

The Triple 'E'

EDUCATION, ENCOURAGEMENT, EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN THE UAE

Emirati Women Continue To Play A Leading Role In The Development Of The UAE.

Exclusive Interview with Lucy Cow, Director of Women's Angel Investor Network

By Radha Chhabra

Having lived and worked for Global entities for the past 15 years in Dubai in the Middle East, I am seeing that the UAE is an

Excellent example for all those nations who wish to support women and bring about change. Nothing more gratifying than to see Emirati women, who utilize their 'power' to empower others, play a prominent role in society and achieve high positions in the future. His Highness Shaikh Mohammad bin

Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai says, "We are not empowering women, but rather empowering the community with women."

A shift is happening in the UAE, and women are the cornerstone in the country's development. The leadership of President His Highness Shaikh



Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan; His Highness Shaikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and

Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai; and His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, is continuing a powerful approach to empowering women.

In the Year of Zayed, Women's Angel Investor Network WAIN, the first investor network for women in the MENA region, continues to build an informed ecosystem of women investors who educate and empower women entrepreneurs in the Arab world. These women have full confidence to harness their potential to achieve success, excellence and contribute to building the nation and preparing future generations.

Lucy Chow

Lucy Chow, the Director of **WAIN** that successfully closed their fourth round with an investment pot of **\$335,000** last year, is the perfect example of the **'Boss Lady'** who implements the Triple 'E' formula. Educate, encourage, and empower women and the community.

As well as being the Director of WAIN, Lucy also sits on the Advisory Board of Mindshift Capital. She is also an investor with NextWave Ventures and the Founder Institute, and CEO of the Elements Group. She is Chairman of the Steering Committee with The Capital Club, and she founded the Dubai Chapter of Room to Read.

Lucy was recently honored to be a Judge for **the GEMS Global Innovation Challenge** (student entrepreneurs) and the MIT Enterprise Forum Pan Arab & Challenge 22 Prize (an innovation award that promotes creativity in the Arab world). She was also featured in the photography book, *Women of the UAE* and was one of Ahlan!'s Hot100 in 2012, under the Entrepreneur category.





BC: How and Why did Dubai become your home?

LC: My husband was asked to start the Middle East office for McLagan Consulting 12 years ago. We have never regretted our decision. My son was 18 months when he arrived, and today he counts himself a true Dubai native.

BC: What work are you currently focusing on?

LC: I am the Director of Women's Angel Investor Network (WAIN). WAIN, the first investor network for women in the MENA region. Our goal is to build an informed ecosystem of women investors who support women entrepreneurs in the Arab world. We have democratized access to capital by providing investment opportunities to individuals and facilitating capital-raising for entrepreneurs!

I have been asked to spend time focused on increasing Canada-UAE Business relations. Specifically, to get the word out that the UAE is a great place for Canadian (women) to do business and innovate. There is growing trade between Canada and the UAE, but the potential is enormous.

Interestingly enough, back in Canada, there are misconceptions related to the role of women and the power they wield here in the UAE. As a Canadian woman, who has lived and worked here for 12 years, I can lend my voice to help with that myth-busting. I will work with the Canadian Consulate and the Canada-UAE Business Council to move ahead of initiatives that will benefit both amazing countries. In my role as a supporter of innovation, I spend time with the American School of Dubai, as they work on building out a learning pathway focused on entrepreneurialism.





BC: What are your thoughts regarding women empowerment in this region?

LC: Women are empowered in the region. However, knowledge of this fact is low outside of the region. Anecdotally, traditional family offices, are now passing the reins to more daughters and wives. Naturally, there are businesses still dominated by the men of the family, but there is breaking away from these traditional systems. Here is a direct quote from a newspaper article published in late 2017, "With nine ministerial positions out of 31 now held by women, the UAE is more gender-equal than Donald Trump's cabinet, which has four. Nearly 30 percent of the UAE Cabinet is female, almost the same as the UK government and higher than many countries, including India, where 22 percent of cabinet ministers are women." The government is setting a strong example for its people. I am excited to play, however small a role, in spreading the word that the UAE is open for business.

It is an 'open' nation! Also, there are many strong and successful women whom we can showcase.

BC: What are you involved in for ensuring your hard work and efforts empower women?

LC: WAIN is structured perfectly to ensure the empowerment of women. With all female angels on board,

we accelerate financial and intellectual capital. I was also part of the 30% Club GCC, which is focused on advocating for more women on boards. I sat on the Board of Educate Girls Globally for two years. This non-profit worked primarily in rural India where girls are not given the opportunity to go to school. Only by giving these girls the opportunity, can the cycle of poverty and deprivation be broken. I have spent the past two decades lending my time and voice to efforts that empower women.





BC: What educational tools or value system if any should we instill for boys in this region?

If I think about my son, he is entirely gender blind. I credit this to the fact that he views my contribution and work as being on par with that of my husband. We need to 'model' how we want our sons/boys to view girls/women. We need to be confident in our contributions whatever form that takes. Schools must also reinforce the concept of gender parity. Girls must be encouraged to take up STEM subjects. Boys should be encouraged to take up dance and choir. No judgment about what is '**traditionally**' done by girls, and what is done by '**boys.**' The language also forms our mindset. Girls who are not afraid to speak their mind, should not be labeled as '**bossy,**' or '**tomboyish.**' We need to watch how we 'label' behaviors at an early age.

RADHA CHHABRA



Radha Chhabra is an established fundraiser in the MENA region, with 22 years of experience working at Top Tier Investment Managers based in New York and Dubai. She has advised Startups and VC Firms on business and marketing strategy.

From 2006 to 2016 she was responsible for the fundraising and business development initiatives to Family Offices, Financial Intermediaries and Institutions in the Middle East, Africa, and the Asian sub-continent. Radha holds an M.B.A. in International Business from The Zicklin School of Business (Baruch College, NY) and a B.A. in Economics from Rutgers College of Rutgers University in New Jersey.

Radha is a Member of WAIN (Women's Angel Investor Network) in the U.A.E. which assesses and values angel investment towards ventures funded or founded by a female. She is also a member of The Chartered Institute of Securities and Investment. She holds a Thomson Reuters Certification in Global Financial Sanctions and a CCL (DFSA) Certification in Financial Crime.