



PRESS RELEASE

Unlock Her Future Prize 2023 – Winners Announced

The Bicester Collection has recognised four women social impact entrepreneurs from the Middle East and North Africa in its inaugural edition of the Unlock Her Future Prize.

8 March 2023, London – The Bicester Collection has announced the winners of the Unlock Her Future Prize 2023 during a prize-giving ceremony in celebration of International Women’s Day, hosted by author and women’s activist Lina AbiRafeh.

Over the past two days, eight finalists representing Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, Saudi Arabia and the UAE attended a pitch day in London to compete to become the winners of the first edition of the start-up business competition, which aims to identify and support women social impact entrepreneurs who are leveraging system-changing innovation as a force for good.

Judges Desirée Bollier, *Chair and Global Chief Merchant of Value Retail*, creator and operator of The Bicester Collection; Dr Iman Bibars, *Vice President and Regional Director, Ashoka Arab World* and founder of Women's Initiative for Social Entrepreneurship (WISE); the Hon. Dr Badira Ibrahim Al Shihhi, *Vice Chair of the State Council of Sultanate of Oman*; Elham Fardad, *founder and CEO, Migrant Leaders*; and sustainability advisor Caterina Occhio, *founder of SeeMe and Ethicarei*, reached a unanimous decision, recognising the exceptional talent of Noor Jaber and Sara Ali Llalla.

Each will receive a business grant of up to \$100,000, bespoke mentorship from international experts and an education programme from presenting partner New York University Abu Dhabi.

Noor Jaber, Nawat (Lebanon) – enhancing women’s sexual and reproductive health (SRHR) through a safe and accessible digital space providing SRSH knowledge in Arabic via educational content and consultations with qualified experts, offering confidentiality, privacy and convenience.

“I’m so thrilled to have been selected as a winner of the Unlock Her Future Prize, this initiative brings validation to my passion and to my mission to bring the importance of women’s reproductive health out into the open and to empower women to care for their well-being and take informed decisions about their bodies.” Noor Jaber, founder of Nawat

Sara Llalla, EcoCentric (Iraq/UAE) – an online marketplace and circular economy system designed to mitigate microplastic food contamination and eliminate plastic waste.

THE BICESTER COLLECTION

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TheBicesterCollection.com



"Winning this prestigious prize validates the need of EcoCentric's services in our society. We're introducing the only truly sustainable food packaging system, which should be normalised as part of our everyday and now is the perfect time to launch this in Abu Dhabi and Dubai, the host of COP 28." Sara Ilalla, founder of EcoCentric.

Inspired by the power of product invention, the judges decided to allocate the third prize between two finalists who are at different stages of the development of their invention.

Fella Bouti, Ecodalle (Algeria)– providing ecological construction and homogeneous, economical and integrated irrigation solutions to improve large cities' air quality and urban temperature.

"Unlock Her Future stands for the power of women, this is an incredible opportunity, it will be life changing for me!" Fella Bouti, founder of Ecodalle

Nuhayr Zein, Leukeather (UAE) – a sustainable and ethical vegetal material alternative to exotic leathers made from dried plant pods, and a by-product of existing agriculture which minimises its carbon footprint and provides an additional source of income for farming communities.

"The Unlock Her Future Prize will allow Leukeather to develop, so that we may all take a step forward towards a more eco-friendly and responsible world by collaborating with nature and completely eliminating the unethical and wasteful killing of exotic species". Nuhayr Zein, founder, Leukeather

Chantal Khoueiry, Chief Culture Officer, The Bicester Collection commented *"Empowering women social entrepreneurs is not just about recognising their achievements – it's about creating a ripple effect of positive change that impacts entire communities. Today, we celebrate the vision, tenacity and innovation of these four Arab women, the winners of the Unlock Her Future Prize 2023 MENA edition. These women are leading the way towards a brighter future for us all."*

Open to women of any age with an inspiring not-for-profit business idea, or a business where their for-profit goals generate a positive return to society; the Unlock Her Future Prize identifies system-changing ventures that will drive sustainable positive social, cultural and environmental impact for generations to come, as defined by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. A global programme, the inaugural edition celebrated the women of the Middle East and North Africa and in 2024, the prize will travel around the world to celebrate women from another geographical region.

