

## Ms. Najla Al Midfa

Director of United Arab Bank

Chairperson – Board Audit Committee

Member – Board Risk Committee

Re-elected to the Board in 2021 for a term of 3 years



Najla Al-Midfa is Chief Executive Officer of the Sharjah Entrepreneurship Center (Sheraa), a government supported entity with a mandate to build the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Sharjah, and support the next generation of entrepreneurs as they build and grow innovative startups that will contribute positively to the region's economy.

Launched in January 2016, under the chairmanship of HE Sheikha Bodour Bint Sultan Al Qasimi, Sheraa has become the foundation of Sharjah's startup ecosystem. Having helped conceive the vision for Sheraa, Najla has been involved from inception: forming a prominent advisory board, building a high-performing team, and structuring partnerships with key corporates and government entities in the ecosystem to support startups.

Today, Sheraa has a loyal community of over seven thousand entrepreneurs and ecosystem players, and offers a full-stack program ranging from ideation and incubation through to acceleration and growth. To date, over 300 ideas have been validated and over 70 startups have graduated from Sheraa's programs. Having raised over \$14m in seed investment, these startups continue to generate over \$19m in recurring sales.

The first Sheraa Hub was inaugurated at the American University of Sharjah (AUS), and the second hub at the University of Sharjah (UOS) was inaugurated in September 2018. In 2017, Najla spearheaded the creation of the annual Sharjah Entrepreneurship Festival (SharjahEF).

The event brings together over 2,000 entrepreneurs, investors, mentors, and ecosystem supporters to celebrate the power of entrepreneurship and inspire further innovation.

Najla is also founder of Khayarat, a platform that empowers young, high-potential Emiratis to make informed career choices, and enables them to succeed in the private sector. With a community of over one thousand young Emiratis, and over 70 placements in leading international private sector companies, the platform is influencing the next generation of Emiratis to raise their ambitions and fulfill their potential.

In her previous role as Senior Manager at Khalifa Fund for Enterprise Development, Najla led a team of business counselors through the due diligence process of selecting ventures for financing.

She also set up and operated the Northern Emirate branch of Khalifa Fund, covering Ajman, Dubai, and Sharjah.

Prior to joining Khalifa Fund, Najla was a senior associate at McKinsey and Company's New York office, primarily serving clients across the financial institutions sector. Her experience also includes roles within PricewaterhouseCoopers and Shell.

Najla is a board member of United Arab Bank, where she also chairs the Board Audit Committee and is a member of the Board Risk Committee. She is Vice-Chairperson of Young Arab Leaders, and a fellow of the Aspen Institute's Middle East Leadership Initiative. Najla holds an MBA from Stanford University.