

ENHANCING QATAR'S HUMAN CAPACITY TO SHAPE THE NATION OF THE FUTURE

Community development has always been embedded in every initiative of the organization

THE FABRIC of a nation is woven by the fundamental qualities, principles, and ethos of its community. As Qatar strives to realize its dynamic, progressive vision for sustained prosperity through the enhancement of knowledge, it is imperative for its society to reflect and support the pillars of this vision.

Strong communities, imbued with aspiration, creativity, compassion, and a sense of citizenship, coalesce to build a strong nation – one that cherishes its past, inspires purposeful and impactful contribution in its present, and is capable of defining its future.

Within communities, the potency of human potential is deployed for the benefit of others, recognizing that everyone has the opportunity and responsibility to play their part in paving the way to well-being and prosperity.

This is why, throughout the 20 years since its establishment, the principle of community development has been embedded in every initiative of Qatar Foundation (QF), demonstrating its abiding belief that to invest in people is to invest in progress.

The efforts and accomplishments of QF in education and research bolster Qatar's human capacity, and address the country's national priorities. However, for QF, the people of Qatar are themselves a national priority that must be supported, nurtured, empowered, and actuated to realize that everyone can be an active participant in shaping the future of their nation.

Through a spectrum of initiatives sweeping from art, cultural heritage, and literary learning, to health, policy research, family development, and sustainability, QF has fostered a society characterized by vibrancy, advancement, awareness, open-mindedness, and empathy; that promotes and displays active citizenship; that treasures its heritage; and that supports and reinforces a knowledge-based economy.

In this society, the reflection of a nation's vision can be seen. And such has been the expansion in QF's scope, and the strength of its commitment to bringing benefit beyond as well as within Qatar, that its dedication to community development has extended to the global landscape.

For QF, community development is intertwined with spreading knowledge, nourishing imagination, and fostering creativity; tenets that are at the heart of the mission of Qatar National Library (QNL), a member of QF.

Reflecting the essentiality of an information-enriched society to a nation's development, QNL serves the specialized requirements of researchers and students through its University and Research Library, and the needs of the general public through its Metropolitan Public Library, as it delivers library services, fosters engagement, and enhances information literacy and lifelong learning opportunities.

As a key member of the British Library-

Qatar Foundation Partnership, through which the Qatar Digital Library – providing public access to more than 500,000 pages of priceless historic archive and manuscript material – was launched in 2014, and through its existing outreach focus – and its future range of educational programs and services for children and adults, including second language learning programs, book clubs, workshops, early literacy initiatives, and information literacy activities – QNL is inspiring learning, inquiry, and discovery across Qatar's community.

“The prominent community role of QNL reflects the importance we place on raising

it instills the personal development value of debate, dialogue, and discussion; integral factors in critical and logical thought, openness, communication, confidence, and broadening worldviews.

Though partnerships with ministries and organizations in Qatar, QatarDebate provides public debate programs that act as a source of empowerment for young people, and raise their awareness of local and global issues.

Its work is allowing youth to excel in a multilingual, multicultural, and global society, and to be leaders of thought. “We believe that debating is one of the tools that shapes

to build a social outreach network through which knowledge and research on the family can be translated to the community in a meaningful way, to bring positive change.

“Through projects that are intertwined, and a commitment to working closely with stakeholders at all levels, DIFI has reached the point where it now has a national, regional, and international role and focus,” explained Noor Al Malki Al Jehani, Executive Director, DIFI.

“This demonstrates that firm steps have been taken toward the fulfillment of DIFI's mission, and to ensuring that the family unit is the priority it needs to be, and has the status it deserves to have.”

The community development pillar of QF is founded on envisaging a social framework where, through having the opportunity to realize their full potential, every member of that community can contribute to ensuring it advances and thrives. For Reach Out To Asia (ROTA), a member of QF, this vision is pursued on both a national and international scale.

