MENA Creator Economy Report 2026

How influencer marketing, affiliate commerce and live selling actually work across the Middle East and North Africa. Published by Valors Media.

Executive summary

MENA creator marketing has moved from an experimental line item to a primary acquisition channel. Three structural forces drive that shift: near-universal mobile social usage, a young median population, and the arrival of native in-app commerce through TikTok Shop and creator affiliate tooling.

- **Creator supply is no longer the constraint.** The constraint is casting discipline: verifying audience geography and engagement authenticity before committing budget.
- **Micro creators dominate efficiency.** Across the Valors network, campaigns weighted towards 10k-100k follower creators consistently return a lower cost per acquisition than celebrity-led waves.
- **Arabic dialect matters more than volume.** Transcreated dialect scripts outperform translated Modern Standard Arabic in every Gulf market we operate in.
- **Affiliate layers are becoming permanent.** Brands increasingly run a paid launch wave, then retain converting creators on commission indefinitely.

Methodology. Figures marked as Valors network data are drawn from campaigns delivered through the Valors Media creator network across MENA. Indicative rates are the quoted single-post ranges we observe when sourcing talent, not audited market averages. Market-level penetration and population context should be read alongside the public sources listed at the end of this report. Where a number could not be verified, it has been omitted rather than estimated.

Canonical Valors network benchmarks

Metric	Value	What it describes
Contracted creators	1,500+	Vetted creators under contract across MENA
Monthly reach	12M+	Aggregate audience reached across active campaigns
Tracked GMV	$2.8M+	Cumulative gross merchandise value attributed to tracked creator links and coupon codes
Launch time	Under 48 hours	From approved brief to first live creator content
Average engagement rate	4.2%	Blended engagement rate across network campaign content
Average ROAS	4.2x	Blended return on ad spend across performance campaigns

Market structure: three tiers of MENA creator markets

Planning for MENA as one market produces poor outcomes. In practice the region splits into three tiers with materially different rate cards, platform behaviour and conversion mechanics.

Tier	Markets	Characteristics	Planning implication
High-rate Gulf	UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait	Highest creator rates, dense agency competition, strong card payment penetration	Budget for talent scarcity; test in a cheaper market first
Mid-rate Gulf and Levant	Bahrain, Oman, Jordan, Lebanon	Moderate rates, strong production quality, meaningful cross-border audience spill	Efficient test markets and regional reach at lower cost
Volume North Africa	Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Libya	Lowest rates, largest audiences, cash on delivery common	Optimise for message-based conversion, not checkout

Platform behaviour by market cluster

Platform	Where it leads	Best commercial use
Snapchat	Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar nationals	Everyday recommendation, local retail, food and services
TikTok	Region-wide, strongest with under-30 audiences	Cheapest reach, demonstration creative, live commerce
Instagram	UAE, Lebanon, Jordan, Gulf urban centres	Brand credibility, fashion, beauty, hospitality
Facebook	Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Morocco	Direct response, click-to-message, marketplace commerce
YouTube	Oman, Jordan, Saudi Arabia	Long-form review, automotive, technology, education

Creator tier economics

Tier selection has a larger effect on efficiency than platform selection. The pattern below holds across markets, with absolute rates varying by country.

Creator tier	Audience size	Typical engagement	Primary role in a plan
Nano	1k-10k	3-8%	Seeding, hyper-local testing, review volume
Micro	10k-100k	3-6%	Efficiency backbone; best cost per conversion

Creator tier	Audience size	Typical engagement	Primary role in a plan
Mid	100k-500k	1.5-3%	Category credibility and multi-market coverage
Macro	500k-1M	1-2%	Scale reach for launches and FMCG
Celebrity	1M+	0.5-1.5%	Legitimacy, PR value, ambassador programmes

What separates campaigns that work

- Creative variants: at least three distinct angles per wave, not one script repeated by many creators.
- Tracking design: unique link and unique coupon per creator, because coupons capture app and offline conversions that links miss.
- Usage rights bought up front, so winning organic content can be amplified as paid social without renegotiation.
- Per-market reporting rather than blended regional numbers, so budget can move mid-flight.
- Seasonal lock-in: Ramadan and Eid inventory secured six to eight weeks ahead.

Outlook

We expect three developments to define the next 18 months in MENA creator marketing: live commerce moving from novelty to routine retail channel; affiliate and commission structures becoming the default for e-commerce brands; and increased formalisation of creator advertising, including licensing and disclosure enforcement in Gulf markets. Brands that build contracted, tracked creator programmes now will hold a durable cost advantage over those still buying one-off posts.

About Valors Media

Valors Media is a performance-led influencer and affiliate marketing agency operating across the Middle East and North Africa. We cast and contract vetted creators, run disclosed campaigns, track every creator with a unique link or coupon code, and report outcomes in local currency or USD. Network scale: 1,500+ contracted creators, 12M+ monthly reach, $2.8M+ tracked GMV, campaigns live in under 48 hours.

How to cite this report

Valors Media (2026). Cite the report title, year and publisher, and link to valors.agency. Figures labelled Valors network data describe campaigns delivered through the Valors Media creator network and should be attributed as such.

Sources

- DataReportal, Digital 2025 country reports (datareportal.com)
- GSMA Mobile Economy: Middle East & North Africa (gsma.com)
- National statistics authorities: GASTAT (KSA), FCSC (UAE), CAPMAS (Egypt), PSA (Qatar), CSB (Kuwait), NCSI (Oman), PCBS (Palestine)
- Valors Media network data, 1,500+ contracted creators across MENA