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Issue 4

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## Qatar's Trailblazers

June 2018

Business innovators

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Cultural pioneers

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Sporting champions

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The new philanthropists

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The Government  
Communications Office  
of the State of Qatar

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# Foreword



| His Excellency Sheikh Saif bin Ahmed  
Al Thani

Qatar has a rich and illustrious history. Thanks to our strategic position on the Arabian Gulf, we have always been an outward-looking nation. From our early trading days in pearls, we have gone on to build a thriving society and a magnificent showcase modern city in Doha.

Our enterprising spirit does not stop there, however. This edition of *Q Magazine* shines a light on our new breed of innovators. They are making their mark on the world and bringing new focus to Qatar.

This latest generation of leaders are using our flourishing economy and open, progressive society as a springboard for success. They are pioneers.

What is fantastic to see is that so many of these pioneers are women. In Qatar, we are proud that women are playing such an important role in shaping the future of our country.

We are also proud that we use our country's assets for the greater good of human development. It is our people who make us great. Qataris and expats alike see the opportunity this nation offers as we bring to life the Qatar National Vision 2030, with its ambitious programme of economic and social development.

*Q Magazine*, now in its 4<sup>th</sup> edition, seeks to educate a global audience about the State of Qatar and highlight the country's achievements and initiatives in various fields, on a local and international level.

We are rightly proud of these pioneers and the organisations that support them to do their important work.

In Qatar, we know where we have come from – and we know where we are going.

**Saif bin Ahmed Al Thani**

Director of the Government Communications Office

# 1

## *Business innovators*

Qatar has rapidly accelerated its plans towards economic diversification and greater self-sufficiency in recent years, in line with its National Vision 2030. Our economy today is strong and robust.

We have invested significantly to support and encourage young entrepreneurs and small businesses. They now represent an important – and growing – part of our economy.

From the CEO of the Qatar Financial Centre to highly acclaimed jewellery designers, this chapter demonstrates that in Qatar there is no one definition of success.

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Fatma Al Khater: Torba Farmers' Market

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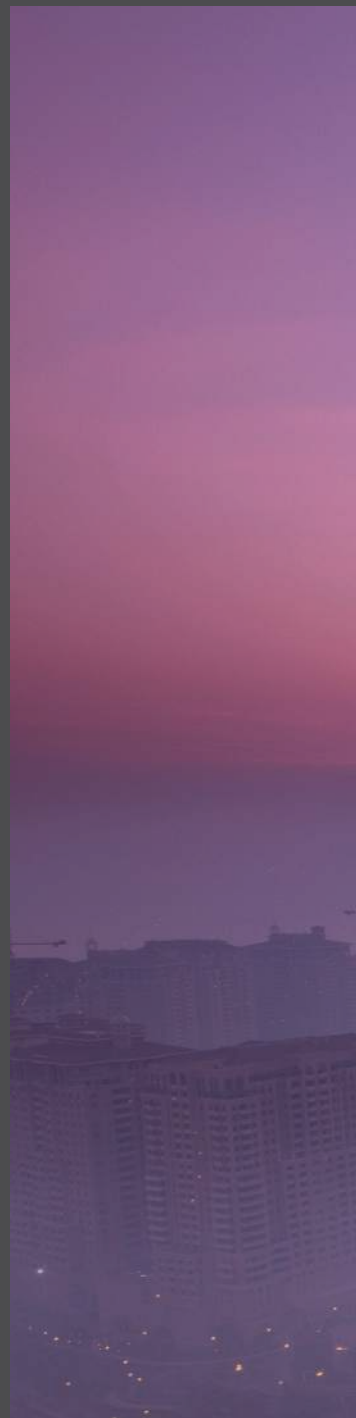
Ghada Al Buainin: Jewellery designer

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*The incredible support we get from the government in terms of education, career development opportunities I got through Qatar Foundation, as well as the incubation of Qatar Business Incubation Center, all paved the path to get Oola to where it is today.* ”

Haya Al Ghanim, CEO and co-founder of Oola Sports



### Entrepreneurship in Qatar

According to the 2017 Global Entrepreneur Index, Qatar ranks:

**22<sup>nd</sup>**

globally

**2<sup>nd</sup>**

in the  
MENA region

**1<sup>st</sup>**

in the  
GCC

Many organisations in Qatar support entrepreneurship

- Qatar Business Incubation Center
- The Digital Incubation Center, Ministry of Transport and Communications
- Qatar Science & Technology Park Business Incubator
- Qatar University Business Centre
- Young Qatari Designers initiative





**Fatma Al Khater**

## *How Torba Farmers' Market is taking Doha by storm*

Independent traders showcase an abundant array of local artisanal  
food and fresh produce



**T**here are luscious boxes of organic vegetables, freshly pressed juice, home-baked pastries, and raw milk produced on a farm in Qatar. As far as the eye can see, delicious produce is piled high.

Welcome to Torba Farmers' Market, the latest arrival on the Doha social scene.

A riot of colour, Torba is a community-inspired farmers' market hosted by Qatar Foundation at Education City. It has rapidly become the place to be seen in Doha.

It has humble roots, however, according to founder Fatma Al Khater. "People in Doha had lost their connection to food," she says. "I wanted to bring that connection back. We had a farmers' market, but it was a working wholesale market for trade. Now everyone is involved."

Inspired by Coconut Grove Organic Market in Miami and Borough Market in London, Fatma wanted to showcase nourishing Qatari food, with a low impact on the planet.

Now, abundant Swiss chard, spring onions, greens, beetroot, numerous varieties of colourful tomatoes, and four different kinds of kale can be found alongside artisan produce, including soaps and beauty creams. Local wild

herb remedies are also on offer, as are nut butters, jams and honey.

A Danish baker comes with pastries she has baked through the nights and trays of fresh sourdough bread.

Green juice of the day, made from sparklingly fresh spinach, pak choi, kale or moringa picked at 6am, is ready by 9am for the hordes of mothers with young children, students, and residents who visit the open-air market.

At the 'farm table', local chefs cook seasonal dishes with the Torba food, while the aroma of freshly-ground artisan coffee lingers over the stalls.

Regulars include Mama Baba Ganoush, Superheroes Eat Plants, and Greenola. There are seeds and seedlings on offer for those ambitious enough to grow their own food at home.

The name 'Torba' is derived from Arabic. It means 'the pure soil that feeds, nourishes and nurtures'. Health is a priority – the juices and vegan bakes on offer would not be out of place in California.

For a country known for skyscrapers, big cars and sand dunes, Torba Farmers' Market has become the



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## **Qatar's path to self-sufficiency**

In July 2017, His Excellency Mr Mohammed Abdullah Al Rumaihi, Minister of Environment and Municipality, said he expects Qatar to be 100% self-sufficient in vegetable production by 2020.

Since then, Qatar has established four agriculture projects, which will enable Qatar to produce 80 thousand tons of fresh vegetables and fruits annually.

More than 500 greenhouses with a total area of 280,000 square meters have been added to the existing capacity of local farms between July and November 2017.

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hip alternative weekend spot for residents. It also gives visitors a chance to sample handmade and local food and experience a slower pace of life.

Fatma is particularly proud of the stall selling Kanar Crumble, made by local producers from the fruit of Qatar's national tree. Rather like small apples, they contain more vitamin C than any citrus fruit.

She says: "We have the limitations, obviously, of the desert, but we have forty kinds of home-grown produce, and more is appearing all the time."

The food is grown on organic Qatari farms, certified to maintain the highest standards.

"We are able to sell raw sheep, goat and cow milk, alongside camel milk. We have free-range chickens fed from pastures in the farm so that they produce what we call 'golden eggs', which are extra-nutritious," Fatma says.

"Our lettuce is grown in the open, and we have rainbow colour carrots, delicate purple aubergines, and exotic dinosaur kale – all homegrown. I am very proud to showcase this, some of which comes from my own family farm passed on to us by my grandfather."

It is a growing movement – people will visit the organic market to tell Fatma "we have a farm", and say that they want to contribute too. So, the market is a true community initiative, growing organically each month.

A formidable force of nature herself, Fatma began planning the market two years ago. It opened at the end of 2017. "Health and safety inspectors wanted the food to be packaged, and I had to explain that people wanted to buy it loose in paper bags. We have a zero-plastic philosophy, but that required a change in mindset."

Reusable hessian bags are the order of the day, together with recyclable containers.

The market is also working to become zero waste, with any excess food used as compost.

It is satisfying work. Fatma says: "The public in Qatar is really passionate about this. Being a sustainable, healthy nation is so important, and buying and cooking food straight from the ground is incredibly rewarding. The market has been greeted with such enthusiasm, it has been a joy to see."

Where ? 


*Ceremonial Court, Qatar Foundation*

When ? 

*Runs from November to April*

What ? 

*Locally grown vegetables, vegan mushroom burgers, fresh juices, coffees*

Why ? 

*If you support zero waste, locally grown products, and supporting local business – Torba is the place for you*



**Yousuf Mohamed Al Jaida**

# *The Qatar Financial Centre: rising to the challenge*

Business support leader hails a record year for growth in number of new firms



| *The Pearl, Qatar*

## The Qatar Financial Centre in numbers

- More than **500** firms registered across a variety of sectors
- **24** business licenses approved in the first quarter of 2018
- More than **3,000** people within the QFC community
- **USD 20 billion** combined total assets



**Y**ousuf Mohamed Al Jaida is the CEO of the Qatar Financial Centre Authority (QFC). After talking to Al Jaida, it quickly comes clear that the QFC has a monumental task on its hands: “Our objective at the QFC is to diversify the economy and position Doha as the region’s leading financial and commercial capital,” he says.

One way that the QFC contributes to the expansion of a strong private sector is by providing a comprehensive framework for firms to do business in Qatar and the region. This encourages local and international investment, helping to create jobs and opportunities.

