



# Goals UAE: A Scalable Model for Inclusive, Community-Based Sport

Scaling Inclusion from the Ground Up >

Real Access • Real Growth • Real Champions

*Building inclusive pathways through consistent, community-led sport.*





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عام المجتمع  
YEAR OF COMMUNITY  
UAE



## From Grassroots to Scalable Impact: The Journey of Goals UAE

Goals UAE began in 2014, founded by a parent determined to make inclusion real, not in name, but in daily life. At a time when consistent, community-based opportunities for people with disabilities were still largely absent from public discourse, Goals UAE launched the country's first disability triathlon team, supported multi-sport athletes in over 30 events, and developed teams that represented Special Olympics UAE in five sports during the 2019 World Games.

What started as a grassroots effort has grown into a replicable model that embeds inclusive sport directly into existing community infrastructure. Relaunched in 2024, Goals UAE now delivers consistent, high-quality sessions in football, swimming, cycling, and athletics, while also offering families and participants regular opportunities to engage socially, build relationships, and feel a true sense of belonging. The model operates through partnerships with private academies, government entities, and families, prioritizing sustainability, visibility, and trust.

**Grassroots at scale, rooted in trust and built for longevity.**



Gold Award Winner  
CSR Impact  
Majra, National CSR Platform, UAE 2025



Certified Social Enterprise  
The Authority for Social Contribution, Maan



Gold Award Winner  
Best Inclusive Initiative  
Sports Industry Awards, Middle East 2025



## Real Needs, Real People, Real Inclusion

In 2014, I saw plenty of goodwill, fun days, gift drops, school invites but not what we needed. I didn't want special invitations once or twice a year. I wanted my son to try new things on our terms, not only through his school or center.

I imagined a city where every family, from day one, could find real chances for their children to explore, grow, and discover their passions and not just through therapy or academics, but everyday experiences.

The biggest challenge? Most people didn't see the need. Ten days before our first session, the coaching partner withdrew. But a coach stepped in, found a venue, and delivered our first training. He's still of our partners today. That's how Goals UAE was built, on trust and commitment.

**"We built from the ground up, with people at the core and systems designed to serve them."**

*This principle still guides how we grow: sustainable, rooted, and ready to scale.*

A photograph of a woman with dark hair tied back in a hijab, smiling and hugging a young man with dark hair and glasses. The young man is wearing an orange t-shirt. They are outdoors with a body of water in the background.

**MUMS ON A SPECIAL MISSION**

Three UAE supermums use their inherent skills to provide various opportunities for their kids with autism, and raise awareness of the condition. **By Zenifer Khaleel**

**A**part from the functional roles that define motherhood, autism mums don many more hats. If primarily they have to be their child's best friend, guiding them through their complex world, they also have to be the teacher who redefines conventional rote methods, the lawyer who makes others understand their child's emotions and defends him, and the caregiver who is always at hand to offer a reliable helping hand.

Though autism is a commonplace word today, it is also one of the most misunderstood. Put simply, it refers to a slew of conditions that fall under the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), characterised by issues related to communication, speech, social skills, and behaviour.

But individuals with the condition have various unique strengths and abilities that can be honed to make them lead a meaningful life. And who better to help them in this process than their supermums?

