

ANNUAL REPORT 2014



SHEIKH SAUD BIN SAQR AL QASIMI
FOUNDATION FOR POLICY RESEARCH

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MANAGING DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

2014 has been a remarkable year for the Al Qasimi Foundation, and we are proud to present this annual report, which highlights the Foundation's recent accomplishments and celebrates its fifth year of dedication to the development of Ras Al Khaimah.

As Ras Al Khaimah and the United Arab Emirates continue to grow, the Al Qasimi Foundation has been at the forefront of regional research on education while also contributing to discussions on urban planning and public health. In addition to expanding its team of resident researchers, community organizers, and education professionals, the Foundation has continued to build and strengthen partnerships with its key stakeholders to create more opportunities for development and strategic achievements.

Such resources made 2014 the Foundation's most productive year to date in terms of tangible contributions to national priorities including education, public health, and urban development. Yet, what sets us apart is that we refuse to be satisfied with our previous accomplishments and aspire to advance the frontier of excellence and be a pacesetter to realize the vision of our founder, His Highness Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi. Therefore, we share his assertion that regional policymaking efforts must be evidence-based, and we remain motivated by a desire to serve the UAE and contribute to Ras Al Khaimah's auspicious future.

Dr. Mohamed Abdulatif Khalifa

Managing Director

Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

At its core, the Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research is part of the Ras Al Khaimah community, supported by its leadership and energized by its citizens and residents. Reflecting on 2014, I realize how much of the Foundation's initiatives are born out of its conviction that effective community investment is the product of people-centered approaches to development. This perspective makes the Al Qasimi Foundation a unique variety of think tank in that it emphasizes both research and relationships in all of its endeavors, as our third annual report illustrates.

This year, the Foundation built on its core competencies in the educational arena while expanding its activities related to public health and urban development through several research and capacity development initiatives. These included the publication of a book exploring education and gender inequality in the GCC; a collaboration between the Foundation, University of Sydney medical research team, and local health care experts; and a proposal for the environmentally friendly revitalization of an abandoned fishing village in Ras Al Khaimah.

While pursuing such new opportunities, we also continued to invest in our established interests. Our professional development programs provided courses and workshops to hundreds of local educators while the Sheikh Saqr bin Mohammed Al Qasimi programs supported local students in their efforts to learn English, gain pre-professional skills, and study overseas. At the same time, our outreach team hosted an impressive array of community events from policy discussion forums to the Second Annual Ras Al Khaimah Fine Arts Festival, and the research department had its most prolific publishing year to date.

Throughout 2014, I have been humbled to witness the Foundation deepen its roots in the United Arab Emirates even as it forges strategic international partnerships. From conducting regional studies on private education to piloting a program for local at-risk youth, the Foundation has sought to equip its stakeholders with relevant research findings as well as strategies for their application in Ras Al Khaimah's immediate context. The efforts of our team in 2014 have positioned the Al Qasimi Foundation for a dynamic and productive new year, and we remain committed to serving our community by promoting education and sustainable development and by mobilizing people across Ras Al Khaimah, the United Arab Emirates, and the Gulf Cooperation Council.

Dr. Natasha Ridge

Executive Director

Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research

ABOUT THE AL QASIMI FOUNDATION

OVERVIEW

The Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research was established in 2009 to aid in the social, cultural, and economic development of Ras Al Khaimah, a northern emirate in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The Foundation is a non-profit, quasi-governmental organization and is the visionary initiative of Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi, UAE Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Ras Al Khaimah. His Highness places great value on education and research, and the Al Qasimi Foundation was created with three central purposes:

1. to generate a world-class body of research on Ras Al Khaimah and the broader UAE region,
2. to develop local capacity in the public sector, and
3. to engage the community in its work.

As the ruler of the fastest growing emirate, His Highness seeks to ground policy decisions firmly in relevant bodies of research that reflect the best thinking in the world as well as the local Ras Al Khaimah and UAE contexts. To this end, the Al Qasimi Foundation serves as a bridge between the research and policymaking communities—bringing to scholars' attention public policy questions important to Ras Al Khaimah, and, in turn, disseminating research findings to promote positive social change and community investment.



