

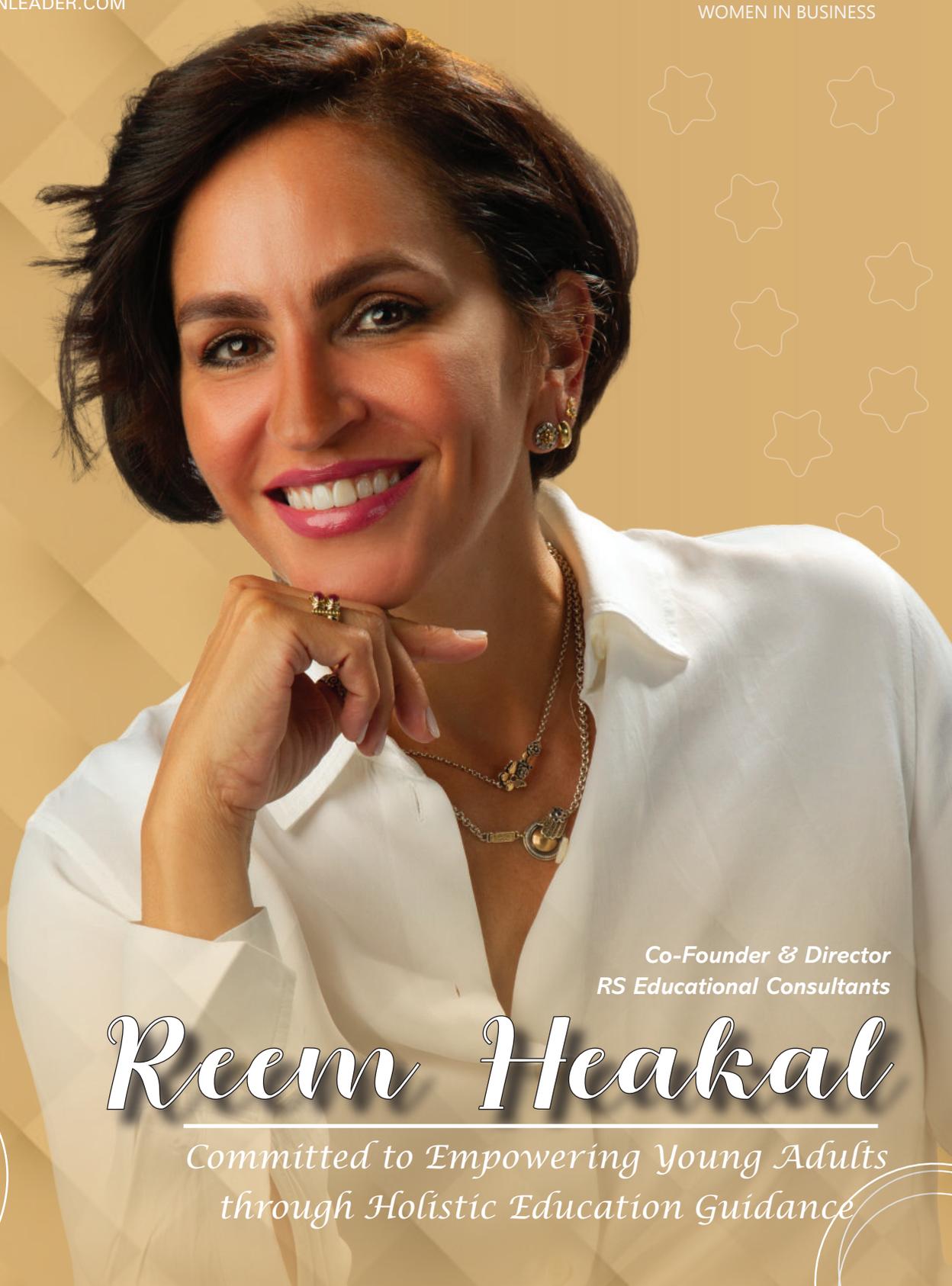
GLOBAL

WOMEN EDUCATION LEADERS FROM MIDDLE EAST

# WOMAN LEADER

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WOMEN IN BUSINESS



*Co-Founder & Director  
RS Educational Consultants*

## *Reem Heakal*

*Committed to Empowering Young Adults  
through Holistic Education Guidance*

\$50



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# Reem Heakal

*Committed to Empowering Young Adults through Holistic Education Guidance*

*By Ayushi Datta*

**I**n an age where education often leans heavily on high scores and rigid curricula, some educators are redefining what learning truly means. For them education is not just the quest for a degree but it is a launchpad where students must feel seen, heard, and guided, exploring their unique strengths. Experienced educator and counsellor, Reem Heakal believes in the same philosophy and through her firm RS Educational Consultants, renders educational counselling to students that focuses on their holistic needs.

Reem's approach is guided by a rich, cross-cultural perspective shaped by a life that has spanned continents and disciplines. Born in the United States to Egyptian immigrant parents, Reem moved back to Egypt at the age of 15. This move marked a pivotal chapter, one that awakened her global curiosity and set her on a path toward understanding the world through education and diplomacy. She witnessed an academic journey in political science and international relations with a formative experience in the Model United Nations program, cultivated not just intellectual depth but a passion for hands-on, holistic education.

Reem spent the majority of her adult life in Sudan, where she built a family and a distinguished career in international education. Now based in Egypt, she continues to lead with resilience and vision. Deeply inspired by her late father, an academic and business leader who seamlessly blended knowledge with enterprise, she channels that legacy into RS Educational Consultants, where she empowers students to discover their strengths and navigate their educational journeys.



*Cover Story*

**Co-Founder & Director  
RS Educational Consultants**

Reem Heakal is the Co-Founder and Director of RS Educational Consultants, a student-centered college counselling firm committed to personalized, research-based guidance for high school students. With a background in international relations and macroeconomic research, she has a unique blend of analytical thinking with a deep passion for education and youth development.