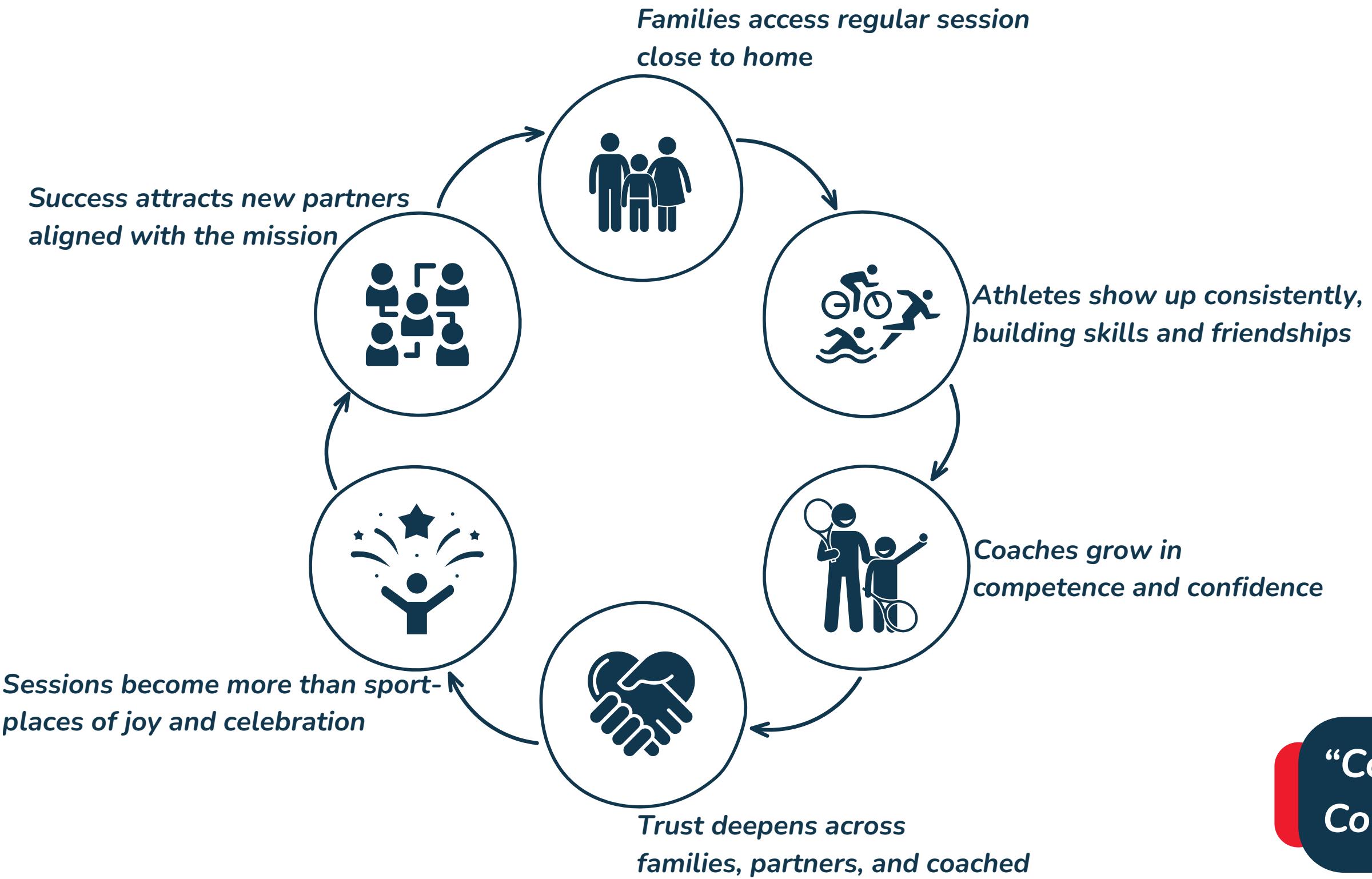
Friday meets three mothers who have risen above the odds to help their special children through their journey and channel their creativity to raise awareness on the condition.

While Dr Michal Ziolkowski put her writing skills to use with a storybook series, Khawla Barley founded Goals UAE, a sport coaching programme based on the buddy system, and Dedia Stevenson made a short film that went on to win international accolades.

What motivates these women is the hope that one day their children will reach their full potential and be recognised for the stars they truly are.



# The Loop of Belonging: A Living Ecosystem That Sustains Inclusion



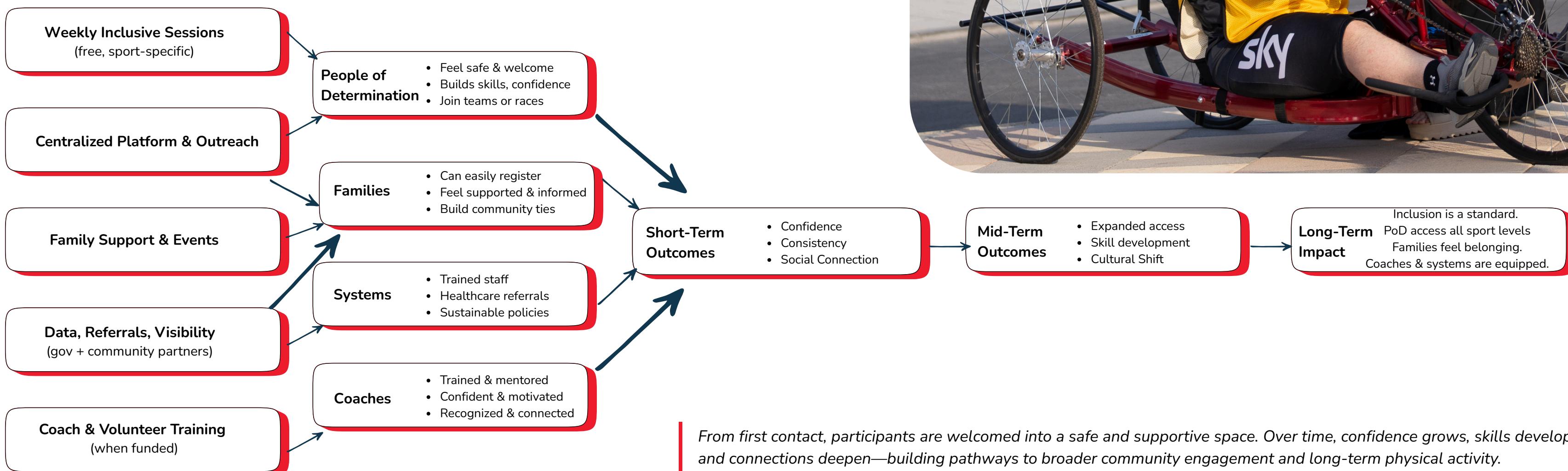
**“Consistency builds confidence.  
Confidence builds community.”**