VISION

Our vision is the sustained social, cultural, and economic development of Ras Al Khaimah and the United Arab Emirates and the enhanced capacity, satisfaction, and quality of life for all members of its community, attained through effective public policy research and strategic service delivery.

MISSION

The Foundation believes in a people-centered approach to equipping the community to find creative, collaborative strategies to aid in the development of Ras Al Khaimah. Accordingly, our mission is to make significant contributions to the social, cultural, and economic development of Ras Al Khaimah and the United Arab Emirates by:

- Generating and supporting high-quality research focused on education and related policy areas in order to support the creation of relevant, effective public policies
- Providing strategic services and support to develop individual and local capacity in education and the public sector
- Building a spirit of collaboration and shared vision through purposeful community engagement

RESEARCH

A key part of the Al Qasimi Foundation's mission is to conduct and promote high-quality research that will help inform policymakers in Ras Al Khaimah, the United Arab Emirates, and the broader Gulf region. To this end, the Foundation seeks to build a community of international and locally-based scholars whose research interests focus on policy issues relevant to Ras Al Khaimah and the UAE. Additionally, the Foundation promotes collaboration among highly recognized international universities and the UAE public sector and is committed to connecting policymakers with researchers in order to promote evidence-based decision making. As a result, most research undertaken by the Al Qasimi Foundation is applied in nature. The Foundation's research tends to focus on the areas below:

- Education quality and impact
- Community development
- Health and well-being

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

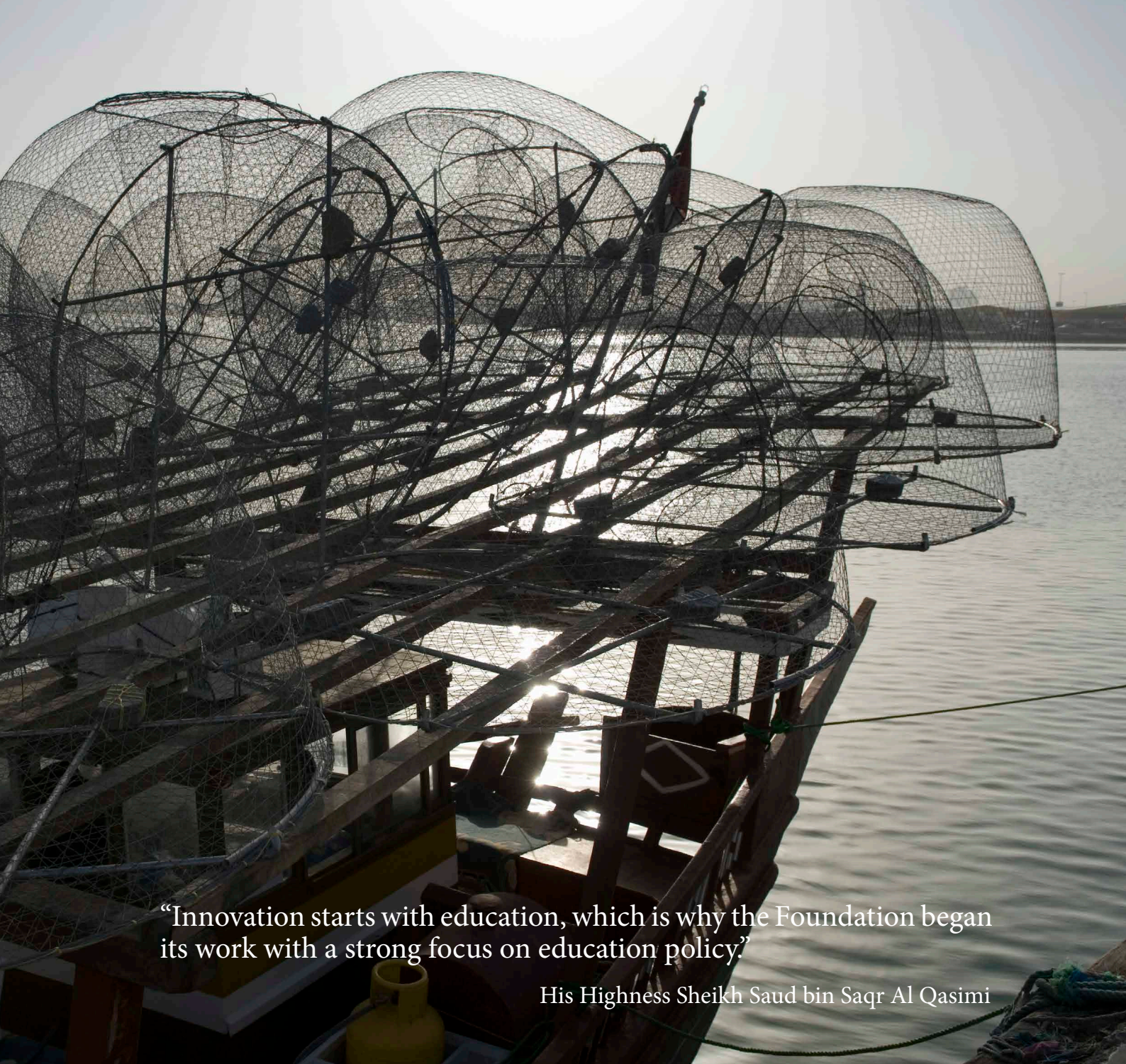
Building the capacity of Ras Al Khaimah and broader UAE community represents a core part of the Al Qasimi Foundation's mission. Therefore, the Foundation strives to develop locally-based talent and to support institutional improvements in the public arena. The Al Qasimi Foundation's initiatives are designed to serve government sectors including education, community development and urban planning, and public health. Specific initiatives include:

- Improving teacher quality
- Promoting school development
- Developing gifted and talented students
- Cultivating targeted skills among the Ras Al Khaimah civil service members

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Supporting people, nurturing collaboration, and advancing a spirit of community are at the heart of the Al Qasimi Foundation's mission. Accordingly, community engagement represents a purposeful exchange and leveraging of knowledge, resources, and partnerships to the mutual benefit of those involved and the local public sector. Community engagement is, therefore, the catalyst for Ras Al Khaimah's sustainable development and includes a commitment to inclusiveness, open source (public) information, and transparent communication. Primary avenues of outreach include the:

- Community Gathering Series
- Majlis Series
- Ras Al Khaimah Teachers Network
- Ras Al Khaimah Fine Arts Festival



“Innovation starts with education, which is why the Foundation began its work with a strong focus on education policy.”

His Highness Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

RESEARCH

7



In-house research projects

4



Policy papers published

1



Book published

1



Report published

2



Working papers published

2



Doctoral research grants awarded

1



Faculty research grant awarded

1



Seed grant awarded

1



Resident Fulbright scholar

1



Conference proceedings published

9



Presentations given

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT



30

Scholarships awarded through the Sheikh Saqr Overseas Scholarship Program



300+

Participants in the teacher professional development courses



4

Teacher scholarships awarded



4

School grants awarded



500+

Students tested for English language proficiency



150

Participants in the Sheikh Saqr Student Enrichment Program



16 semester courses

13 modular workshops

Teacher professional development courses offered

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH



New visitors to the Al Qasimi Foundation website in December 2014



Fact Sheets published



Community Gathering Series events



Majlis Series events



Participants in Foundation events



Art and film pieces featured in the Ras Al Khaimah Fine Arts Festival



Foundation appearances in local and international news coverage



Foundation videos produced



Film featured in the Dubai International Film Festival



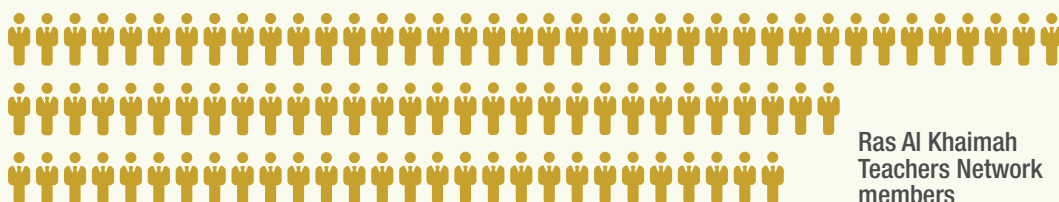
Guide to Living in Ras Al Khaimah published



Interns



Quarterly newsletters published



Ras Al Khaimah Teachers Network members





POLICY FOCUS AREAS



EDUCATION

OVERVIEW

As Ras Al Khaimah and the United Arab Emirates work toward achieving a more knowledge-based economy, education remains a key priority. Accordingly, the Foundation's education research and outreach efforts focus on three specific groups: educators, students, and vulnerable populations.

