

EduVision NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2026

ISSUE 4



Dear Students, Alumni, and Partners,

Despite the challenges that have marked this period across our region, the GSE responded with resolve and a commitment to moving forward together. This spring, we celebrated the graduation of our 14th M.Ed. cohort. We also launched the new Professional Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching (PPDT), and witnessed our students create an inspiring online, inclusive book talk series. Faculty continued to represent our school with distinction through publications and conferences, while our alumni distinguished themselves through academic and new professional pursuits. These achievements remind us of what this community is capable of, even in demanding times. To our students, faculty, staff, and families: thank you! Wishing you all a restorative summer holiday.

Warm regards,
Nadera Alborna, Ed.D.
Dean, Graduate School of Education

Announcements

AUD's New Professional Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching

The Graduate School of Education is pleased to launch the **Professional Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching (PPDT)**: a 24-credit graduate qualification for aspiring teachers, career changers, teaching assistants, and educators seeking to strengthen their professional practice.

The program combines coursework in curriculum, assessment, classroom management, inclusive education, differentiation, and educational technology with a supervised teaching practicum. Candidates may choose a pathway in Elementary Education, Secondary Education, or Special and Inclusive Education.

PPDT graduates may also progress to AUD's Master of Education by completing an additional 12 credits.

[Click Here to read more](#)

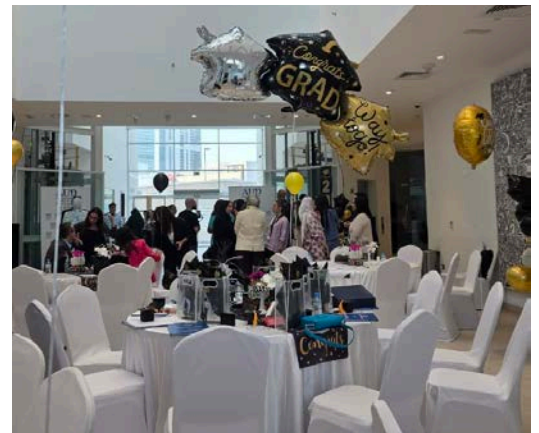


1. GSE Celebrates the 14th Master of Education (M.Ed.) Cohort

A Night to Remember: The Annual Graduation Dinner & Thesis Signing Ceremony

The Graduate School of Education marked the close of another remarkable year with its annual graduation dinner and thesis signing ceremony, bringing together students, faculty, staff, and friends from across the AUD community who have supported our graduates throughout their journey. Members of the Alumni Advisory Council also joined the celebration to welcome the newest cohort into our growing alumni family.

The evening was made truly memorable by the presence of our **Guest of Honor, Dr. Catherine Hill, Dean Emerita and Founding Dean of the GSE**, whose heartfelt address reminded our graduates of what lies at the heart of this profession: teaching with kindness, learning with humility, and living with honor, words that sent them forward with both pride and purpose.



Research in Action: The Class of 2026 Poster Showcase



The Graduate School of Education's Class of 2026 presented their research posters during an engaging evening that celebrated inquiry, professional growth, and the practical impact of educational research.

The event brought together educators, AUD students and alumni, and graduates' families and friends, creating a supportive space for dialogue and the exchange of ideas. Graduates shared the focus, methodology, and key findings of their research, demonstrating how evidence-informed practice can contribute to meaningful improvement across schools and learning communities.

The presentations were reviewed by a **distinguished panel of judges comprising Dr. Sandra Alexander, Dr. Lisa Johnson, and Dr. Rami Saleh**. Their thoughtful questions, constructive feedback, and professional insights were greatly valued by the graduates and enriched the evening's academic experience.

The event concluded with the announcement of the Best Poster Award winners:

First Prize: **Mona Jomaa**

Second Prize: **Gizem Balata**

Third Prize: **Hussein Alsalehy**



Congratulations to all members of the Class of 2026 on their successful presentations and research achievements.



2. Research and Beyond: Faculty in the Field

AUD Hosts the 30th International TESOL Conference

The Graduate School of Education hosted the **30th International TESOL Conference and Exhibition** on February 7–8, 2026.



Themed "**Enhancing ELT: Empowering Learners in an AI Inclusive Era**," the event brought together over 350 teachers and researchers from more than 26 countries, participating in 176 sessions that explored the frontiers of English Language Teaching.