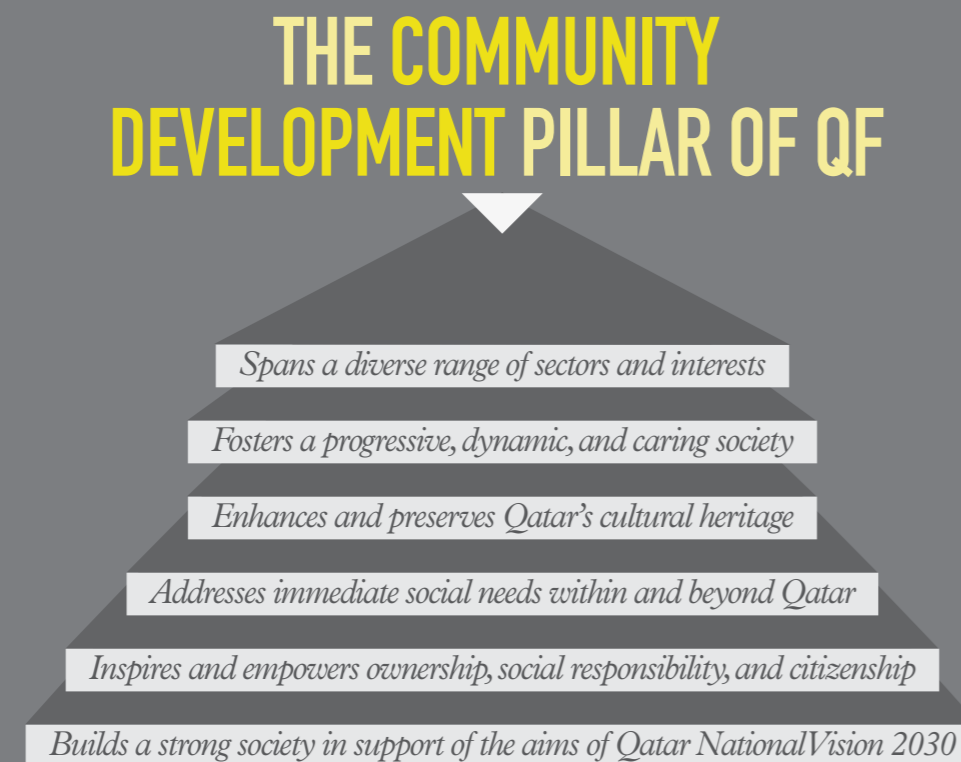
While striving to ensure vulnerable young people in communities affected by crisis in Asia – and now beyond – have access to the quality education that will allow them to shape their own futures, and the future of their society, ROTA activates the youth of Qatar in benefiting society within their country, and abroad.

With programs currently building both infrastructure and human capacity in 10 countries, as well as Qatar, ROTA is enabling communities to take ownership of their destiny, to define and command their own path. And it is empowering young people in Qatar to be global citizens and ambassadors, energized by a devotion to service, and enhanced by the skills they develop and utilize to benefit humanity.

“Education is a fundamental requirement for any community to progress, and we believe that, once a seed is planted, the positive effects will be felt for a very long time,” said Essa Al Mannai, Executive Director, ROTA.

“We have developed, and are developing, very strong programs that engage communities, and that have proved to be successful and sustainable. Education defines all of us: our personalities, our humanity, our respect for ourselves and those around us. It is not just about the things you learn; it is about how you apply them, to grow and progress. Our work has shown the results that can be achieved.”

Everything QF has achieved over the past 20 years, through its community development pillar, has shaped a society in Qatar that is robust, perceptive, altruistic, insightful, knowledgeable, and forward-looking. As QF builds on these achievements, the platform for a sustainable and prosperous Qatar will increase in strength.



awareness about how libraries can serve the population,” explained Dr Claudia Lux, Project Director, QNL.

“Our team visit schools, universities, and other organizations, and participate in various book fairs in Qatar, and internationally, to educate people on the benefit of engaging with our resources.”

This commitment to serving communities will intensify through QNL's extension of the facilities and services it provides to Qatar's people, creating opportunities to explore and to learn. “Building knowledge not only empowers society, but also allows its members to become critical thinkers and leaders of tomorrow,” stated Dr Lux, adding: “QNL plays a key role in building such a society.”

QatarDebate, a member of QF, also performs this role as it shapes global citizens and builds Qatar's intellectual capacity through diverse, high quality, and rigorous debate learning programs in Arabic and English.

As Qatar's national debating organization,

human beings, and helps them to build self-confidence,” said Dr Hayat Maarafi, Executive Director, QatarDebate.

In building a strong, cohesive, and sustainable society, the centrality of the family unit must be recognized. As a unique entity with the goal of being a global center for knowledge on issues facing the Arab family, the Doha International Family Institute (DIFI), a member of QF, occupies a pivotal position in the realm of community development.

Focused on research, family policy, and outreach – through a cyclical approach where each of these areas informs and shapes the others – DIFI is maximizing knowledge and impact to ensure the importance of the family to the well-being of individuals, and society, is recognized and prioritized.

In addition to its in-house research program, it promotes additional policy-oriented research on the family unit in the region; collaborates with national and international organizations with which its aims are aligned; and continues

Investing in human capital to create value and prosperity for Qatar

As a unique pathway for the pursuit and acceleration of innovation, QRLP is shaping Qatar's future research leaders

IN QATAR'S transformation to a knowledge-based economy – a transformation that, in order to be sustainable, requires a workforce that is skilled in research and development, and dedicated to the conception and pursuit of innovation – Qatar Research Leadership Program (QRLP) occupies a unique position.