The 2022 FIFA World Cup, to be held in Qatar, has accelerated this aspect of the QFC’s work. The QFC will provide the necessary legal, regulatory, and financial support to local and international firms working on projects related to the tournament. This enabling framework is an essential part of

Qatar’s journey towards economic maturity, diversity and sustainability.

However, Al Jaida’s job does not end there. The QFC is here to support Qatar’s economy for the long term. As he points out: “Qatar’s plans for economic diversification and human capital growth pursuits are well enshrined in the Qatar 2030 Vision.”

Leading such an important organisation can be a daunting challenge at times. When an illegal blockade was imposed on Qatar in the middle of 2017, there was more pressure than ever on the QFC to ensure Doha remains a good place to do business.

Al Jaida did not shy away from this task. Thanks to a series of economic reforms implemented by the State of Qatar in response to the blockade and the hard work of his team, 2017 was the Qatar Financial Centre’s most successful year on record.

He says: “2017 was the fastest growth

period in the QFC’s 13-year history. We recorded a 66% increase in new firms being licenced on the QFC platform in 2017 compared to the year before.”

This is something that Al Jaida is especially proud of. He says: “As I reflect on the year that has passed, I look back with immense pride at everything our team has accomplished. Our success this year is best shown by our record growth.

“The way our nation and our entity stood up to the challenges of the blockade has been truly inspiring and will always be a proud moment in my career.”

For Al Jaida, the future for Qatar and its economy is bright. He concludes: “I see Doha being a leading business and financial capital by 2022.”



## **Sara Al Hammadi**

# *A precious dream comes true for Sara*

Doha designer's hard work pays off as her jewellery creations attract  
women of all ages



**A**s the bride floated into the ballroom, Sara Al Hammadi was transfixed by the glittering gems that adorned her. The glamorous fairy-tale weddings of Qatar eventually inspired this young designer to set up her own bespoke jewellery company, which now provides women with bridal jewels and much more.

Sara says: “At weddings in Qatar, I watched women enter the ballroom with gorgeous gleaming jewellery. I’ve always seen bridal jewellery like one of Picasso’s well-known artworks. They seem like a mixed-up puzzle with shapes but, at the same time, they all somehow fit so smoothly together in one place.

“I am intrigued by how there can be so much detail in one piece but, on the other hand, it has that gentle delicate feeling.”

Setting up her own company was a dream come true for Sara, allowing her to develop her intricate imaginative designs into delicate works of art. She says: “Since I was a child, I’ve also always loved to draw repeating patterns. These patterns inspired my jewellery designs and my interest in making bridal jewellery.

“Sketching abstract shapes came naturally to me, and I always ensured symmetrical motifs were part of the piece. This is what draws attention to my jewellery and makes it stand out. Gradually, I entered a whole new world of design, introducing colours and different precious stones, developing my own unique style.”

Certainly, it is a style that is now much in demand. Since setting up her business, Sarah’s & Co, four years ago, Sara has found that there is a thriving market for



## THE YOUNG QATARI DESIGNERS INITIATIVE

Young Qatari Designers is an initiative of the annual Doha Jewellery and Watches Exhibition (DJWE), which showcases more than 400 of the world's best luxury jewellery and watch brands from over 10 countries.

Under the patronage of His Excellency Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, the initiative seeks to nurture talent and creativity by selecting young Qatari designers to showcase their jewellery at the exhibition.





her designs. “Most women around the world want to have bridal jewellery laid on their necks and hanging from their ears on their wedding day,” she says.

“I started with simple gold pieces and incorporated a lot of filigree work into my very first designs. Women want to have something special, created just for them to celebrate special moments in their life.”

She noticed that some women were fond of the smaller and simpler pieces, while others favoured the large extravagant eye-catching pieces that she offers, so she has developed both strands of her work.

Her collection now has a classic look, along with some contemporary designs and simpler pieces. The jewellery displays her flair for exotic colours. She says: “I took this step so that all women of all ages have a variety to choose from in my collection.”

There is also much technical expertise involved. Sara has had to learn how to work with rare gemstones and different precious metals, mastering the age-old craft of fine jewellery and acquiring techniques beyond her natural skill in sketching creative designs.

The hard work has evidently paid off. In 2017, she became part of the Young Qatari Designers initiative, allowing her to canvas opinion on her designs from locals and gain national and international recognition for her work. She says: “The scheme aims to motivate more young Qatari women to start their own businesses and use their imagination in creating remarkable artwork and jewellery.

“It was a great opportunity to meet other young Qatari designers, discovering each other’s ideas through their jewellery and swapping our ideas about what is trending now in Doha in terms of jewellery.

“Doha Jewellery and Watches Exhibition also gave me the opportunity to interact with customers. It was interesting meeting new faces and getting their impressions of my jewellery, and wonderful to collaborate with other designers.”

Now, when Sara attends weddings, she often quietly admires her own designs as the bride enters the ballroom and can reflect on her own personal dream come true.



| Original piece by Sara Al Hammadi

## Ghada Al Buainin

### *Golden girl*

Jewellery designer Ghada Al Buainin talks about what inspires her designs – and how the Young Qatari Designers initiative has helped her to grow her business

#### **How long have you designed jewellery?**

Since I was young, I have loved creating and designing things. I designed my first piece of jewellery when I was 21 years old – it was a pipe-in-gold bracelet that I made as part of a summer art project. I was so proud of the piece, and I've mostly used gold in my designs ever since.

#### **What does your typical day look like?**

I'm always looking for inspiration around me. My Digital Garden collection was inspired by chicken

wire that was lying around my bedroom! Most days I visit a nearby hardware store to find ideas. When I find something inspiring, I make a story of the collection or piece of jewellery I plan to design, to help me to create the final designs.

#### **How has the Young Qatari Designers initiative helped you?**

Before joining the Young Qatari Designers initiative, I struggled to find a retailer that would sell my jewellery in Qatar. I could only sell online or abroad. The initiative gave me the opportunity to showcase my pieces in Qatar for the first time,



| Original piece by Ghada Al Buainin

at the Doha Jewellery and Watches Exhibition in 2017 and 2018, alongside some of the world's top brands. This has opened a lot of doors for me.

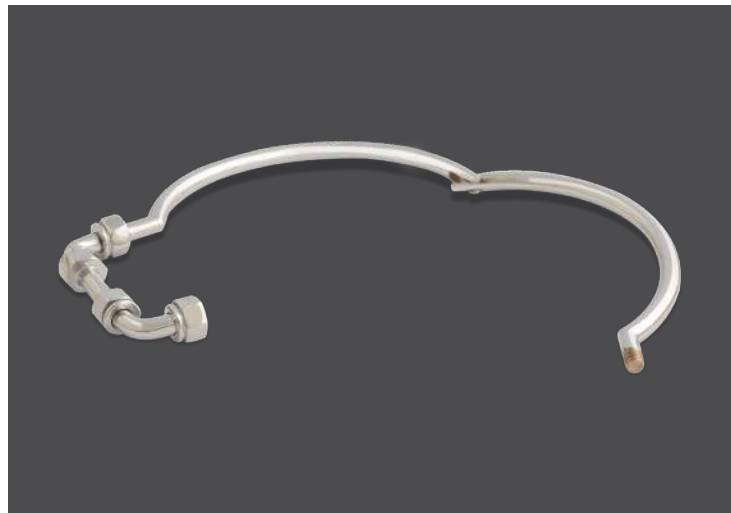
### **Do jewellery designers in Qatar support each other?**

The Young Qatari Designers initiative has helped to foster a sense of community among jewellery designers here. I've met a lot of other designers through the scheme, and we keep in touch to support

programmes like this, each year there are new designers and artists bursting onto the scene.

### **What has been your biggest challenge?**

Starting my business and creating a brand. The first time I showed



| Original piece by Ghada Al Buanin

each other. It's been great to meet other designers with different styles, levels of experience and stories to tell.

### **Do you think Doha is a good city for artists and designers?**

Absolutely. Qatar has always supported the arts. One example is the Doha Fire Station, which has been converted to be a residence for upcoming artists. Thanks to

my jewellery to retailers was at an exhibition in London. I had just designed my first ever piece – the pipe-in-gold bracelet – and had plans to travel to London in summer. A friend recommended that I create a collection and show it off at an exhibition in London, and I did. When I returned from London, I knew that I wanted to start my own business. But I knew it wouldn't be easy!



| Oola Sports clothing



## Haya Al Ghanim

# *Sportswear entrepreneur: there is no 'one size fits all' approach in business*

Pioneer women designers tap unmet demand for modest activewear

Inspiration struck at the top of Mount Kilimanjaro. Two friends, Haya Al Ghanim and Amina Ahmadi, the co-founders of Oola Sports, made it to the summit of the Tanzanian mountain. They wore sports clothing that was appropriate for the conditions, but it did not give them the coverage they desired.

So began their visionary mission to create a range of high-quality modest fitness clothing, suitable for women across the Middle East.

That arduous climb took place in January 2015, and was the start of a long journey.



Haya, who was Innovation Director at Qatar Science & Technology Park, explains: “While we were training for Kilimanjaro, we really wanted to train outside, but we were struggling to find something to wear that was appropriate.”

Amina says: “We knew at that point that we wanted to do something about it, but it was the experience of Kilimanjaro itself that brought Oola to life. We made up our minds that we were going to go back home and take action.”

Oola Sports now provides women with modest, loose-fitting activewear that performs well in action and aligns with their cultural values.

Made from functional cutting-edge fabric, the sleek kit replaces the multitude of items Haya and Amina had to cobble together previously in order to cover up.

They found that other women were also searching far

and wide for appropriate gear. They realised there was a huge unmet demand for modest, long-sleeved sportswear made from ultra-modern, technical fabrics.