Special thanks to **Dr. Nader Ayish**, whose long-standing engagement with TESOL International was instrumental in bringing this landmark conference to AUD.



Publication Spotlight: Virtual Exchange as a Gateway to Inclusive Learning

Dr. Nadera Alborno and Dr. María Inés Marino of Florida International University published "**Virtual Exchange to Prepare Teachers as Advocates for Inclusion**" in Springer Nature's Handbook of Using Virtual Exchange Across Disciplines.

The chapter explores how an eight-week COIL exchange helped preservice and in-service teachers challenge deficit-based views of disability, deepen their understanding of inclusion, and strengthen their commitment to advocacy and socially just practice.

SPRINGER NATURE



Handbook of Using Virtual Exchange Across Disciplines

Building Global Citizens from Home
Living reference work | © 2026
Latest edition

Virtual Exchange to Prepare Teachers as Advocates for Inclusion

AUD | AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN DUBAI

FIU | FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY



Prof. Nadera Alborno

Stevens Initiative



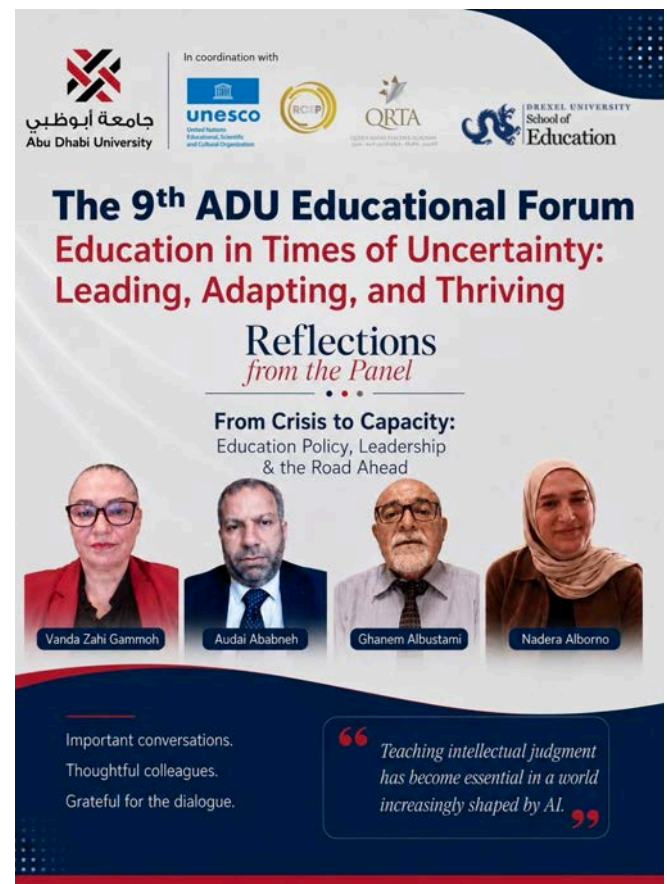
Dr. María Inés Marino

Resilient and Human-Centered: GSE Voice at the 9th ADU Educational Forum

Dr. Nadera Alborno, Dean of the Graduate School of Education, participated as a panelist in the **9th ADU Educational Forum** on May 16, 2026. The forum was held in collaboration with **UNESCO, the Queen Rania Teacher Academy, and Drexel University**.

During the panel, **“From Crisis to Capacity: Education Policy, Leadership, and the Road Ahead,”** Dr. Alborno emphasized the importance of elevating the teaching profession, strengthening human relationships in education, and preparing teachers to lead with empathy and resilience.

She also highlighted the need to develop students’ intellectual judgement in the age of AI, encouraging them to question, evaluate, and use technology thoughtfully rather than accept its outputs without reflection.



AI, XR, and the Future of Teaching: Teachers Forward 2026

The Graduate School of Education participated in Teachers Forward 2026 on February 12 at Mövenpick Grand Al Bustan Dubai.

Dr. Fariha Salman led an interactive workshop on Crossover Learning and Assessment Design through AI and XR, introducing educators to ways emerging technologies can connect classroom learning with authentic, real-world contexts.

The event also gave teachers an opportunity to learn more about AUD’s M.Ed. program and its focus on innovation, inclusion, leadership, and professional growth.