Pioneered by Qatar Foundation (QF) in 2008 to bridge a gap in Qatar's research and development capacity, it remains the country's sole program to encompass, and contribute to, the entirety of Qatar's innovation value chain: a chain along which basic scientific research can be progressed to applied and translational research, and subsequently to products, processes, and outcomes that will create benefit for Qatar.

As a lynchpin of QF's support for the objectives of Qatar National Vision 2030, QRLP's uniqueness is reflected through its status as the only initiative in Qatar that enables students to pursue science and research-oriented degrees, from undergraduate to graduate level, across a wide range of scientific disciplines and higher education institutes; and that provides formal training in research management.

Currently supporting 164 students from institutions across Qatar, including Hamad bin Khalifa University (HBKU) – a member of QF – and QF partner universities, it supports students in entering, progressing through, and elevating their sights beyond, the cycle of education.

PIPELINE

Having expanded to the point where it supports undergraduate, Master's, doctoral and post-doctoral studies, QRLP provides preparation for young people seeking admission to university, and support for students in their forthcoming studies, such as by facilitating internships in the environment of research and development.

Offering constant mentorship, the program also places students in research jobs once they graduate, as Qatar's main pipeline for producing



scientists and managers with the professional and leadership skills to support Qatar's research and development goals.

In this way, QRLP illustrates QF's commitment to a comprehensive cycle of education and research, and to investing in the potential of Qatar's most precious resource – its people.

Past experiences of, and future opportunities for, QRLP were recently discussed at a workshop hosted by senior officials from Qatar Foundation Research and Development (QF R&D), where the program's alumni, together with directors and managers of research offices and centers within QF, shared their insights. Reflecting on how they benefited from the program, 10 young people who participated in the event shared their ideas for taking it forward.

According to graduate scholar Abdulrahman Al Qahtani, QRLP is “an investment, not merely an expense”; while fellow alumnus Talal Al Hothal, described it as a “renewable source of human capital” that trains its participants to be future leaders

in research and development. At the same time, the alumni presented their ideas to strengthen the initiative.

They emphasized their belief that widespread and positive outreach to schools, teachers, parents, and students will attract the highest caliber of young talent for research training at university level and beyond; and that formal internships and career guidance within QRLP would enhance the learning experience for its participants. Suggestions also included an online forum to provide current QRLP trainees and alumni with a platform to network, offer and receive mentorship and advice, find solutions, and share success stories.

OPPORTUNITIES

In a broader sense, the graduates see QRLP's future role as being to serve Qatar's wider research and development needs, stretching beyond QF; and that it must support social sciences, arts, and humanities, one of the four key pillars of the Qatar National Research Strategy. As one of the program's first graduates, Haya Al Ghanim, Director of Innovation, Qatar Science & Technology Park, an entity of QF R&D, explained: “Trainees can, and should, be given more opportunities for leadership – to change something or help to improve something.”

Participants in the workshop noted the many unique aspects of QRLP, including the high quality of its

trainees and the management team that guides students into, and through, their degrees; the support and the role models it provides; and the way in which it inspires others not simply to pursue a research career, but to excel in it.

Describing QRLP as “one of the best programs I have seen in the world”, and “a lifeline for research capacity development”, Dr Hilal Lashuel, Executive Director, Qatar Biomedical Research Institute, a research institute under HBKU, was among the senior officials who, at the workshop, shared their experiences of working with the program's trainees and graduates.

Encouraging the QRLP alumni to promote the initiative, as its ambassadors, in order for more young Qataris to pursue research and development careers, he told them: “We are truly proud of you and your accomplishments.”

“You are all leaders. We see you as great role models, and a source of pride and inspiration for the younger generation.”

Observing that QRLP is the only Qatar-based program that is “open to scientists at an early age” and that provides “early exposure to the research environment”, Noor Al Merekhi, Director of Programs, Qatar National Research Fund, a research funding entity under QF R&D, said its alumni should consider how they can publicize its availability.

PURPOSE

Meanwhile, Dr Abdellatif Saoudi, Managing Director, Qatar Computing Research Institute, a research institute under HBKU, described QRLP trainees as “members of a community building their careers toward a bigger purpose picture”.

“QRLP trainees and alumni are the main actors toward Qatar National Vision 2030,” he said. “They have international reach, and can become this country's future researchers and leaders.”

With QRLP having established a solid track record and reached a level of maturity from which it can be propelled to a new level, participants in the workshop concluded that its unique attributes must be preserved, but continuous enhancement sought, to ensure the program attracts the best students and guides them through their studies across the scientific disciplines that are at the core of a knowledge-based economy.

“The impact of QRLP goes beyond QF,” said Dr Marwan Khraisheh, Senior Research Director, Qatar Environment & Energy Research Institute, a research institute under HBKU. “Its graduates, including those who find careers beyond QF, will contribute to helping to achieve Qatar National Vision 2030.”

“This is a very important program. We need to make sure it remains successful.”