So, on their return from Africa, they teamed up with Lilian Gabriel Barbosa, a fashion designer with a background in physical therapy. She embraced the challenge of designing a line of activewear that is loose fitting and stylish, without compromising on sports and fitness performance.

They launched in June 2015, partnering with Behold, and leveraging Indiegogo crowdfunding.

Businesswoman Haya used her experience in creating support programmes for entrepreneurs, including accessing accelerator and investment funds, to push the process forward.

She says: “I’ve been working with entrepreneurs for my entire career. Being so close to the entrepreneurship





| Co-founders Haya Al Ghanim and Amina Ahmadi

ecosystem and enabling entrepreneurs certainly inspired me to form a team to solve the struggle of exercising outdoors for many women.

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**“My hope is to impact the health and wellness of the next generation. Giving women access to outdoor sports means their children and younger relatives will join in too. This will, hopefully, have an impact on their lifestyle, making it more healthy.”**

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“While forming a community around outdoor sports, I used lessons learned from forming a community of entrepreneurs in Qatar and globally.”

She adds: “I grew up believing the sky is my limit, thanks to my upbringing and the support available for us in Qatar. My family encouraged me to learn, explore and pursue what I enjoy.”

“Their support, coupled with the incredible support we get from the government in terms of education, career development opportunities I got through Qatar Foundation, as well as the incubation of Qatar Business Incubation Center, all paved the path to get Oola to where it is today.”

After a rigorous process of sketching, multiple visits to factories around the world to identify suitable trade partners and numerous prototype iterations, a first collection of Oola sportswear was produced.

It included various sport headpieces, and a multi-sport top. This was followed by other styles, including trousers and jackets.

Haya says: “Modesty is a relative value that varies from one person to the other. We want to provide modest sportswear options to as many women as we can. Providing variety is something we aspire to – this is not a ‘one-size-fits-all’ solution. Women need a range of clothing to suit different needs.

“I want Oola to become the comfortable, stylish option for women seeking function and fashion.” These energetic businesswomen hope to inspire and empower a new generation of Qatari women to get fit.

Haya says: “My hope is to impact the health and wellness of the next generation. Giving women access

to outdoor sports means their children and younger relatives will join in too. This will, hopefully, have an impact on their lifestyle, making it more healthy.

“Given the link between physical activities and metabolic diseases, such as diabetes and obesity, encouraging healthy lifestyles should make the next generation healthier, more active and more productive.

“I’m proud of Oola every time I see a woman wearing our outfits, working out outdoors and sweating. This brings pure joy to my heart and makes me forget about all the challenges of setting up a new business.”

And, of course, there is another upside to Oola’s continuing success. Haya says: “Now my sports bag is lighter, and I get the coverage I want and look fashionable. It is win-win.”



## I ABOUT OOLA SPORTS

Oola means ‘the first’, or ‘the pioneer’. The young entrepreneurs believe every woman is a pioneer in her own life and Oola reflects this ethos.

Oola Sports sells clothes specialising in cycling, hiking, running, golf and tennis.

You can buy their products in stores in Qatar and the UK – and online around the world.



# 2

## *Cultural pioneers*

Qatar is emerging as a global cultural hub, respectfully blending Arab tradition with modern, international trends.

The country is passionate about using art and culture to connect diverse people, and originate new and vibrant experiences to be shared with a global audience.

Individual trailblazers, supported by world-renowned entities such as Doha Film Institute and Qatar Museums, are a fundamental part of this rich cultural growth.

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Dr Sohair Wastawy: Qatar National Library

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Rachel Morris: Food blogger

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AJ Al Thani: Film director

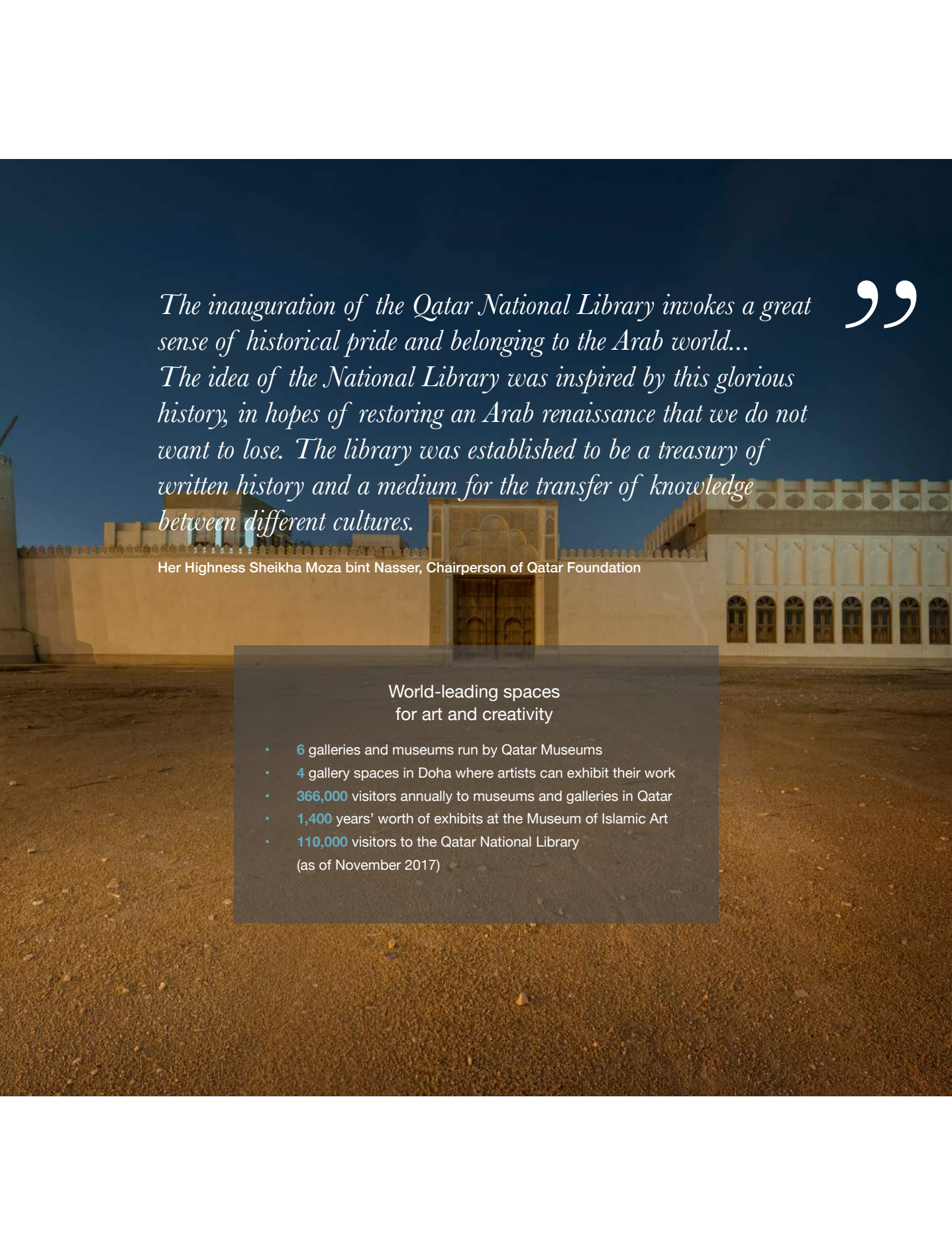
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Bouthayna Al Muftah: Artist

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*The inauguration of the Qatar National Library invokes a great sense of historical pride and belonging to the Arab world... The idea of the National Library was inspired by this glorious history, in hopes of restoring an Arab renaissance that we do not want to lose. The library was established to be a treasury of written history and a medium for the transfer of knowledge between different cultures.*

Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation

World-leading spaces  
for art and creativity

- **6** galleries and museums run by Qatar Museums
- **4** gallery spaces in Doha where artists can exhibit their work
- **366,000** visitors annually to museums and galleries in Qatar
- **1,400** years' worth of exhibits at the Museum of Islamic Art
- **110,000** visitors to the Qatar National Library  
(as of November 2017)



## I THE GRAND OPENING

The ceremony was attended by the Father Emir, His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, and Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation, as well as ministers of state in Qatar and members of the international community.

The event was a fantastic celebration of the new library's mission to spread knowledge, nurture imagination, cultivate creativity, and preserve Qatar's heritage.

At the opening, Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser said: "The inauguration of the Qatar National Library invokes a great sense of historical pride and belonging to the Arab world, which pioneered writing, transcription and libraries in Mesopotamia 5,000 years ago...

"The idea of the National Library was inspired by this glorious history, in hopes of restoring an Arab renaissance that we do not want to lose. The library was established to be a treasury of written history and a medium for the transfer of knowledge between different cultures."

## Dr Sohair Wastawy

# *A world-class public library fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century*

The Executive Director's aim is to make the inspirational building central to the lives of Qatar's community

One of the most rewarding parts of Dr Sohair Wastawy's job is to stand by the door of the new national library. She likes to watch the awestruck look on visitors' faces as they see the magnificent building for the first time.

Indeed, as Executive Director of the monumental Qatar National Library (QNL), a member of Qatar Foundation, Dr Wastawy oversees a world of dreams.

"The first time I walked through the building, I could tell this was going to be more than just another library," she says. "It's an incredible building, designed by the famous architect, Rem Koolhaas, and it has a very different feel from a traditional library.

"The moment you walk in, you can see a panoramic view of the entire library, with all of its possibilities, all around you. The light surrounds you and gives you a feeling of warmth. It is very rewarding to stand by the door and see the look on the faces of those entering the library for the first time: complete awe."

So what makes the visionary new library in Doha's Education City so different? "Most national libraries are not open to the public in the manner of this library," explains Dr Wastawy.

