

Human resources not fully utilised, experts say

More opportunities needed for GCC nationals

- By Zaher Bitar, Staff Reporter
- Published: 00:00 January 21, 2011



Dubai: The Gulf and Middle East region have sufficient human resources, but they are under-utilised, said participants of the International Human Resources Conference and Exhibition, which ended yesterday.

The experts were unanimous in their opinion that the under-utilisation of knowledge, and a lack of motivation and engagement were the main obstacles to human capital development in the region.

"The Gulf states have over 50 per cent of their human resources under-utilised," said Dr Khalid Al Yahya, Director of Governance and Public Management Research at the Dubai School of Government.

"We need a fundamental shift in thinking about what organisations can do with their human resources.

"There are also no clear strategies for transferring the explicit and tacit knowledge lying within an organisation. "Poor management and poor utilisation of knowledge resources are the underlying reason for the persistent gap between human capital development and performance in the GCC. Dr Edward Kellough, Department Chair and Professor of HR at the University of Georgia (US) said while speaking in the opening plenary of the conference: "Organisational reforms are imperative over and above education and training. Develop the individual; develop the organisation too".

Participants also dismissed the notion that jobseekers did not possess needed skills.

Chander Mohan, Chairman of the HR Sub-group of Dubai Quality Group said: "There is no such skills deficit".

"GCC nationals need more opportunities. Investment patterns and stereotypes that make the public sector the preferred employer for nationals and private sector incapable of retaining them as employees should change," he said.

Paul Sparrow, Chair and Director of the Centre for Performance-led HR at Lancaster University warned that the credit crunch should not be a pretext for organisations to bring talent management down their priority list.

Labour Ministry blamed

The police chief of Dubai warned about the dangerous increase in unemployment in the UAE during the Human Resource conference on Wednesday.

Lieutenant General Dahi Khalfan Tamim said: "Despite the big expenditure on education in the UAE, there is a remarkable increase in the unemployment rate up to 14.4 per cent which represent 43,000 Emiratis". "Moreover, there is serious worries that the number of unemployed Emiratis to increase up to 100,000 in the coming 10 years," Lt Gen Dahi said.

He blamed the Ministry of Labour for the unemployment in the emirates, and the lack of a solid strategic plan to develop human resources, as well as the unavailability of social security to support new graduates who could not be supported by their families.

"The role of the Ministry of Labour should be more active and give priorities to employ Emiratis and create business opportunities to invest their potential rather than paying more attention to manage expatriate workers in the labour market," he said. "They should work harder to help business sector more available to all graduate Emiratis and jobseekers."

© Gulf News 2011