

## **SOS Children's Villages exhibits first local initiative in the UAE, the “Circular Entrepreneurship Hub”, at Austria Pavilion in EXPO 2020**

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**Dubai, 14 February, 2022:** The Austrian pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai is set to host the pilot project of the SOS Children’s Villages International, Gulf Area Office, "Circular Entrepreneurship Hub", on February 16, 2022 from 12 noon to 5 pm. Founded in Austria in 1949, SOS Children’s Villages is the world’s largest non-governmental organization focused on supporting children and young people without parental care or at risk of losing it. With the ultimate goal of youth employability the Circular Entrepreneurship Hub will raise awareness of environmental sustainability and drive circular economy and social entrepreneurship amongst youth using small scale recycling machines developed by Plastic Preneurs, an Austrian registered company with a focus on social entrepreneurship.

The Commissioner General of the Austrian pavilion, Beatrix Karl, says: "This exhibition which will be hosted in the iLab inside our pavilion represents the essence of Austria's vision at Expo 2020 Dubai. We are working towards creating a better sustainable future in which humanity deploys technology in a way that improves the quality of life for everyone. We look at Expo as the ideal opportunity to present these ideas to an audience of millions and hopefully inspire them to adopt solutions that will have an effective role in bringing positive changes".

Through the establishment of a ‘Hub’ youth will learn about the environment and recycling plastic waste, gain hands on experience in working with the recycling machines and small-scale manufacturing, and be provided the opportunity to innovate, design and market products that would be useful for individuals or the community. The proposed three-months participatory experience will culminate with participants receiving a certificate of completion, which they can then show to potential employers or use the experience to launch their own small companies. Visitors to the exhibition will be able to view a demonstration of how plastic waste can be converted to everyday items and learn more about the project, including opportunities for participation.

The director of SOS Children's villages in the Gulf region, Harry Goodal, says: "We have hopes that the ‘Hub’ concept will be made available to youth through universities, schools and local NGOs in the UAE. In order to create even more impact, the pilot project will then be scaled up as a “best practice” from the UAE to other markets. The project is a collaborative effort between SOS Children's Villages International, Gulf Area Office, Plastic Preneurs, Green Energy Sustainable Solutions and DulSCO."

With its unique architectural concept and ecological materials, the Austrian pavilion, located in the Opportunity district, has won till this date three internationally recognized prizes in the sustainability category. The pavilion operates under the motto "Austria Makes Sense" and it welcomes its visitors to an array of unforgettable experiences that are designed to ignite their senses and help in bringing what Austria is famous for to the UAE.

- Ends -

**Austria at the World Exhibition – [www.expoaustria.at](http://www.expoaustria.at)**

The Austrian Pavilion at the Expo 2020 in Dubai – which retained its name despite being postponed to 2021 – makes creative use of digitalisation to present Austrian innovations as part of the exhibition curated by Ars Electronica Solutions and büro wien. The team of architects from the firm querkraft has realised a pavilion that combines traditional Arab wind catchers with contemporary climate technology to send an appealing message against the waste of energy that is so harmful to the climate. Funding for the Austrian contribution is provided by the Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs, and the Austrian Federal Economic Chambers.

**Photo download:** <https://www.wko.at/site/expoaustria/de/presse.html>

**Further information on the companies and research institutes in the iLab:**

<https://www.wko.at/site/expoaustria/en/ilab.html>

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