"QNL is truly a library of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This is reflected in its floor plan, services, collections, and mission. We offer hundreds of public events, from early literacy programmes to knitting groups to orchestral performances. We aim to be central to the Qatari community, not just a place people think of when they occasionally need a book."

Its mission is to spread knowledge, nurture imagination, cultivate creativity, and preserve the nation's heritage for future generations.

A tour of the gleaming library reveals a multitude of quiet corners for reflection and an interactive children's library, full of brightly-coloured toys, alongside treasured heirloom volumes and stacks of academic works.





| *Qatar National Library interior*

Public computer workstations, performance spaces, and a café complement the world-class literary collection. The building also houses a world-leading collection of Islamic literature and antiquities, a rich heritage now protected for the nation.

Well-worn first editions of pivotal works sit alongside early versions of European fairy tales and rare Islamic books. You could lose hours quietly browsing the shelves, dipping into old volumes. In contrast, the digital facilities and technology are cutting edge.

An online portal allows users to access the library remotely, while a book club for the blind supports people with visual impairments.

It is truly a library for everyone. Dr Wastawy says: “This is a unique national library that plays three roles: national, public, and research.”

Having spent most of her career in academic libraries where there is a sole mission and a single erudite audience, the breadth of her new role has proved inspirational for the director.

Of course, there have been some challenges along the way. “The most challenging part so far has been working out the details that you only notice once the library is open to the public,” she says.

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**“QNL gives Qatar’s community something it has lacked: a welcoming, inspirational place where individuals and families can come to learn together and have fun.”**

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“We have been planning for this opening for years, working with some of the world’s experts in a range of related fields, but you never quite know how



### QNL in numbers

- Over **800,000** books
- **300,000** eBooks
- **26,000** rare books
- **100,000** children's books

people are going to react. So we've had to make some adjustments in terms of space use, event offerings, and so on.

"But these are good problems to have, because they show that our visitors really do care about making QNL their own."

Since opening in November 2017, the QNL has hosted more than 100 events.

Dr Wastawy finds it hard to pick a favourite. "The early literacy programmes, of course, are wonderful, because you can see a love of reading develop before your eyes in children who are going to enjoy books for the rest of their lives," she says. "It has also been great to see adults come back and rediscover their own love of learning, whether through book discussions, computer classes, or photography workshops.

"All these events go to show that, deep down, we all want to keep learning-sometimes, we just need the right place to go."

She adds: "QNL gives Qatar's community something it has lacked: a welcoming, inspirational place where individuals and families can come to learn together and have fun. Already, we've welcomed more than 150,000 visitors, and our members have checked out more than 300,000 books.

"The overwhelmingly positive reception shows that people in Qatar are eager to pursue their educational, creative, and innovative goals, and we look forward to nurturing that passion for generations to come."

Certainly, it is hard to imagine a job more satisfying

### Rachel's favourite eateries

- Nobu Doha
- Yee Hwa restaurant in Al Nasr
- 42 café
- Oishi Sushi
- Isla Mexican Kitchen

## Rachel Morris

# *Doha's food scene: 'you can dine around the world in one day'*

Popular blogger keeps foodies informed as she seeks out the city's diverse eating outlets



| Rachel Morris

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**"You can dine around the world in one day – Yemen for breakfast, Italy for lunch and Japan for dinner!"**

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**D**iverse, multicultural, accessible. Those are the three words food blogger Rachel Morris uses to describe Doha, her home of 11 years.

As one of Qatar's most popular food bloggers, Rachel is permanently on the lookout for the newest and most delicious meals that Doha has to offer. Her searches range from luxury hotels to hidden gems tucked away in the city's souqs, and she describes her findings in her food blog, *Life on the Wedge*.

Because there are people of so many different nationalities living in Doha, Rachel believes that its restaurants cater for almost every style of cuisine in the world and for every budget. She says: "You can dine around the world in one day – Yemen for breakfast, Italy for lunch and Japan for dinner!"

Rachel started *Life on the Wedge* as a personal blog about eating and documenting '365 cheeses in a very long year'. She enjoyed the creative outlet it provided and, with encouragement from friends, slowly started covering a broader range of food topics.



She was encouraged by the positive responses to her blog: "People really seemed to engage with me," she says. Instagram and Twitter helped her to find an even bigger audience to share foodie finds with her fans.

Whatever the platform, Rachel works hard to uncover Doha's best restaurants. She says that regular and varied content "keeps readers engaged and coming back".

Today, she is one of Doha's most established 'influencers' – a word used to describe people with a large fan base on social media, especially Instagram, who set trends and influence consumer behaviour.

The rise of Instagram and its influencers has, according to Rachel, "transformed how we eat and how we decide where to eat." Just one Instagram post from her can make or break a restaurant's reputation in Doha. As such, there are some perks to the job: invitations to restaurant openings, complimentary food and drink, and reservations at the very best tables.

Despite her position as an influencer, Rachel has struggled to be seen on equal terms to food critics writing for traditional newspapers.

She says: "I think there is still a level of scepticism about bloggers and social media generally, and this has made it hard to win over audiences."

But this hasn't put her off blogging – and her perseverance has paid off. She says that a big turning point in her blogging career, and one of her proudest moments since starting *Life on the Wedge*, was when international brands started to take notice of her work.

Last year, Rachel was featured in Qatar Airways' onboard magazine, Oryx. She says that when she saw the article, "it made me feel that all the hard work was finally paying off."

Rachel has recently expanded her quest to find the very best eateries outside Qatar's borders. She says: "Qatar is a gateway and we have so many interesting destinations within easy reach for a weekend trip."

Because her fans in Qatar are constantly on the lookout to discover new cuisines, they are enthusiastic about her foodie adventures abroad. She is now just as likely to be found showcasing food in Sri Lanka, India or Singapore as in Doha. India is a particular favourite: "I love the food and the energy of the country," says Rachel.

She also sees her blog as a way to connect with people and share her experience of living in Doha. She says: "I love how passionate people are about food here.

"I also really enjoy the holy month of Ramadan – not just the incredible food, but the family atmosphere and spirit of sharing makes it one of my favourite times of the year."

These days, Rachel is just as likely to be found with her head buried in a book than eating at the latest new restaurant. "I've recently joined Qatar National Library," she says. "I've been able to indulge my inner book nerd – it's a stunning space, has more than one million books and is a great space to lose myself for a few hours."

But nothing can keep Rachel away from restaurants for too long. After all, she says: "I do spend a lot of time eating out!"

## About Rachel

Website: [lifeonthewedge.net](http://lifeonthewedge.net)

Instagram: [rachelmorris71](https://www.instagram.com/rachelmorris71)

Twitter: [@LifeontheWedge](https://twitter.com/LifeontheWedge)



## AJ Al Thani

# *A film industry in bloom*

Young director says it is an exciting time for Qatari film-makers, with many new screen projects in the pipeline

It is surely true that Qatar's desert has long been a source of artistic inspiration. Poets, painters and musicians have dedicated great works to its splendour.

In a digital age, it is no surprise that the desert of Qatar is now inspiring film-makers.

Qatari film-maker AJ Al Thani calls her short film, *Kashta*, "a love letter to Qatar". She says: "I feel so much more connected to the desert of Qatar than its urban landscape. There is so much beauty in our desert that hasn't been put in cinemas and I wanted to do that with my film."

*Kashta* was released in 2016. It tells the story of a man teaching his young sons how to track and hunt in the desert. Frustration leads to an apparently harmless struggle between the two brothers, but their carelessness brings about sudden disaster.

It is a film of contrasts, between calm and calamity, adolescence and adulthood, knowhow and ignorance.



| *Kashta* film still

To make the film, AJ received a grant from Doha Film Institute (DFI), which was founded in 2010 by Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani to support the growth of the local and regional film community.

DFI provides funding grants to produce local, regional and international films. It also organises training and development programmes, film screenings, annual film events and other initiatives to nurture filmmaking talent in Qatar.

AJ was one of DFI's first beneficiaries. She says: "I joined one of the first DFI workshops when it began in 2010." She remembers it well: "It was a workshop in collaboration with the 2022 World Cup bid and we made a one-minute football film," she recalls.



## Award-winning

DFI-supported films have won over 290 awards at leading film events including:

- An Academy Award® in 2017 for Best Foreign Language Film for *The Salesman*
- A BAFTA for Outstanding Debut for *Theeb* in 2016
- 7 awards at the Cannes Film Festival in 2016
- 3 awards in competition at Berlin in 2016
- 3 awards at the British Independent Film Awards

DFI has been a crucial source of support to AJ ever since. After that first workshop, she spent the next five years attending other courses at DFI to learn the tricks of the trade. In 2015, DFI provided her with a grant to fund the production of *Kashta*.

The support from DFI has been “incredible”, according to AJ.

Her next project is a feature-length film called *Khuzama*. She received a grant from DFI in September last year to make it.

The focus of this film is on the lives of women. AJ says: “*Khuzama* is a story about a Bedouin girl living in isolation in the desert. Her parents are murdered by an evil sheikh and she is forced to marry him. She escapes and finds a

group of six nomadic women who have also suffered injustice from him, and they work together to take their revenge.”

*Khuzama* and *Kashta* are two of over 380 films from Qatar and the MENA region that DFI has supported since it was founded, with many more funding grants planned for the coming years.

With so many new projects in the pipeline, AJ believes that it is an exciting time for the film industry in Doha. “There are so many stories that have yet to be told, and so many platforms to tell them on,” she says. “I can see a sustainable film industry about to bloom and I would like to help kick start it.”

