



## Member Interview



<b>Name</b>	<b>Karin Gabriel</b>
Nationality:	Austrian
Hometown:	Rohrbach (Upper Austria)
Education:	Business and Economics at the Johannes Kepler University in Linz
In Dubai since:	2012
Employer:	Dubai Future Foundation
Hobbies:	I love to participate in sports competition like Spartan race or government games. I really enjoy running. I miss skiing and cross-country skiing
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### **Q: Karin, tell us a little bit about yourself. What is your personal story?**

**Karin:** What I usually like to tell about myself is that I am somebody who likes to go her own ways. When I was 12, I joined one of the first female firefighter volunteer groups in Upper Austria. If you can imagine, we were nine girls at the age of 12- 16, who ended up in a very male dominated domain. The reception was partially positive, but also partially very negative; it was a really interesting experience. I went on to be the first ones from my family to graduate from university. When I finished my thesis, I wanted to realize my dream of working and living abroad. I wanted to move to Hongkong, Shanghai, Kuala Lumpur or Singapore. Those were my 4 target cities. I received very interesting job offers from Hongkong and Singapore, but I ended up in Bangalore, India and I can tell you the story, why I ended up in India, once we meet face to face. I was working for a French company in India that helped companies from primarily developed countries such as the US, Canada and Europe enter emerging markets such as GCC and India. After 6 months in Bangalore, my CEO asked me if I wanted to move to Dubai, which was a city that was never on my list, but I am very happy that I got the chance to move and now live in Dubai.

**Q: Are you still working in the same company or did you change jobs in between?**

**Karin:** I changed my job about three years ago. I now work for a Dubai government organization called the Dubai Future Foundation. It is a very new government organization, we are around 4 years old and the focus is to support the vision of His Highness Sheikh Mohamed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum to turn Dubai into a city of the future. We work a lot in the field of innovation, research, and technology. One of our key projects is the Museum of the Future, which I think everyone in Dubai and the UAE is excited about it opening hopefully soon.

**Q: What is your specific role in Dubai Future Foundation?**

**Karin:** My role in Dubai Future Foundation is Project Lead for programs. Basically, we have created an ecosystem that connects private sector organizations and government organizations with startups and scale-ups from all around the world. We started with Dubai Future Accelerators, a 9-week program that invites the leading startups and scale-ups to work with government entities on specific projects. Those projects could evolve around autonomous driving, artificial intelligence, blockchain, augmented reality or new EdTech and healthcare solutions. And in the last one and half years, we have put a lot of efforts into diversifying our portfolio, creating new program formats, but also starting to work with private sector organizations such as Procter & Gamble, Al Futtaim Group, HTC VIVE and Burj Khalifa.

**Q: That sounds very interesting. Do you also provide some services that could be of interest to other members of the Austrian Business Council?**

**Karin:** I would love to invite everybody at ABC to come to our office. We had planned a presentation for the ABC in our offices just before COVID-19 happened, so I hope we can make it happen afterwards. For anybody, who is interested in innovation and emerging technologies, we offer quite a few community events that are free of charge for anyone to attend. Some of them are happening now virtually, so I would be happy to share the calendar as well. Then hopefully, once the museum is open, we could organize a trip to the museum, which will be absolutely amazing.

**Q: We will absolutely be looking forward to that. Is there anything else you would like to add? Personally or professionally? Anything that comes to your mind?**

**Karin:** I think I would like to add two points. One that it is a very unique experience to be able to live in Dubai, which houses every nationality. I don't think there is a city that is more multi-cultural and tolerant and open than Dubai or the UAE in general. I have been very grateful for this experience and also for living in the Middle East, and in a Muslim country, which is not always portrayed in the right way in the Western media. Getting to experience the culture firsthand is an absolutely valuable experience for me. And the second point that I would like to mention is that I really appreciate what the ABC does and also the Austrian Embassy. Especially right now, given the corona situation, it is great to see how the community is very strong and that we keep constantly being updated on when the next flight is going out or what we should keep in mind. I know that there is a lot of effort that goes into it from both organizations and I really appreciate that.

**Q: Thank you so much, Karin, for the interview.**

**Karin:** You are welcome.