

# ARTS & CULTURE

## The Citizens Foundation and Faisal Kapadia create new note in education



A classroom in a TCF school.



Faisal Kapadia on stage.



A student in a TCF school.

**DUBAI:** The Citizens Foundation (TCF) — UAE's upcoming event on November 2, Umeed 2025 at The Agenda, Dubai, is an evening dedicated to supporting education in Pakistan. Featuring Faisal Kapadia, Hassan Raheem and Shae Gill, the event will be an evening of music, hope, and purpose. TCF was founded in 1995, and thirty years later, it stays as one of Pakistan's leading non-profit organisations, dedicated to providing quality education to the less privileged. With more than 2,033 purpose-built schools units educating over 300,000 students, it has become a beacon of hope, transforming lives and communities. It now has chapters in seven countries, including the UAE.

The TCF Dubai event aligns with the UAE's official announcement of 2025 as the Year of Community — a national initiative aimed at strengthening social bonds and promoting meaningful engagement. Speaking about the initiative, Mushtaq Chhapra, Co-Founder of TCF, said: "In over thirty years of TCF's journey, I've seen children from some of the poorest communities of Pakistan grow up to become doctors, teachers, and leaders in their communities. All they needed was an opportunity. That's what Umeed (hope) really means to me. Umeed 2025 is an opportunity to take that hope forward, to the millions of children still waiting for their chance to build a better life."

As Umeed's title sponsor, Careem's CEO and co-founder, Mudassir Sheikh, said that "Pakistan's economic potential is enormous and education is the key to unlocking this potential and driving transformative change across the country. Pakistan has given Careem for everyone, and we feel a deep responsibility to give back to them. Mission-driven organisa-



tions like The Citizens Foundation are making education accessible to the communities that need it most. We are proud to stand alongside them in shaping a brighter future for Pakistan."

Faisal Kapadia, renowned singer-songwriter, musician, composer, guitarist and now TCF's Brand Ambassador, added: "Music has the power to bring people together, and when it supports a cause as meaningful as education, it becomes even more powerful. I am thrilled and honoured to be part of this evening of hope, alongside such talented artists." All proceeds from Umeed 2025 will go towards supporting TCF's education programmes in Pakistan. Faisal Kapadia is best known as the lead vocalist and primary lyricist of rock music band, Strings. After its dissolution, he

began singing as solo artist. He has cited Kishore Kumar and R.D. Burman as influences in addition to U2, Bryan Adams, Sting and Bon Jovi and he has also been UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador for Pakistan. He speaks to Gulf Today

**How different is singing solo and in a group?**

It is very different, because a group can be a band of family, friends, who make music together, who have similar likeness, and they have a consistency in sound. In solo, you're on your own. In a group, you all make decisions together. If something goes wrong, you all take responsibility, and if something goes right, you

all share the credit. In solo, you are responsible for all your decisions, whether wrong or right. But unlike a band, where the music and sound are consistent, solo work gives you more room to experiment, grow, try different things, and collaborate with others. And you know, when you work with various other artists, you learn. I am enjoying the process of learning right now, working with so many different musicians, producers, and songwriters.

**How have legendary Indian singer Kishore Kumar, Indian music composer R. D. Burman, U2, Bon Jovi and Bryan Adams influenced your music?**

I grew up listening to legendary musical talents like Kishore Kumar, appreciating his songs, his voice, his command of singing, his

range, and his expressions. I love R.D. Burman as a composer, and the combination of R.D. Burman and Kishore Kumar was just epic. U2, Bon Jovi, and Brian Adams have been very consistent for the past 30-40 years. Times are changing, the world has changed in the past 40-50 years, but these musicians are still there, still making music.

**Why do you like associating with causes like those of UNICEF and TCF?**

I want to give back to society now, at my age and at this time. Music has given me a lot. The reach that music has given me is something I want to use for good causes. TCF is doing phenomenal work in education, and I want to support them as much as I can.

**How will you be a Brand Ambassador for TCF?**

As a Brand Ambassador for TCF, I'm trying to create awareness for the cause of education. If they require me for fundraising or awareness efforts, I'm happy to be there. I'm currently on a European leg tour with them in Dublin, heading to Munich, Luxembourg, and Amsterdam for their fundraising event, and then we're having the Umeed 2025 concert in Dubai.

**Any future albums in the making?**

My last album, my first solo album in 35 years, was released in 2023. It was called Zindagi Jahan Le Jaye (Wherever Life Takes Us), and I had a great time making it. This year, I released a couple of solo singles. One is Sadiyan (Centuries), which was released last week. Before that, I did an OST (Original Sound Track) for a drama series. I don't know if I'm going to release an album in 2026, but I am working on a few singles to be out in 2026.

Muhammad Yusuf, Features Writer