## Bouthayna Al Muftah

### *Artist extraordinaire*

Bouthayna Al Muftah, one of Qatar's most talented young artists, tells us what inspires her creatively, and why Doha is one of the most exciting places in the world to be an artist

#### **Tell us about your art**

Culture, heritage, folklore and tradition. This is the basis of my artistic expression and subject matter – the themes and dialogue that I have chosen to express through different media to keep my native land's memories alive for generations to come.

#### **What inspired you to become an artist?**

Art was always a hobby of mine. As a young girl, I always enjoyed the experimentation process of arts and crafts, mastering new techniques

and learning to take them further in my own way. I always found great comfort in an art class. There was no right or wrong – it allowed me to be myself, as well as find my path to discovering my own identity.

#### **What is your preferred medium and why?**

Black ink is my favourite medium and the basis of most of my artwork. I have always loved monochromatic artwork and the combination of the rich black ink pouring onto the crisp white paper. This passion emerged during my years in middle school, as

I began learning the techniques of Chinese ink painting and calligraphy. From there, my appreciation for black and white art evolved into what you see today.

#### **You say that Qatar is the main inspiration for your art. Why is this?**

Recording and communicating memories through art is my way of staying close to my cultural history. I like to capture glimpses from the past and conceptualise them in a deconstructed form, while inviting the viewer to reflect on our history.



| Art by Bouthayna Al Muftah





**How did it feel to showcase your art in Berlin in 2017?**

It was one of the highlights of my artistic career. To have been selected as an exhibitor in Berlin – one of the most influential cities in the arts – was something I had never imagined for myself. It was awe-inspiring to see my work up on display and a true honour.

**Do you believe Qatar encourages its artists?**

Absolutely. Qatar is fast becoming one of the best places in the world for aspiring young artists, for which we owe much to Her Excellency Sheikha Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Chairperson of

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**“Qatar is fast becoming one of the best places in the world for aspiring young artists, for which we owe much to Her Excellency Sheikha Mayassa Al Thani for her support and encouragement of the arts. And the support from the artistic community in Doha is an amazing source of inspiration – and motivation!”**

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Qatar Museums, for her support and encouragement of the arts. And the support from the artistic community in Doha is an amazing source of inspiration – and motivation!



# 3

## *Sporting champions*

Qatar is passionate about sport. Like every successful athlete, the country is determined to better itself, push boundaries, and break down barriers.

Qatar has a strong track record of hosting international sporting events, developing sporting talent, and investing in world-class training facilities.

Sport plays a central role in the Qatar National Vision 2030 — and our ambition is to become a global leader in sports.

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Fatma Al Nuaimi: Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy

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Mansoor Al Ansari: Qatar Football Association

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Nasser Al Attiyah: Athlete

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Bahiya Al Hamad: Athlete

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*At a time when global dialogue is emphasising cultural differences rather than similarities, we believe the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar can utilise football's ability to bring people together.*

Fatma Al Nuaimi, Communications Director at the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy



#### Countdown

**4**

years until Qatar hosts the first  
Arab World Cup, in 2022

**1**

year until Qatar hosts the 2019  
World Championships in Athletics

**2030**

the year we hope to be a truly  
global leader in sport

#### A global hub for sport

- **440+** international sporting events hosted since 1993
- **1<sup>st</sup>** Qatar Olympic silver medal won at the 2016 Games in Rio by high jumper Mutaz Essa Barshim
- **2** Dakar Rally titles won by Qatari driver Nasser Al Attiyah in 2011 and 2015
- **2** Qatari athletes, Abdulrahman Abdulqadir and Sara Masood, won medals in the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games

## Fatma Al Nuaimi

# *2022 will ‘set the benchmark’ for social and economic legacy*

The opportunities the World Cup brings will have a transformative impact on the region



| A CGI of Al Bayt stadium

**F**atma Al Nuaimi has one goal: to deliver the most amazing FIFA World Cup the globe has ever seen. As the Communications Director at the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy (SC), she has a singular focus and a long-term vision.

“We want the 2022 World Cup to be remembered as the best tournament, but we also want to set the benchmark for how major

sporting events deliver real social and economic legacies long after they have finished,” she says.

Al Nuaimi stepped into her role in early 2017 and proudly admits her first year was momentous.

“Highlights included launching Khalifa International Stadium in front of 48,000 fans at the Emir Cup Final in May 2017 and unveiling the designs of Al Thumama and Ras

## SUSTAINABILITY AT THE HEART OF QATAR’S VISION FOR 2022

16,000 trees have been potted in a vast nursery outside Qatar’s capital, Doha. In the coming years, the trees will be re-planted around the eight 2022 World Cup venues.

Abu Aboud stadiums to the world,” she says.

There have been challenges too, of course. “When the blockade began in June 2017, we all had to adapt to a new way of working,” she says. “I am really proud of the way my team, the organisation, and Qatar as a whole adapted to the blockade.

“It brought out the best in us, reflecting our solidarity, unity, and



integration. Our contingency plans helped us to move on, find alternative routes, and continue our construction projects as scheduled.

“We’ve all shown such resilience in the face of adversity and it’s made us all the more determined to deliver the most amazing FIFA World Cup the world has ever seen.”

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**“We want the 2022 World Cup to be remembered as the best tournament, but we also want to set the benchmark for how major sporting events deliver real social and economic legacies long after they have finished”**

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The SC team is made up of over 400 employees from 52 different nationalities, so it is an exceptionally diverse workforce.

Women will also be centre stage in the Qatari World Cup effort, she explains. “Qatar is keen to empower women through encouraging them to excel and succeed in any discipline,” she says. “Qatar has always had strong inspirational female role models.”

The 2022 event will also notch up a number of ‘firsts’, she says. “This will be the first World Cup for an Arab state and the first World Cup in the Middle East. We can’t wait to welcome the world to look

at the region for reasons other than conflict and dispute.

“Tournament-wise, this will be the first ‘compact’ World Cup in history, meaning the longest distance between stadiums is only 55km and fans will be able to watch two live matches in one day.

“We want to create an Olympic Village atmosphere in and around Doha, which hasn’t been done in a World Cup before. I am an avid

football fan and can’t wait to see the world’s best players take to the pitch in some of our unique tournament venues.

“Watching a semi-final at Al Bayt Stadium in Al Khor is going to be a special moment for me as it’s by far my favourite stadium design and a project I have been involved with since the start.

But it is when the sports events finish that Al Nuaimi’s real work begins.









“Legacy has always been central to Qatar’s World Cup plans – so much so that the word ‘legacy’ is in the name of our organisation,” she explains. “When we bid for 2022, we did so on the promise that we’d leave a meaningful, measurable legacy in Qatar and around the world.

“An obvious example is how hosting the World Cup is helping to deliver Qatar’s National Vision 2030 by accelerating infrastructure projects across the country. Projects like the HIA airport expansion, Metro project, and road network expansion are all upgrades that will benefit Qatar for generations.”

The transformative impact will not stop there, however. “We also wanted the region to benefit from the opportunities – social and economic – that hosting a World Cup can bring,” she says. “At a time when global dialogue is emphasising cultural differences rather than similarities, we believe the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar can utilise football’s ability to bring people together.”

In February 2018, the SC inaugurated the SC Tree Nursery, a project to grow the turf required for the 2022

FIFA World Cup stadiums and the trees that will fill the green spaces surrounding them. This venture, the first of its kind in the region, will also leave a rich environmental legacy.

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**“At a time when global dialogue is emphasising cultural differences rather than similarities, we believe the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar can utilise football’s ability to bring people together.”**

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She adds: “For me personally, legacy means shaping a rich and beneficial history that is engraved in people’s hearts and minds forever. I truly believe that, when it comes to major global sporting events, the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar will set the benchmark for legacy and leave a lasting impact long after the last ball has been kicked on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2022.”

## 2022 in numbers

- **8** stadiums under construction for 2022, with Khalifa International Stadium complete
- **1.5** million football fans expected during the **28-day** tournament
- **15-24°C** average temperatures during the four weeks of the November to December event
- **170,000** seats to be donated to developing nations after the tournament
- **55km** between the two furthest apart stadiums, meaning a maximum of just one hour’s travel time between venues
- **32** teams preparing to play **64** games to find one world champion for **2022**



| *Mansoor Al Ansari*

## **Mansoor Al Ansari**

*Meet the man responsible for  
getting Qatar's football team  
World Cup ready*

Extensive range of facilities and preparatory programmes put in place  
for Qatar's national players



## INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

Aspire Academy was established to discover and develop the very best Qatari sports men and women – including football players. The programme has generated promising results. Qatar won the AFC U-19 Championship in Myanmar in 2014 and qualified for the FIFA U-20 World Cup in New Zealand in 2015. All players were past or current students of Aspire Academy.

To many a youngster, it would surely be a dream job. Mansoor Al Ansari is General Secretary of the Qatar Football Association. And while his role requires him to establish and maintain good relations with the global football fraternity, it is young people he seeks to inspire.

He explains: “Our emphasis on youth development stems from our strategy which is to develop successful national teams across all levels, specifically the youth as they will be the team that will participate in the 2022 World Cup.”

Developing a talented team for the 2022 World Cup is of course his key objective – and one that he hopes will see the national football team become the pride of Qatar.

He says: “Our goal is for our national teams to perform well at all the competitions with the aspiration of qualifying for all major tournaments such as the FIFA World Cups and winning the continental and regional competitions.

“We have great facilities for our youth players at the Aspire Academy, excellent coaches, outstanding education programmes, and we organise various friendly matches, all with the aim of developing youth and senior teams so they can compete at the highest level.”

He maintains that despite not qualifying for the 2018 World Cup in Russia, Qatar’s national football team will be ready for its own tournament.

