

Barclays, Dubai's ZeeArts Community partner

Funds raised from Project 20/20/20 initiative aimed to support children from Dubai Centre for Special Needs (DCSN).

30/03/2015 9:59 am EDT- UAE



The Team during the Event.

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As part of its continuous commitment to support the local community and one of the leading initiatives for 2015, Barclays recently partnered with ZeeArts Community, a non-profit platform connecting emerging artists in Dubai, to create and sponsor 20/20/20 Art Community Project.

Through this initiative, Barclays is placing emphasis on supporting individuals with special needs showing awareness and compassion for those in more vulnerable positions and making a difference in their lives.

The initiative is part of Barclays' commitment to support the communities of the countries it operates in through encouraging employees to give their time and skills, in addition to funds, for the benefit of the local communities.

20/20/20 Art Community Project is a joint effort wherein 20 emerging artists and 20 students from Dubai Centre for Special Needs (DCSN) came together to create 20 pieces of art. They all gathered in DCSN's gardens for a fun-filled exciting day. In collaboration with ZeeArts Community, the students created exceptional and extraordinary artworks, which will be auctioned at the annual client dinner organised by Barclays. The community-focused initiative aims to support children from the Dubai Centre for Special Needs (DCSN), a non-profit organization with the vision to serve the diverse academic, physical, social, and emotional needs of its students.

Andrew Mortimer, Managing Director, Chief Operating Officer and Country Manager, Middle East Barclays Plc, said: "We are very happy to partner with ZeeArts Community and DCSN in this honorable and noble initiative. Barclays understands the responsibility of educating children, especially those with special needs, in order to allow them to achieve their full potential in all aspects of life."

He added: "Citizenship is a fundamental part of Barclays, and we have lauded the remarkable spirit of our employees who work with disadvantaged communities and infuse their lives with passion, positivity and creativity. As a responsible corporate citizen, Barclays has leveraged its global campaigns and adapted them to ensure we contribute to the sustainable development of the communities in which we operate. Barclays employees are given time during working hours, as well as grants, to support the volunteer activities that are important to them throughout the year."

Barclays' employees played a key role in facilitating the activities for the artists and the children during the event. Various artists coming from different nationalities from ZeeArts Community were able to lend their passion, engage with the children to facilitate and mentor them through the art of freely expressing themselves under the theme of "Freedom of Expression" using different styles and techniques. The art workshop was held purposefully coincided with the launch of Art Dubai 2015, the ninth edition of the leading international art fair in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia, to support the promotion of the 20 participating artists.

Zaahirah Muthy, founder member of ZeeArts Community, explained, "It was an exceptional and heartfelt experience, where we brought together 20 artists from different nationalities, different cultures and with different styles to share their skills and passion for a good cause. The mentorship concept was one of the prime objectives for us, since we wanted to create an opportunity for these children to interact and engage with professional artists."

Dr. Mahshid Salehi, Director of Dubai Center for Special Needs, elaborated: "As a non-profit organisation, we rely heavily on the community for support and funding. It is very reassuring to know that there are companies out there, like Barclays and ZeeArts Community, who want to help and give to organisations such as ours. Through this project, Barclays will not only help us raise funds, but also raise vital awareness about DCSN."

Previous activities at Barclays have included teaching young people how to manage money, designing and running career advice/interview workshops, mentoring, as well as one-on-one business consultancy sessions.