# Theory of Change

## Embedding Inclusion into the Fabric of Community Sport

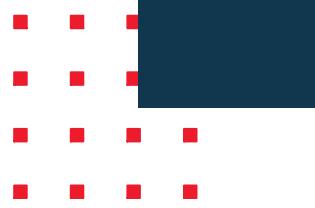
Goals UAE transforms how People of Determination (PoD) access sport by embedding inclusive training within mainstream private academies. Our model addresses systemic, social, and structural barriers, not through one-off events, but through sustained, capacity-building partnerships.





# Why Now, Why Goals UAE.

*A community-first model  
for a community-first year.*



Real progress happens when grassroots efforts and policy come together. That's when things become strong, and they last. Goals UAE started with one parent asking, "Where will my child belong?" and it's stayed grounded in that lived experience ever since.

Many of our partners have been with us for a decade. That's not by chance, it's because we built something based on trust, shared values, and a real understanding of community needs. And when programs grow from that kind of foundation, they don't just work, they last, and they spread.

We often look for what's big, shiny, or already well-funded. But if you really want to find what works, look for what has heart. Learn from it. Back it. And help it grow.





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YEAR OF COMMUNITY  
PEI UAE

## Voices from the Community



“It was a place where 'can't' transformed into 'can,' and where the power of the human spirit shines brightly.”

We, as a school, are forever grateful to Gulf Multi Sport & Goals UAE for giving us this great opportunity to be part of this extraordinary program.

Dani Bartossek, P.E. Teacher, Abu Dhabi Grammar School(Canada)



“Beyond the sports themselves, these sessions have provided him with a safe, inclusive, and uplifting space where he truly belongs. He looks forward to every session, excited to learn and develop his skills further, play, and connect with others.”

Shazia, Mother of Mustafa Hussain



“At first, Pieter was hesitant. He had experienced rejection before—being picked last, sitting on the bench, or simply not being invited at all. But from the moment he stepped onto that field, something was different. The coaches welcomed him with open arms, his fellow athletes cheered him on, and most importantly, no one expected him to be anyone other than himself.”

Karen Snyman, Mother of Pieter



“This support has not only helped our coaches refine and adapt their skills to better support our PoD athletes but has also given them greater confidence in delivering high-quality sessions that inspire and develop every rider. With Goals UAE by our side, we are better equipped to create a positive, safe, and professional environment for both our athletes and coaching team.”

Helen Beckley, Wolfi's Cycling Academy



“A partnership with Goals UAE offers Arabian Swim Academy an opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the community, align with local policies promoting inclusivity, and enhance its brand reputation by supporting and facilitating sports participation for People of Determination in Abu Dhabi.”

Debbie Scheiber, Arabian Swim Academy



“PASS and GOALS UAE have been synonymous when it comes to inclusive sports since 2014. In that time, we have been in a position to foster initiatives that have engaged and excited PoDs and educated the general community in equal measures.”

Seth Amoaf, PASS Abu Dhabi





## What if every child grew up expecting to belong?

At Goals UAE, we build with that future in mind. Not to make people fit in but to reshape what is offered, what is expected, and what is possible. Because real inclusion does not ask people to adjust to the system. It asks the system to rise to meet the people.

That means creating spaces where families feel welcome from the very beginning. It means designing programs that grow with the athletes, not just around them. And it means bringing in partners who are willing to learn, adapt, and stay over time.

That is the kind of inclusion worth investing in. It does not just work in theory. It works in practice. And it is already changing lives.

***“Inclusion grows best when it’s grounded, when families trust it, and it shows up consistently. That’s what makes this model real.”***



+971 50 111 6075



[khawla@goalsuae.ae](mailto:khawla@goalsuae.ae)