“We are certain that our national team will play to the best of their abilities during the 2022 World Cup,” he says. “After all, they will be representing their country as Qatar hosts the biggest football event on the planet. “We are on the right track with our team development

plans for the 2022 World Cup. We are increasing training and organising friendly matches, fostering a high performance culture, providing a comprehensive performance analysis system and providing periodic training courses to referees, coaches, club officials, and players on the rules of the game to ensure our national team has what it takes to compete.”

Al Ansari previously headed operations at the QNB Stars League, which has attracted talent such as Xavi Hernandez and Wesley Sneijder.

He says: “Having names such as Hernandez and Sneijder shows just how much the league has developed over the years. These are world-known players that can exchange their knowledge and expertise with our local players and help bring the competition level of the league to a higher level. Having them definitely gives the league a great reputation amongst other leagues in the region and the continent.”

More widely, he sees that sport is central to Qatar’s future. He explains: “Qatar has made a name for itself at the local, regional and international sports scene.

“We have a day in the year on which the whole country has a public holiday to take part in their favourite sport. The National Sport Day is dedicated to ensuring that the whole population has the opportunity to adopt a healthy lifestyle through sports.

“Our country’s 2030 vision places special emphasis on sports and the importance of having an increased sports participation within the local community.”

To this end, the QFA runs many social responsibility initiatives, community-specific leagues, and grassroots programmes to promote a healthy lifestyle for all Qataris.

The Association also works with world-renowned institutions such as Aspire and Aspetar. The Aspire

Academy was set up to discover and develop the best Qatari athletes in all sports, and is a prime source of new talent for the national teams.

Indeed, the Aspire football program has been a resounding success, with all players on the Qatar U-19 national team that won the AFC U-19 Championship in Myanmar, and qualified for the 2015 FIFA U-20 World Cup in New Zealand, coming from the Academy.

At the same time, Aspetar plays a significant role in the performance aspect of all the players. Al Ansari says: “It has been instrumental in improving the fitness and performance levels for many athletes over the years.

“Aspetar has established itself as a leading specialised orthopaedic and sports medicine hospital and the very first in the Gulf region.”

Together, all these parts should come together as a recipe for sporting success. Al Ansari says: “The entire football ecosystem which has been set up in Qatar works seamlessly in the development and improvement of the sport and the athletes.”

## QNB Stars League

- The top professional football league in Qatar
- Launched in **1972**
- Comprises **12** teams
- All-time most championships won: Al Sadd SC with **13** titles
- Overseas players: **103**, or **22%** of the **12** squads



| Qatar national football team

## Nasser Al Attiyah

# *Winning for his team, his people and his country*

Olympic medallist pays tribute to the support of his people  
and the opportunities offered to his country's athletes

**N**asser Al Attiyah is not your average athlete. While some know him as the man who won a bronze medal for Skeet shooting in the London 2012 Olympics, others know him as a world champion rally driver.

How does one succeed internationally at two sports? Although some refer to him to as 'superman', Al Attiyah admits it is not always easy: "Juggling between two professional sports and feeling the pressure to be the best in both is very challenging."



| Nasser Al Attiyah

But, according to Al Attiyah, rally driving and shooting complement each other and allow him to excel in both. He has found that he can learn valuable crossover skills by training in both sports rather than one. He explains: "Shooting has helped me excel in rally driving because of the immense concentration needed. It helped me stay mentally strong."

It was Al Attiyah's dream to win the Dakar Rally – one of the toughest races in the world. When he won the race for the first time in 2011, he recalls that winning meant a lot, not only to him but also to his people, his country, and his team: "It felt like a great victory because it demonstrated that I was part of the strongest team in the world."

This ambition and pride did not stop at the Dakar Rally. It followed him straight to winning bronze at the London 2012 Olympics.

While he has represented his people in countless competitions in the past, "being able to achieve an Olympic medal was a very different level of pride". Coming home following the Olympics, thousands of people were waiting at the airport upon his arrival. At that moment, Al Attiyah felt something he never had before: "I felt that the whole country was behind me showing their love and support."



Throughout his career, he has noticed that sport in Qatar has grown dramatically – and this is not by accident. He says: “When we look at Qatar and how much effort the Government has put into developing sport, we know how lucky we are as Qatari athletes.”

Al Attiyah’s advice to other athletes is to take advantage of the opportunities presented to them: “It is important that you learn to appreciate things in life and not take things for granted.

“To all aspiring young athletes, keep striving to achieve your dreams – age and ability should not be your limitation.”

Looking to the future, Al Attiyah has nothing but a positive outlook. Beyond having his eyes on the Tokyo 2020 podium, Al Attiyah wants to encourage the new generation of youth: “I would really like for young people in Qatar to be inspired by my journey and see more aspiring athletes trying new sports.”



### Al Attiyah’s track record

- **2-time** Dakar Rally winner
- **2006** Production World Rally Champion
- **13-time** Middle East Rally Champion
- **2012** Olympic bronze medallist

| Nasser Al Attiyah



| Bahiya Al Hamad, holding the Qatari flag at the 2012 Olympics

## Bahiya Al Hamad

### *Shooting for the stars*

Rifle shooter Bahiya Al Hamad talks about what it meant to represent her country at the Olympics, and offers advice to young, female athletes who want to follow in her footsteps

#### **How did it feel to bear Qatar's flag at the opening ceremony of the 2012 Olympic Games?**

It meant so much to me – it was my dream to compete in the Olympics and raise the flag for Qatar at such a major sporting event. Bearing my nation's flag was the best feeling ever. I was so proud and so happy knowing that I was carrying my country's flag and that the whole world was looking at me at that moment. I wanted to deliver a message to the whole world that Qatari women can achieve greatness on a global level.

#### **How did you first get into rifle shooting?**

I was 15 years old and in high school when I first took up shooting. At the beginning it wasn't my intention to become a professional, but after two weeks of training, I felt that this was my place and I loved this sport. My role model in shooting is Nasser Al Attiyah. I get excited about every achievement he makes for Qatari sport and this inspires me to give my best and achieve more for Qatar.

#### **What part of your work do you enjoy the most?**

I enjoy everything about it, but the best part is when I pull the trigger and shoot the first bullet in a competition. The feeling then is a mix between happiness, excitement and suspense.

#### **How has Qatar Olympic Committee supported your development?**

It has played a great role in my development, always making sure that we have everything we need to give our best in our training and competitions. It pushes us to be bold and participate in every sporting event that will enhance our physical abilities and performance, from which we gain great experience.

## THE QATAR OLYMPIC COMMITTEE

Founded in 1979 and officially recognised by the International Olympic Committee a year later, Qatar Olympic Committee works to encourage sports participation at every level, bring world-class sports events to Qatar, ensure sporting success, and promote Olympism. It is responsible for initiating National Sport Day, Qatar Women's Sports Committee and the Schools Olympic Program.



| Bahiya Al Hamad

### **What advice would you give to young Qatari athletes who want to follow in your footsteps?**

My advice is to give their best in training, always make sure to listen and follow their coach's tips and advice, and never underestimate themselves. Also, it is so important to sleep early, and follow a healthy and nutritious diet.

### **How about female athletes – do you think that Qatar will see more women getting into professional sport?**

Definetely. There are already many Qatari women who are playing sport at a professional level. The number is increasing and the level of performance is improving. I'm proud to be a role model, and inspire and empower more young girls to follow their sporting dreams. Success doesn't happen overnight, but we are seeing more and more achievements at the local and regional level, and we know that this will continue to improve in the future. Qatar has all the foundations in place and is supporting its female athletes in every way possible.





# 4

## *The new philanthropists*

Whether it is Qatar's governmental foreign aid organisation, Qatar Fund for Development, which provides relief programmes to over 80 countries, or Education Above All Foundation, which aims to educate 10 million children globally, the ambitions of Qatar's trailblazers go beyond the country's borders.

This chapter showcases how these ambitious governmental and non-governmental organisations have a global vision to uplift those in need, through sustainable and impactful programmes.

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HE Mr Khalifa bin Jassim Al Kuwari: Qatar Fund for Development

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*Page 60*

Dr Mary Joy Pigozzi: Educate A Child

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Essa Al Mannai: Reach Out to Asia

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*Page 64*

Dr Asmaa E Al Fadala: World Innovation Summit for Education

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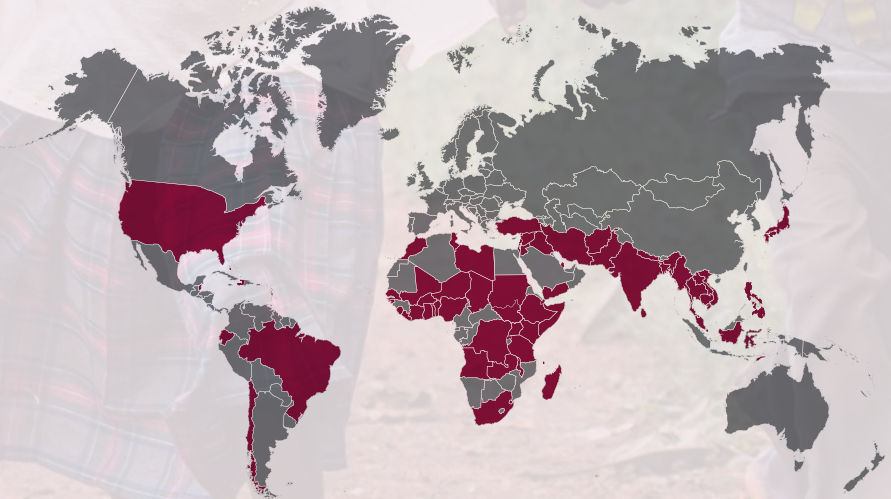




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HE Khalifa bin Jassim Al Kuwari, Director General of Qatar Fund for Development

Between 2012 and 2017 Qatar provided aid worth almost USD 5 billion to more than 100 countries around the world







| *QFED aid recipients*



## HE Mr Khalifa bin Jassim Al Kuwari

# *Spreading hope, promoting peace*

The country's extensive foreign aid programmes increase their scope and reach across the world

It is not your average day in the office. When the Director General, His Excellency Khalifa bin Jassim Al Kuwari, oversees the work of Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD), he meets recipients of Qatar's foreign aid all over the world.

