

The Saudi Princess Helping Shape A Better Future For Women

In 2019, Her Royal Highness Princess Lamia Bint Majed Saud Al Saud became one of the most discussed female leaders in the Middle East as she was recognized as one of the Champions of Generation Unlimited by UNICEF—joining such champions as Nikolai Astrup, the Norwegian minister of digitalization, Takehiko Nakao, president of the Asian Development Bank and Ms. Vera Songwe, executive secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa—and was announced as a speaker at the upcoming World Tolerance Summit in the UAE.

As Saudi Arabia continues to take significant strides towards encouraging women into the workplace and enabling their independence, the Princess has become an outspoken advocate for change.

“To achieve gender equality, we must understand where we are now, to ensure that all women and girls are counted and visible, so we can move forward with the right action. The children of today will live in a very different Saudi Arabia to the one that we grew up in and we should be proud of this,” says the Princess. “Together we need to recognize and understand the potential in everyone to achieve great things. We need to challenge stereotypes and encourage genuine respect, and desire for equality from the youngest age possible.”

In April, as part of her role as Secretary-General and a member of the Board of Trustees at Alwaleed Philanthropies, HRH Princess Lamia unveiled the results of a *Saudi Women in Development* study, which aimed to support the Kingdom’s Vision 2030 and help increase women’s participation in the workforce from 22% to 30%.

“As our team worked to align proposed components with Vision 2030 during the initial research phase of the project, we found that it was necessary to add an additional pillar to those commonly found in gender indices,” explains the Princess. “This social pillar analyses women’s engagement and contributions to society and their community. It recognizes that we, Saudi women, are a crucial element of the Kingdom’s growth and progress. Our talent and energy are vital to the development of our society and economy.”

Alwaleed Philanthropies invests in programs that empower women and youth to overcome economic, cultural, and societal barriers. The concept was structured to invest in individuals to help them fulfill their potential and support the wider development of the community and economy.

As part of this, it has provided cars for female drivers or “Captainahs” at the ride-sharing service Careem. To help create additional employment opportunities, the company has been training women in the maintenance and manufacture of cars. And through a three-year partnership with Turquoise Mountain in Myanmar, it also aims to train and support 250 jewelers, weavers, and artisans—almost all of whom are women—to revive and preserve

Myanmar's traditional craft industry.

Last year, HRH Princess Lamia on behalf of Alwaleed Philanthropies, also joined the UN Women's flagship initiative, "Making Every Woman and Girl Count." This project is focused on monitoring and implementing research and data on gender equality around the world. This cooperation between Alwaleed Philanthropies, UN Women, the General Statistics Authority of Saudi Arabia, the National Observatory for Women, and King Saud University, resulted in the increased knowledge about the positive integration of Saudi women in different sectors of the country.

According to the research 20% of the Shura Council seats were reserved for female members, women were elected in municipal councils and the participation of women in the labor market has grown from 12% (2009) to 18% (2017). The research also showed that women's mobility reached a new level as a result of them being granted driving privileges in Saudi. Women accounted for 20% of the private sector's investments in 2017 and over 450,000 job vacancies were announced for women in 2019.

Reflecting on the role of women in society, the princess says "Our talent and energy are vital to the development of our society and economy."

"If you are fortunate enough to be privileged and you have time to dedicate wherever you please, you have an absolute obligation to use your resources to help those who are not as fortunate."

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