Teachers
Forward

Reclaiming the Moral Heart of Education: AME Conference 2026



Dr. Nadera Alborna, Dean of the Graduate School of Education, and Dr. Catherine Hill, Dean Emerita, represented the American University in Dubai at the **52nd Annual Conference of the Association for Moral Education** in Madrid.

Their presentation, **“Teacher as Moral Agent: Reclaiming the Moral Heart of Education,”** highlighted teaching as a moral profession shaped by care, integrity, ethical judgment, and meaningful relationships. It explored how teachers influence not only academic learning, but also students’ sense of belonging, responsibility, and character.

The session generated thoughtful discussion among international scholars and educators and contributed to broader conversations about building more humane, ethical, and responsible learning communities.

3. GSE for Inclusion

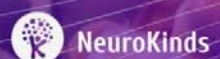
Breaking New Ground: Advancing Neuro-Inclusion Across UAE Schools

Dr. Nadera Alborna joined an action-oriented meeting on neuro-inclusion at the University of Birmingham, Dubai, on January 14, 2026, ahead of the International Neurodiversity Conference. Bringing together UAE-based decision-makers, advocates, and international experts, the meeting explored the opportunities associated with neurodiversity, the barriers faced by neurodivergent individuals, and practical ways to create lasting change across education, healthcare, business, and society. The discussions marked an important step toward developing more inclusive, neurodiversity-affirming practices in the UAE and the wider region.

International Neurodiversity Conference 2026

15-16 JANUARY 2026 | ONLINE

31 JANUARY 2026 | NEURODIVERSITY YOUTH CORNER | ONLINE



Reading Toward Inclusion: Book Talks That Center Lived Experience

Teacher candidates and M.Ed. graduates from the Graduate School of Education took part in Reading Toward Inclusion, a book talk series designed to deepen understanding of disability, neurodiversity, and inclusive education through biography, memoir, fiction, and first-person accounts.

Across eight short presentations, participants reflected on books that centre the voices and experiences of people with disabilities. The series opened with Suzan Harb, who explored **Dyslexia an Amazing Discovery** and the importance of understanding how learners experience reading and language differently. Nicole Ashwin discussed **Born Lucky** by Leland Vittert, prompting conversations about autism, neurodiversity, and personal experience, while Reema AlAwadhi reflected on Naoki Higashida's **The Reason I Jump**, offering insight into communication and the inner world of a largely nonspeaking autistic teenager.

The series continued with Sameena Mian Mustafa, who presented **Roll with It** by Jamie Sumner, a novel addressing cerebral palsy, friendship, identity, family, and belonging. Amineh AlRusheidat discussed **Disability Visibility**, edited by Alice Wong, highlighting the importance of representation and the inclusion of disabled voices in public and educational conversations.



Suzan Harb



Nicole Ashwin



Reema AlAwadhi



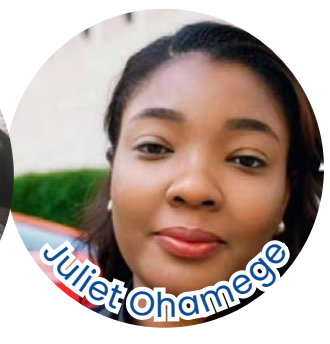
Sameena Mian Mustafa



Reading Toward Inclusion: Book Talks That Center Lived Experience

Further presentations included Rozana Ziadat's reflection on Nick Vujicic's **Life Without Limits**, which explores resilience, determination, and human potential; Rania AlShafie's discussion of Emily Ladau's **Demystifying Disability**, focusing on allyship and the need to move from good intentions to informed action; and Juliet Ohamege's exploration of Temple Grandin's **The Autistic Brain**, which combines lived experience and scientific insight to challenge stereotypes about autism.

Together, the book talks encouraged future educators to listen carefully, question assumptions, and recognise the diversity of human experience. By engaging with stories told by and about people with disabilities, teacher candidates were invited to consider how empathy, representation, accessibility, and responsive teaching can contribute to more inclusive classrooms and communities.



In Partnership with EDSA: Celebrating Inclusive Education

Dr. Nadera Alborno was recognized by the Emirates Down Syndrome Association (EDSA) at their Hag Al Lila celebration for her long-standing advocacy and volunteer contributions to the association and the rights of people of determination.