UnlockHerFuturePrize.com
#DoGood #UnlockHerFuture

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About The Bicester Collection

The Bicester Collection is a family of 11 distinctive shopping destinations in Europe and China defined by extraordinary experiences while offering remarkable value. The Collection, created and operated by Value Retail, brings together the world's most discerning guests and the world's most renowned brands – often for the first time – on a journey of discovery. The Villages are located close to some of Europe's and China's most celebrated cities: London, Milan, Munich, Dublin, Barcelona, Madrid, Paris, Brussels, Frankfurt, Munich, Suzhou and Shanghai. Collectively home to more than 1,300 boutiques, The Bicester Collection offers guests an ever-evolving curation of fashion and lifestyle brands, world-famous restaurants, exciting pop-ups, and imaginative art installations throughout the year.

DO GOOD is The Bicester Collection's platform to make the lives of others better – brands, guests, people, and communities. Representing a culture that places giving back at its heart, the programme harnesses a sense of purpose and belonging amongst colleagues and engages with guests, standing as a powerful collective force for good. Our mission is to generate transformative social impact through our inspirational partners, with a focus on unlocking the potential of women and children, to align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals – to play our part in making a difference locally and globally for generations to come. Discover more at TheBicesterCollection.com

About Ashoka Arab World

Ashoka Arab World is the regional hub for Ashoka: Innovators for the Public, the world's largest platform for social entrepreneurs. Ashoka was founded in 1981 as a non-profit organisation based on the idea that the most powerful force for good in the world is a social entrepreneur: a person driven by an innovative idea that can help correct an entrenched global problem. Today, Ashoka exists with the mission of identifying and supporting the world's leading social entrepreneurs and equipping Everyone to be a Changemaker. As a global organisation, Ashoka is represented across 94 countries and has offices in 35 countries.

About New York University Abu Dhabi

NYU Abu Dhabi is the first comprehensive liberal arts and research campus in the Middle East to be operated abroad by a major American research university. NYU Abu Dhabi has integrated a highly selective program with majors in the sciences, engineering, social sciences, arts, and humanities with a world centre for advanced research. Its campus enables students to succeed in an increasingly interdependent world, and to advance cooperation and progress on humanity's shared challenges. NYU Abu Dhabi's high-achieving students have come from some 120 countries and speak over 115 languages. Together, NYU's campuses in New York, Abu Dhabi, and Shanghai form the backbone of a unique global university, giving faculty and students opportunities to experience varied learning environments and immersion in other cultures at one or more of the numerous study-abroad sites NYU maintains on six continents.

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About Almosafer (part of Seera Group) Saudi Arabia's Leading Travel Company

Elevating the journey for travellers from Saudi Arabia, the region and beyond while harnessing Seera Group's 40+ years of expertise, Almosafer supports Saudi Arabia's vision as a national champion for tourism, creating opportunities for outbound, leisure and religious travel whilst serving B2C and B2B customers, partners, and suppliers with state-of-the-art travel solutions, a digital-first mindset and travel advisory. Through powerful and world-class technology platforms, central sourcing and fulfilment capabilities and data-driven decision-making, Almosafer elevates travel experiences through multiple businesses operating under the Almosafer umbrella; Almosafer, the Middle East's leading travel brand, offers consumers seamless user experiences for domestic and international travel bookings through its omnichannel offerings. As a dedicated service solution, Almosafer Concierge addresses the needs of VIP and high-end clients through bespoke services; Almosafer Business, a dedicated service solution, caters to corporate & government entities. Discover Saudi is the Kingdom's leading Destination Management Company, specialising in inbound travel, online distribution, and MICE solutions and Mawasim, a Hajj and Umrah tour operator, offers high-quality end-to-end travel arrangements and simplified sourcing for external agents in key international source markets.

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