

YouTube series shows Dubai VC turning ideas into revenue generating start-ups

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ASA Ventures teams up with entrepreneurs to create money making businesses in just 7 days



By Lubna Hamdan

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ASA Ventures, a venture capital firm based in Dubai, UAE, will release a reality-based web series on Monday night which documents the transformation of a start-up idea into a revenue generating business in the span of just one week.

The first season of the 7 Days Challenge series, which will be released on the official ASA Ventures YouTube channel, will follow junior VC Samreen Shaikh as she attempts to transform fitness trainer Johnny Mijajlovic's idea of an in-home personal training platform into a money making business.

Shaikh collaborates with Mijajlovic's team on corporate strategy, technology, marketing, public relations, and sales.

The show aims to “put young leaders [like Shaikh] front and centre, as they see things with fresh eyes and are guaranteed to take a new approach to things”, according to ASA Ventures CEO Arif Saiyad.

He explained that millennials like Shaikh are known for finding faster yet well-rounded solutions.

As for Shaikh, she said the series provides an opportunity to "show Dubai and the rest of the world what we do on a regular basis in the office."

The UAE garnered \$625 million in startup funding in 2018, making it the top country in MENA for startup investments.

Filming for the second season of 7 Days Challenge has already begun, according to ASA Ventures.

The company, which was founded in Portugal in 2003 and is currently headquartered in Dubai, calls itself a ‘hybrid’ VC firm as it partners with founders “beyond capital”.

Funding in MENA has surged 66 percent to a total \$471 million in the first half of 2019 compared to just \$283m invested in the same period last year, according to a report by data platform Magnitt.

The H1 2019 MENA Venture Investment Report revealed a record 238 start-up investment deals from 130 institutions across MENA in the first 6 months of the year, with 30% of investors including China’s MSA Capital and Germany’s food conglomerate Henkel headquartered outside the region.