The celebration also highlighted **EDSA's Hospitality Academy**, the "Creative Kitchen", which provides youth with Down syndrome professional culinary and hospitality training, opening real pathways to employment and independent living.



The celebration was a beautiful reminder that inclusion means more than access — it means belonging, contribution, and opportunity. Values that are very much at the heart of the GSE community.

Learning from the Youngest Voices: A Young Advocate's Story

M.Ed. candidates at the Graduate School of Education welcomed Leia, a Grade 6 advocate for people of determination, for a meaningful conversation about disability, identity, and inclusion.

Inspired by **I Am Not a Label** and supported by her mother, **Kholoud Sawalha, M.Ed. '22**, Leia encouraged future educators to question assumptions and listen more closely to the voices and lived experiences of young people.



Her visit was a powerful reminder that advocacy can begin at home, grow through education, and shape more inclusive classrooms. Some conversations do more than inspire—they influence the educators we become.

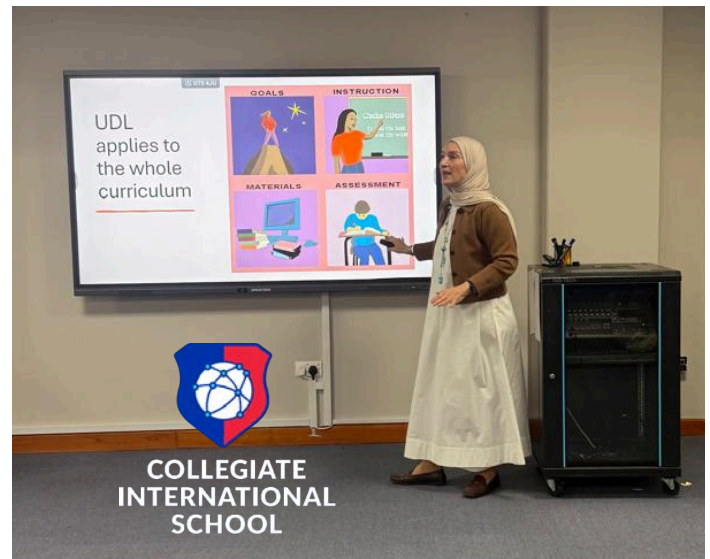
4. Community Engagement

Designing Learning for Every Student: A UDL Teacher Development Session

Dean Alborno led a professional development session at Collegiate International School on **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)**, encouraging educators to design flexible learning experiences that respond to learner variability.

Participants explored UDL's three **core principles: engagement, representation, and action and expression**, and considered practical ways to remove barriers through varied materials, assessment options, assistive technology, and classroom supports.

The session emphasized a key shift: barriers often exist in the design of instruction, not in the learner. Meaningful change can begin with one intentional decision that improves access, agency, and opportunity for all students.



Heartfelt Ramadan Gathering: Community, Gratitude, and Connection

The Graduate School of Education's annual Iftar brought faculty, students, alumni, and friends together for an evening of connection, gratitude, and reflection.

A closing activity explored how Ramadan values—including patience, resilience, intention, love, and kindness—also shape meaningful teaching. The gathering highlighted the importance of character, purpose, and human connection within education.



Celebrating Graduations in Partner Schools

Dubai National School (DNS) Early Years Graduation

Dr. Nadera Alborno attended Dubai National School's KG2 Graduation as the guest of honor, at the invitation of alumna and Kindergarten Coordinator **Kinda Al Jabri, M.Ed. '20**, a proud reminder of the lasting connections between GSE and its graduates.



Celebrating the Class of 2026 at GEMS The Millennium School

Dr. Nadera Alborno delivered the keynote address at GEMS The Millennium School's Grade 12 Graduation, celebrating the school's 25th Silver Jubilee batch — encouraging graduates to embrace lifelong learning, lead with integrity, and contribute to their communities.



Opening Doors: AUD's Graduate Virtual Open Day

On May 14, the Graduate School of Education welcomed prospective candidates to its Graduate Virtual Open Day, introducing AUD's M.Ed. and PPDT programs, its three concentrations, and its focus on research, professional practice, and inclusive education.

Kholoud Al Sawalha, M.Ed. '22, shared her alumni experience,

offering participants a personal perspective on how the program supports educators' professional growth and classroom practice.