They are the beneficiaries of Qatar's foreign aid programme, established in 2002 to deliver the nation's development pledges and commitments to other countries.

QFFD's work started in earnest four years ago, when dedicated resources were allocated to help Qatar tackle some of the world's most pressing humanitarian and development challenges.

HE Mr Al Kuwari says: "QFFD's mission is influenced by Qatar's steadfast commitment towards spreading hope and promoting peace and justice through sustainable and inclusive development."

Historically, Qatar has been a generous donor and its aid has reached many countries all over the world. In 2016, QFFD's contributions reached USD 507

million, while in 2017 this increased by nearly 33%, to USD 674 million.

HE Mr Al Kuwari says: "Today our aid reaches over 80 countries in the form of grants, concessional loans, and technical assistance. For next year, QFFD has already signed agreements with partners and will be working in eight new countries.

"Our primary focus is to support human development by improving education and health systems and promote sustainable economic development initiatives geared towards strengthening communities' resilience by creating jobs and improving workers' skills."

He adds: "Over the past four years, QFFD has been able to reach more than eight million direct and indirect beneficiaries in more than 80 countries. During that time, QFFD has developed various partnership models with national and international NGOs and multilateral organizations to ensure that its funds are efficiently used in targeting communities and individuals."

The partnership with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is a case in point. In 2016, QFFD pledged USD 50 million to establish the Lives and Livelihood Fund (LLF).



## QFFD in numbers

- 2002 QFFD established
- USD 674 million spent on foreign aid in 2017
- 80 countries have benefited from QFFD's support
- 8 million direct and indirect beneficiaries

An innovative financing mechanism, it aims to raise USD 2.5 billion over a five-year period, offering soft loans that promote human development, healthcare, and agriculture in the world's least developed countries.

QFFD has also developed an initiative with several national NGOs and international partners to provide Syrian children affected by the war with access to education.

Qatar Upholding Education for Syrians' Trust (QUEST) has implemented 13 projects so far, totalling USD 80 million and helping 400,000 students.

And in Tunisia, Qatar has established the Qatar Friendship Fund to support development. The fund, which partners with leading Tunisian micro-lending financial institutes and local NGOs, is helping create jobs by building businesses.

It is seeing these projects in action that gives HE Mr Al Kuwari his greatest sense of achievement. He says: "Each time I visit QFFD projects abroad there is an indescribable feeling of accomplishment in seeing that our work has supported students, teachers, parents, fishermen, and civil servants who live thousands of miles away from us."

There is one project that stands out. He says: "Out of all QFFD projects, our work in Darfur has inspired me the most, as it is a concrete embodiment of what QFFD stands for.

"In Darfur, violence has forced people to abandon their homes and livelihoods, undermining the production and supply of food, resulting in acute humanitarian needs. In addition to the protracted

conflict, natural hazards such as floods and droughts exacerbated the situation."

The Reconstruction of Darfur Program is designed to support displaced persons' return to their hometowns. It builds trust in a future based on security and stability, preventing the return of violence.

Model Service Centres have been built in five villages in Darfur targeting 150,000 people. They include a water station, health centre, primary and secondary schools, police station and a mosque. Through providing educational opportunities, health services and promoting the rule of law, these projects have had a profound impact on local communities, often influencing people's decision to return to their villages after so much destruction.

Affordable social housing and space for establishing micro-enterprises, will form the second phase of this work, providing sustainable livelihoods for locals.

HE Mr Al Kuwari says: "I am very proud to see QFFD grow to what it has become today. A few years ago, there were only three of us in the office, and today we have nearly reached 50 employees. We still have a long way to go, but I am certain that we are on the right track."



## QATAR FUND FOR DEVELOPMENT

Qatar Fund for Development works on behalf of State of Qatar to improve the livelihood of communities around the world. Its goal is to achieve inclusive and sustainable development, through education, healthcare and economic empowerment.

It works closely with partners in Qatar, including NGOs, government agencies and businesses, and with international organisations like the United Nations.

QFFD's programmes have touched the lives of millions of people around the world – from Haiti to Sudan, Syria and the US.



## Dr Mary Joy Pigozzi

*‘Now is not the time to rest on our laurels’, says executive director of Educate A Child*

Education Above All Foundation’s ambitious mission to reach disadvantaged young children will continue its work across the globe

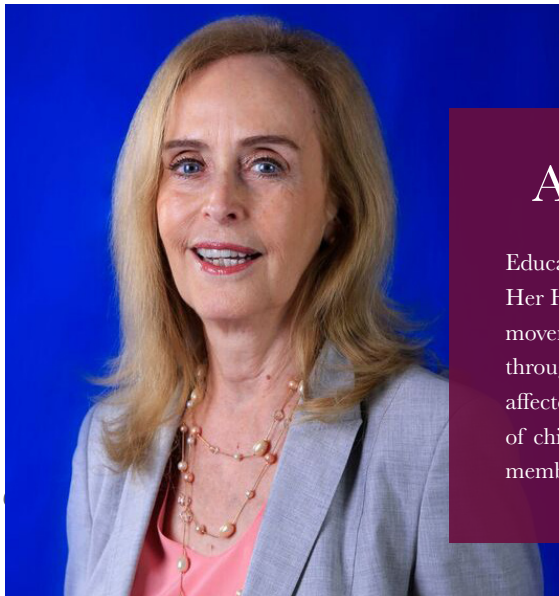
**A**s a young teacher in Botswana, Dr Mary Joy Pigozzi wanted to help children get ahead in education. She surely could not then have imagined how many youngsters she would be able to reach.

After a career that has spanned leadership roles at UNICEF and UNESCO, Pigozzi now works as executive director of Educate A Child (EAC) – part of Education Above All Foundation (EAA) – which has just achieved its ambitious goal of committing to educate ten million out-of-school primary level children.

She has worked at EAA since 2012, profoundly changing the lives of marginalised young people unable to access quality education.

She says: “EAC has had a wonderful opportunity to influence the life chances of millions of children. This does not happen very often.

“Thanks to the vision and strength of our foundation’s founder, Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, EAC has been able to carve out a path to use a strong partnership model to help children overcome the barriers that prevent them from realising their right to a quality primary education.



## ABOUT EAA

Education Above All Foundation (EAA) was founded in 2012 by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser. Its aim is to build a global movement that contributes to human, social and economic development through the provision of quality education. With a focus on those affected by poverty, conflict and disaster, it champions the needs of children, youth and women to empower them to become active members of their communities.



“The barriers include poverty, geography, all forms of discrimination, infrastructure, poor quality education, and conflict and disasters – these are all barriers that the children did not create.”

Her work, which focuses on ‘hard-to-reach’ children, also has much wider benefits, she explains. “In addition to contributing to changing children’s lives, the programme has helped families and teachers. It has brought the global situation of out-of-school children into sharper focus.

“It has shown how different approaches are needed for different contexts, and it has broadened and deepened the knowledge base about out-of-school children.”

Whether they are children living in remote rural areas, such as the nomadic populations of Mali, or in challenging natural environments, such as the flood plains of Bangladesh, in severe poverty and sent to work in Haiti, or in the conflict areas of Syria and Yemen and nearby refugee camps, EAC aims to reach all out-of-school children.

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**“Thanks to the vision and strength of our foundation’s founder, Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, EAC has been able to carve out a path to use a strong partnership model to help children overcome the barriers that prevent them from realising their right to a quality primary education.”**

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Pigozzi has designed and led an ambitious and innovative programme to support partners in identifying and enrolling 10 million out of school children at the primary level. Based in Qatar and with a small team, Pigozzi built the necessary systems to manage and monitor over 65 projects in 50 countries. The team has received two international awards for innovation in education, and total funding for EAC projects has hit USD 1.4 billion.

## The issue in numbers

- **65.6 million** people are forcibly displaced by conflict and persecution
- More than half of the estimated **22 million** refugees are under the age of 18
- **61%** of refugee children attend primary school, compared to a global average of **91%**

Having previously worked on some of the most critical issues in education, such as the expansion of girl’s education, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, disrupted schooling in conflict and post-conflict countries, and overall access to quality education, Pigozzi is not fazed by the challenges ahead.

She acknowledges that having such an ambitious target has been hard, however. She says: “Days are long, weekends are short, and often holidays are cancelled – but it is worth it. I am concerned that we look not at the 10 million target and see it as achieved. Now is not the time to rest on our laurels – there are still 63 million out-of-school children at the primary level.

It is certainly satisfying work. She says: “Honestly, I am humbled every day by the amazing commitment of the many people who are so concerned for and dedicated to out-of-school children the entire team in Education Above All, starting with our CEO, Mr Fahad Al Sulaiti, to each of our partners in 50 countries, to the thousands and thousands of people on the ground who work tirelessly in the projects.

“It has been a privilege to live here and begin to better understand the generosity and ambition of this country, to have been able to contribute to how it is perceived overseas while having the chance to make a difference in so many futures.”

## Essa Al Mannai

# *Reaching out to Asia*

Executive Director of Education Above All Foundation's Reach Out To Asia (ROTA) programme, Essa Al Mannai, reflects on the rewards and challenges of delivering educational initiatives in over a dozen countries.