**Take us through your professional journey. You began working in banking & information management but soon moved to the field of education. What inspired this shift?**

Completing my master's in international relations, I got an opportunity to work as a macroeconomic researcher at an investment banking firm, which appealed to my interest in research, international policy, and understanding how the world works. I ended up spending about seven years there, developing macroeconomic research for the firm.

After moving to Sudan post marriage, I continued as a freelance researcher and wrote educational content for a platform focused on economics and finance. Eventually, my passion for education and hands-on learning led me to the Khartoum International Community School (KICS), an IB World School in Sudan. I urged them to establish a Model UN program for high school students. I began working part-time at the library while running the program, which turned out to be very successful.

Over time, I took on more roles, teaching, college counseling, and even pastoral care, which I enjoyed because it let me support the students' holistic growth. Eventually, the school entrusted me with leading the entire counseling department. Sadly, the school had to shut down due to the war that broke out in April 2023, but that chapter shaped my journey into education and student development.

**Over the years, you have gained various specializations in education and counselling. Tell us more about that. What larger impact do you wish to create through your work in education?**

I have a bachelor's and master's degree in international relations, but over the years, I have also gained certifications related to IB Diploma. I was an IB Business Management teacher and eventually became an IB Diploma Coordinator. Along the way, I also specialized in college counseling and comprehensive counseling. The comprehensive side resonated with me as it is about supporting students as a whole, including their emotional and social well-being. Gradually becoming an international school counselor, I worked with students navigating cultural and social challenges by fostering self-awareness, conflict resolution, appreciation for diversity, and advocacy, ensuring they understand their strengths, support their needs, and feel confident in making decisions.