Graduate Virtual Open Day

Join our **Graduate Virtual Open Day** to hear from current Master's students about their **journey, tips for balancing work and study, and explore admissions requirements.** Discover how a Master's degree can help you upskill and advance your career.

Thursday
May 14, 2026

5:00 PM

Webinar ID
11 3205 2540

Roundtable on Formative and Summative Assessment



Dr. Nader Ayish and Dr. Nadera Alborna led an AUD roundtable discussion on balancing formative and summative assessments to better support student learning.

The session explored how ongoing feedback can identify learning gaps early, while final assessments ensure that key course outcomes are achieved. The discussion also created a valuable space for colleagues across disciplines to exchange practical ideas and reflect on teaching and learning.

5. Rising Stars: Student and Alumni Achievements

A National Honor: M.Ed. Candidate Wins the Khalifa Educational Award

Congratulations to **Farah Jassim AlKhawajah**, M.Ed. candidate, on receiving the Khalifa Educational Award in the Creative Teacher – Arab World category.

The prestigious award recognizes educators whose innovative practices create meaningful learning experiences and advance education across the region. Farah's achievement reflects her passion for teaching, commitment to student success, and ability to translate educational ideas into lasting classroom impact.

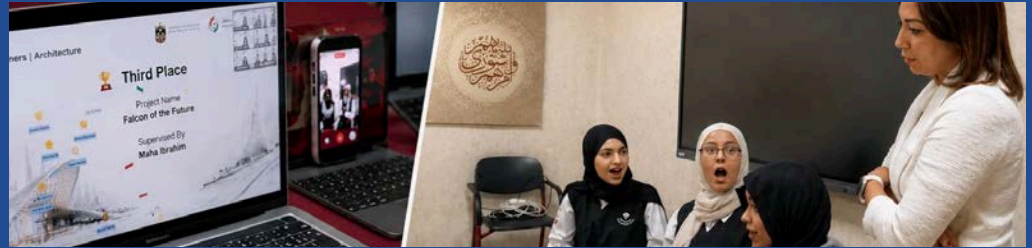


Coaching Excellence Recognized: An M.Ed. Candidate's Impact

Maha Mohamed, a high-achieving member of the M.Ed. Class of 2026, was recognised for coaching students in the Emirates Global Aluminium Design & Innovation Challenge.



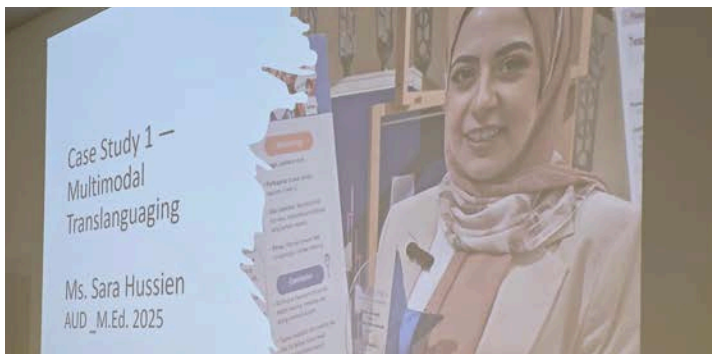
The challenge encourages Grades 9–12 students to apply STEM knowledge and design thinking to real-world problems. Maha's recognition celebrates her role in guiding students to think creatively, overcome challenges, and grow through hands-on learning.



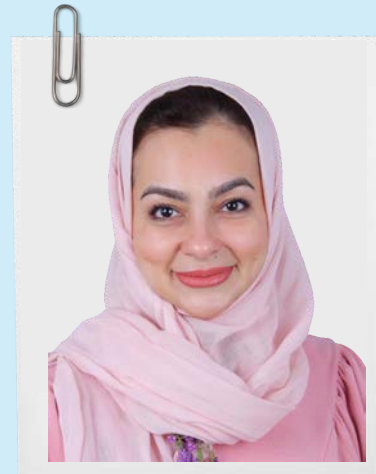
Advancing AI-Inclusive Language Learning

Sara Hussien, M.Ed. '25, co-presented on multimodal translanguaging at the TESOL Conference with Dean Alborno, sharing how she supports multilingual learners in her classroom.

Her work explored using AI through a UDL lens to offer students multiple ways to understand, communicate, and draw on their languages as strengths.



