

# The race is on

A PROFILE OF THE REGION'S MOST PROMISING NEW SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS

**F**our companies have now been shortlisted for The Venture 2017 Gulf regional final on January 18 at Marina Social, InterContinental Dubai Marina. The winner will compete in the global final in Los Angeles this July for a share of the \$1million prize fund, created to support some of the world's most promising social enterprises.

The Venture is backed by Chivas and enables social entrepreneurs from around the world to realise their potential and gain exposure for their business. At the Gulf final, each entrant will present their business and then undergo an intensive Q&A session with the expert judging panel. May the best contestant win!



**COMPANY: ILOVEMYPOCKET**  
**ENTRANT: PEDRO RODRIGUEZ CODINA**  
**STAGE: START UP**

Pedro Rodriguez Codina always wanted to have his own T-shirt brand, but appreciated that this was a saturated sector. Undeterred, he set about creating a brand that would make a statement and also have a positive impact. Founded in Dubai, ilovemyPocket T-shirts are 100 percent cotton, made under fair-trade conditions and have a distinctive pocket located on the left side. The launch piece is the traditional ghotra, an unmistakable symbol of Middle Eastern culture.

The brand also helps children in need. For every T-shirt sold, 10 percent of its retail value is donated to a charitable organisation. This is born of Codina's belief that every action in our lives can help change the world, and that every business today can and must give back. [ilovemyPocket.com](http://ilovemyPocket.com)

**COMPANY: HEALTH GATE**  
**ENTRANT: MAYA ALGHAITH**  
**STAGE: GROWTH**

When a close friend of Maya Alghaith lost the chance to bear children because of cervical cancer, she wanted to find out what went wrong. She discovered that the sanitary products that millions of women use in the region every month are not regulated. Many are made from materials that can be highly toxic to the body.



Alghaith made it her mission to find a solution and was fortunate to find the answer – safe, natural, non-toxic sanitary products that use the science of waterfalls. Health Gate has harnessed this power of nature and created HG Anion sanitary products that are 100 percent natural. They release negative ions that prevent or fight and eliminate bacteria, virus, and fungus.

Health Gate, based in Dubai, was born of a desire to enhance the lives of people, while contributing to greater health and environmental benefits. It is also the regional distributor for several manufacturers of high-quality health and personal-care products from around the world. [healthgate.me](http://healthgate.me)



**COMPANY: NOW MONEY**  
**ENTRANT: KATHARINE BUDD AND IAN DILLON**  
**STAGE: START UP**

Co-founders Katharine Budd and Ian Dillon came from a UK banking background to the GCC, where they discovered that 70 percent of the population don't meet the minimum salary level requirement to open a traditional bank account.

This group makes remittances overseas in the region of \$30bn annually in the UAE alone, yet they are restricted to using prepaid payroll cards and cash deposits at exchange

## THE JUDGES

**Gaurav Sabharwal**  
 Managing Director of Pernod Ricard Gulf  
**Yogesh Mehta**  
 Managing Director of Petrochem Middle East  
**Soushiant Zanganehpour**  
 Founder of Tribeca Impact Partners  
**Charles Blaschke**  
 Co-founder of Taka Solutions, winner of The Venture 2016 Gulf Final  
**Jeremy Lawrence**  
 Esquire's Editor-in-Chief

houses, which typically charge over eight percent for remittances.

Knowing there was a captive market with a reliable remittance behaviour pattern gave Budd and Dillon the idea for NOW Money, an app-based account and remittance marketplace geared to the 4.5 million people in the UAE's low-income market (and a further estimated 21 million in the wider Gulf).

The NOW Money smartphone app provides a safe and immediate remittance solution for people who are excluded from the benefits afforded to those with traditional bank accounts. By giving users visibility of balance and transactions and a marketplace of remittance options, users benefit from the same low rates and "anytime, anywhere" transaction options that wealthier customers are used to. And it does so while also keeping the cost under four percent of total transaction value, providing users with significant savings. [nowmoney.me](http://nowmoney.me)



**12 months in the life of The Venture winner, Charles Blaschke, Taka Solutions**

"Since winning last year we've expanded our reach and, with the help of The Venture, our methods and credibility of reach. This has enabled us to help more buildings, companies and individuals save energy and reduce their carbon impact, which means they are saving money while doing their part to help solve one of the world's biggest problems: climate change due to over-consumption of energy in our homes and buildings.

We continue to innovate and offer our paid-from-savings model, so customers can upgrade their buildings to smart buildings at no cost, and we've developed a mobile app to put



**COMPANY: CHARICYCLES**  
**ENTRANT: RANIA KANAAN**  
**STAGE: START UP**

Charicycles is a UAE-based social brand that up-cycles and customises forgotten vintage bicycle frames to promote a clean environment while encouraging a healthier lifestyle.

The journey started a few years ago when the founders, sisters Zaina and Rania Kanaan, were searching for the perfect bicycle in the UAE. Dissatisfied with the choice on offer, they decided to make one by repainting a second-hand frame in their favourite colour.

Their bicycle quickly became a hit on the streets, and it prompted them to identify a demand for a product that both reduces waste in landfills while making users healthier and happier. They realised that the feeling of freedom felt on a bicycle can, and should, be shared.

Charicycles was formed with the mission statement that for every five bicycles sold, one bicycle would be gifted to a child in a refugee camp located in the MENA region. The bicycles are distributed in accordance to an educational reward programme to incentivise the children to attend more classes and study harder. Charicycles is also working on a campaign with Facebook for women's empowerment in the MENA region. [charicycles.com](http://charicycles.com)

the power in the hands of individuals to help them save on bills.

Our team has doubled in size and revenue, we've expanded into other markets, and formalised key partnerships. These changes enable us to scale and make a bigger positive impact on Dubai, in line with the UN COP 21 Paris Agreement, and the UAE government vision of making this a smart, green and sustainable country." [takasolutions.com](http://takasolutions.com)

To find out more about how business can be a force for good, along with valuable advice and support to start your own social enterprise visit [chivas.com/the-venture](http://chivas.com/the-venture)