I strongly believe that students are so much more than their grades. We often get stuck in this cycle

of focusing just on academics, but we forget that students are also young adults dealing with a lot beneath the surface. I hope to shift that focus to help students value their emotional intelligence, life skills, time management, and their uniqueness. Because just getting a high score in math or history is not what guarantees success in life. It's knowing who you are and how to navigate the world as a whole person.



*Build your skills, not just your knowledge, by learning to communicate well, think critically, and advocate for yourself, because that's what truly empowers you to succeed*

**Introduce us to RS Educational Consultants. What key roles and responsibilities do you shoulder as the company's Director?**

My business partner, Samia and I founded RS Educational Consultants based upon our shared passion for guiding high school students through the transition to university.

Our foundation is built on shared core values. We believe that every student is unique, and we don't believe in a one-size-fits-all approach. Everything we do is highly personalized. As directors, we are deeply involved, not just in running the business, but engaging directly with students and families, which includes doing in-depth research, building strategic plans, and educating both students and parents about the ever-evolving landscape of higher education, whether locally or globally.

Our company is committed to providing clear, accurate, and current information, updated by

continuous professional development, and providing a thoughtful, tailored experience for each and every student. We handle counseling, content creation, meetings, and admin, focusing on holistic student support and easing stress during life transitions.

**What are some challenging aspects of being a leader in education in the Middle East? How do you navigate through these roadblocks successfully?**

The biggest challenge we face is the sheer amount of misinformation about what a "good" education is. Rumors are floating around about the application process, entry requirements, and what universities supposedly expect from students, which creates unrealistic expectations from families.

People mostly assume that a highly ranked university is the best fit for their child, which is not always the case. Furthermore, families at times hesitate to be fully open about the real academic or personal hurdles their child might be facing.

With honest, empathetic conversations and well-researched, up-to-date information, Samia and I focus on cutting through the noise, guiding each family with facts, research, and a personalized approach, especially in the context of the Middle East. We truly understand how intense and emotional it can be as families naturally want what's best, but sometimes in that pressure, we lose sight of what the student wants or needs. Being a leader in this space means constantly challenging those misconceptions and advocating for what's best for each student, not just what looks good on paper.

**Looking back at your professional journey, what key milestones have you achieved so far? What is your 'success mantra'?**

Every step in my journey has been a key milestone, and each experience brought me closer to what I am today. Starting the Model UN program was a huge turning point as it gave me purpose and direction. Then being asked to teach IB Business became another milestone

because it helped me discover what I truly love doing. From there, I moved into college counseling, became a recognized counselor, and eventually led the whole school counseling department. Each of those roles helped shape my path. Additionally, starting my own company was another major milestone, which allowed me to support young adults.

I try to keep going, keep learning, and keep improving because if I can be better for myself, I can be better for my students. And when that happens, my students can be better for themselves, too.

**How do you foresee the Middle East's early educational landscape evolving in the near future? Which trends will create a significant impact going forward?**

I see a trend starting where higher education institutions in the region, especially in places like the Gulf and Saudi Arabia, are becoming much more competitive on a global scale. This could lead to more students choosing to stay in the region for their university education instead of going abroad. These institutions provide opportunities for high-quality research, especially in STEM fields.

The focus on essential skills like critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and conflict resolution is expected to shape the future of education. These skills are crucial for academic success and producing innovative research, as they enable effective application, sharing, and collaboration in a world often dictated by others. **GWI**



# GLOBAL WOMAN LEADER

WOMEN IN BUSINESS

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WOMAN LEADER *Top 10*  
WOMEN EDUCATION  
LEADERS FROM MIDDLE EAST 2025

GLOBAL  
WOMAN LEADER

*Proudly awards*



*Reem Heakal*

Co-Founder & Director  
RS Educational Consultants



*The recognition of Top 10 Women Education Leaders from Middle East-2025 takes into account, the deep industry expertise of the chosen women leaders, while also acknowledging their stellar professional achievements and their impact on Middle East's education landscape.*

*Rachita*

Rachita Sharma  
Managing Editor