Guided by Qatar's 2030 National Vision, ROTA's volunteer-led work to increase access to quality education among underprivileged school children throughout Asia is nothing short of inspiring.



| Wall construction volunteer team, ROTA programme

### **Tell us about your current position at ROTA?**

I first joined ROTA in 2009 and serve as the programme's Executive Director. My principal professional endeavour is implementing the strategic course set by our leadership. During this tenure, I have led a variety of initiatives in 15 countries across Asia and MENA, including Indonesia, Pakistan,

Nepal, Palestine, and Lebanon, as well as in Qatar itself. These projects typically involve educational leadership and teacher training, as well as sports, environmental and skills development.

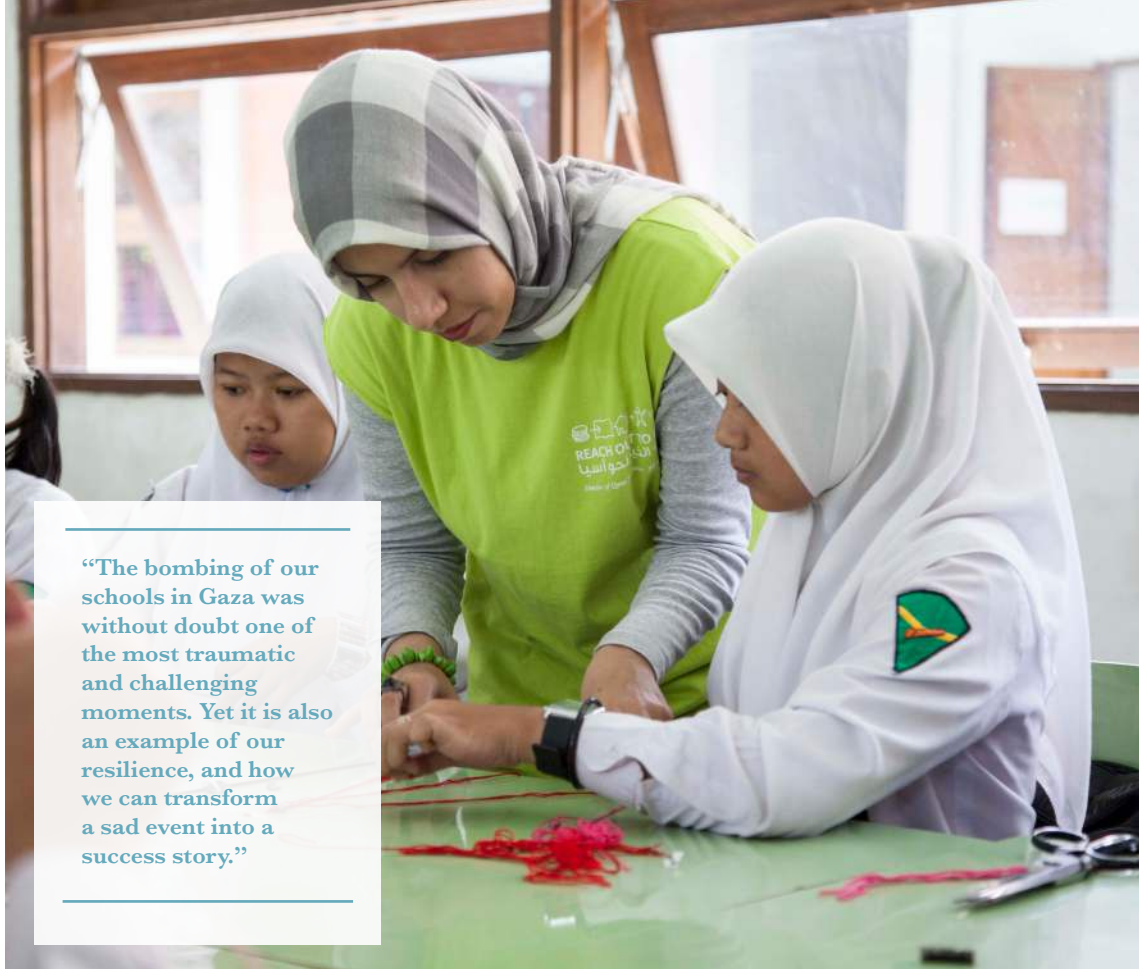
### **What is your favourite part of the job?**

Being part of ROTA's working environment is truly an exceptional experience in itself. Working on

a daily basis with a dedicated passionate team really enriches the professional journey, and instils a sense of confidence that we can overcome any potential challenge together. Also, the diversity of our projects, partners, and beneficiaries brings a sense of excitement and helps avoid routine.

### **What has been your most challenging moment at ROTA?**

The bombing of our schools in Gaza was without doubt one of the most traumatic and challenging moments. Yet it is also an example of our resilience, and how we can transform a sad event into a success story. The children's incredible enthusiasm to continue attending school, despite the severe damage, inspired us to rebuild in record time, and the project is now fully functioning again. ROTA has



“The bombing of our schools in Gaza was without doubt one of the most traumatic and challenging moments. Yet it is also an example of our resilience, and how we can transform a sad event into a success story.”

| ROTA programme

worked hard to rehabilitate the educational environment in Gaza since 2014, and is determined to continue these efforts to ensure children in the Strip receive the education they deserve.

### **What ROTA initiative have you been most inspired by?**

The Al Koora Art Project was a concept developed by ROTA's Volunteer Programme that connected children with special needs with a collective of young aspiring Qatari artists. To celebrate Qatar's successful 2022 World Cup bid, the children and artists created works of art that represented different elements of Qatar, its

people, and its natural environment in the past, present and future. These works of art were then auctioned at ROTA's 2011 Gala Dinner, raising a phenomenal USD 1.5 million, which went on to fund numerous educational initiatives across Asia. Today, the Al Koora pieces are on show at Hamad International Airport alongside artwork by internationally-acclaimed artists.

### **How has ROTA benefitted from joining Education Above All (EAA) Foundation?**

From my perspective, the added value has been two-fold. By merging with EAA, we have gained

tremendously from the patronage and leadership of Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Founder and Chairperson of Education Above All Foundation. Beyond this, we see a two-way experience-sharing benefit: ROTA has learnt from EAA's extensive experience and best practice, while EAA has brought to the table its own pool of knowledge on increasing access to quality education, youth empowerment, and the value of strong community engagement.

## Dr Asmaa E Al Fadala

# *Putting education at the heart of global development*

Research director aims to collaborate, innovate and advocate with partners across the world to raise standards of teaching and learning

**F**or Dr Asmaa E Al Fadala, the field of education has always been one that requires a local understanding and a global outlook. In her pursuit of educational reform, her career path has transitioned from being a physics teacher in Qatar; a science coordinator following her acquisition of a Master's degree; to joining the RAND Policy Institute, focusing on educational research.

At Cambridge University, Dr Al Fadala explored case studies of schools in Qatar impacted by educational reform. The research earned her a PhD in Educational Leadership. Afterwards, she joined the World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE), an international initiative aimed at transforming education through innovation. Today, she is Director of Research at WISE, focusing on promoting innovation in education across three 'pillars'.

"The first pillar that we focus on requires us to collaborate with renowned institutions around the world, and produce policy-relevant research on a wide range of educational topics," she explains. "Secondly, we have programmes that recognize and actively facilitate innovation in education. Lastly, we promote innovation in education through our advocacy work, as we participate in different forums around the world.

"Our most significant achievement has been that we succeeded in putting education on the global agenda. That was very much part of Her Highness's vision following her establishment of WISE in 2009."

Founded by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser as a global initiative under the umbrella of Qatar Foundation, WISE hosts the biennial WISE Summit. The conference brings together over 1,500 worldwide experts, researchers, and innovators to form new collaborations and develop solutions to inspire creative changes in education. In her role as Director of Research, Dr Asmaa E Al Fadala is central to the success of the project and to WISE's international outreach.

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**"Our most significant achievement has been that we succeeded in putting education on the global agenda. That was very much part of Her Highness's vision following her establishment of WISE in 2009."**

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"Working at WISE has taken my work a step further to reach global platforms," she says. "For example, I have been invited to serve as an advisory member of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, working on a new





| *Dr Asmaa E Al Fadala*

education strategy for the region. This has given me the opportunity not only to make my voice heard within WISE and Qatar, but also on an international level.”

Dr Al Fadala’s work is necessarily global, but also local, which allows her to incorporate lessons from her early career path. She says: “On a local level, my personal favourite WISE project thus far has been working on the Empowering Leaders of Learning (ELL) programme with schools in Qatar. ELL is designed to support school leaders with strategies and tools to improve teaching

practices and student learning outcomes, encouraging educators to pursue an evidence-informed focus and to apply research on effective teaching.”

ELL is just one example of the impact she and WISE are making toward education, locally and globally. However, Dr Al Fadala says that such forward momentum must persist: “Having been in the Qatar education system for years, I feel it is important for us to continually seek the gaps we need to fill in order to make our schools among the best in the world.”

# About the Government Communications Office

The Government Communications Office (GCO) was established in June 2015 to effectively communicate the priorities of the Government of the State of Qatar.

The GCO works with Qatar's ministries and embassies across the world to tell the country's story and showcase its vision for the future.

The GCO falls under the jurisdiction of His Excellency Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior. His Excellency Sheikh Saif bin Ahmed Al Thani is Director of the GCO, and is the first point of contact for those looking to learn more about the State of Qatar.

The GCO is committed to transparent engagement with the international community as Qatar continues on its journey of development.

As part of its work, the GCO publishes *Q Magazine* twice a year. Its purpose is to educate a global audience about the State of Qatar, and highlight the country's achievements and initiatives in various fields – locally and internationally.

To find out the latest news from the GCO, please visit our website [www.gco.gov.qa](http://www.gco.gov.qa).



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Government Communications Office

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Qatar Foundation | WISE | Doha Film Institute

Qatar Development Bank | Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy

Qatar Financial Centre | Education Above All

Reach Out to Asia | Qatar Fund for Development

Qatar Olympic Committee | Qatar Football Association







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