Promotion



Rania AlShafie
M.Ed. '27

MS Arabic and Islamic
Department Chair



Ph.D. Education



Iman Ayas
Ph.D. Education

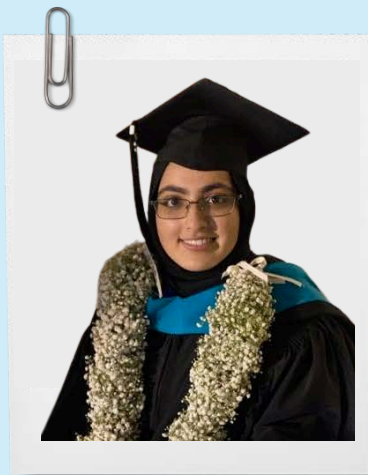
Impact of Integrating Design Thinking with
Problem-based Learning on Student
Learning in Schools in UAE



Lydia Halabi
Ph.D. Education

AI's Role and Stakeholder's Perceptions in
Fostering Student Engagement and Critical
Thinking in Dubai's Private Schools

New Appointments



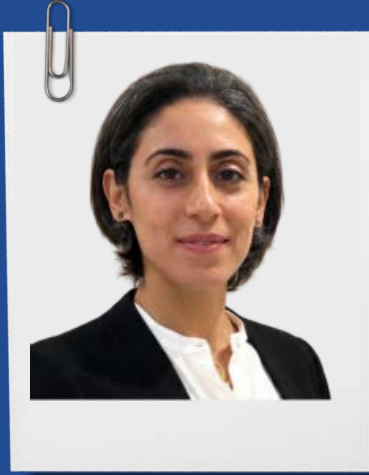
Fatima Al Jassim
M.Ed. '22
Member in the Board of Trustees

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NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTION



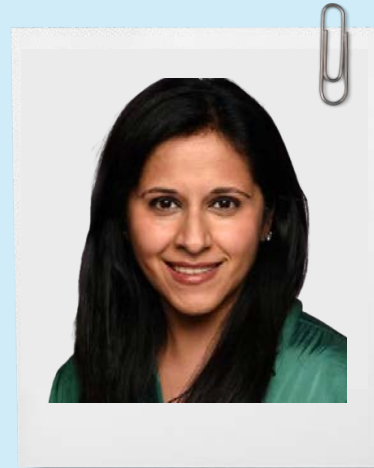
Rima AlOmari
M.Ed. '23
lecturer in Arabic

 **SORBONNE
UNIVERSITY
ABU DHABI**



Nancy Sedky-Tolba
M.Ed. '23

K2 Classroom Teacher – Early Learning Center

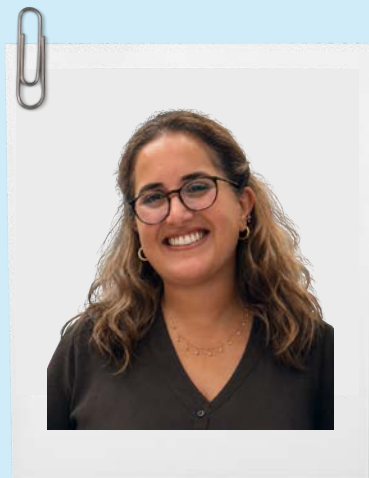


Tania Loungani
M.Ed. '23

PYP Classroom Teacher

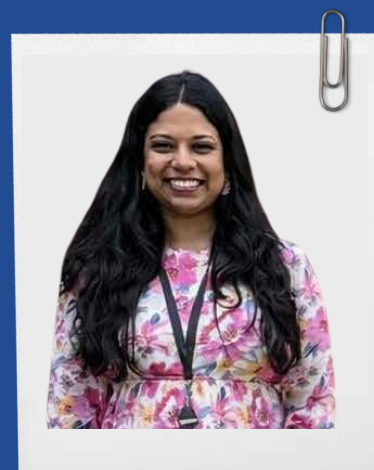


BLOOM WORLD ACADEMY



Shamael Al-Rizaiqi
M.Ed. '26

Homeroom Teacher



Sheryl John
M.Ed. '20

IB Psychology & HSIE Teacher



Santa Sabina College

Gallery





Stay Connected!

Have questions or want to learn more about our program? Reach out to us:

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- **Phone:** +971 4 399 9000 Ext: 234
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Stay informed and inspired ... let's shape the future of education together!