Ras Al Khaimah's educators are helping to prepare the next generation for leadership and service. In order to equip these men and women, the Foundation provides numerous professional development opportunities in addition to facilitating the Gulf Comparative Education Society's annual meeting and research efforts.

Ras Al Khaimah's students also have a unique set of opportunities and challenges. Only some residents have free access to education, and male youths often fall victim to the worldwide reverse gender gap in education. Foundation research investigates these issues and communicates relevant findings

to local policymakers. At the same time, the Sheikh Saqr Student Enrichment Program offers promising local students resources for improving their language and soft skills in order to prepare them for university studies. Similarly, the Sheikh Saqr Overseas Scholarship Program supports Emirati students who are pursuing undergraduate and graduate degrees abroad.

Finally, the Foundation labors to identify and advocate for vulnerable populations in Ras Al Khaimah and the Emirates. In particular, such efforts have focused on local correctional facilities, youth who are at risk of dropping out of school, and the economically disadvantaged. As a testament to the Foundation's effectiveness, this year non-profit organization Al Bayt Mitwahid initiated a partnership with the Foundation to work with a juvenile correctional facility in the neighboring emirate of Fujairah.

EDUCATORS

**January-
December 2014**



Four educators receive Teacher Scholarships to continue their educations



**January
2014**

Ras Al Khaimah Teachers Network prepares educators for new professional development opportunities



**February
2014**

Teacher Professional Development courses resume and Foundation courses later receive accreditation from the Ministry of Education in Ras Al Khaimah

**April
2014**



Fifth Annual Gulf Comparative Education Society Symposium held in Dubai, UAE



**June
2014**

Ras Al Khaimah Teacher Exchange Program preliminary visit to Malaysia's Ministry of Education



**July
2014**

Publication: Education Reform in the UAE: An Investigation of Teachers' Views of Change and Factors Impeding Change in Ras Al Khaimah Schools

**October
2014**



Lee Rensimer, doctoral scholar, begins research on private tertiary education providers in Ras Al Khaimah



**November
2014**

Publication: Expatriate Teachers and Education Quality in the Gulf Cooperation Council



**December
2014**

Publication: Professional Development for Faculty and Staff in Ras Al Khaimah's Higher Education Institutions

STUDENTS



January 2014

Publication: Reshaping Attitudes, Beliefs, and Opinions: The Key to Emiratization in the Private Sector



January 2014

Sheikh Saqr Overseas Scholarship Program continues to support national students studying abroad



February 2014

Majlis: Shadow Education: "International Perspectives on the Scale, Nature, and Policy Implications of Private Supplementary Tutoring" considers the practical and policy implications of this growing trend



VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

January
2014



Ras Al Khaimah Prison Project continues to equip young men with English and professional skill sets



April
2014

Majlis: "Does Privatizing Educational Services for the Poor Make Sense?" discusses benefits and drawbacks of educational privatization for the poor



April
2014

Capacity Development: Delegation of educators and policymakers visit Australia to learn about Hands on Learning program for at-risk secondary school students



July
2014

Community Engagement: Foundation staff assemble and distribute gift packages to local laborers as part of the *sadaqa* tradition



October
2014

Professional development initiatives with Fujairah Juvenile Correctional Facility staff begins on behalf of Al Bayt Mitwahid

HANDS ON LEARNING

December
2014

Hands on Learning pilot program completes first successful semester in two Ras Al Khaimah schools



December
2014

The short film *Burden* featured in Dubai International Film Festival and highlights cultural and economic challenges of local youth



February 2014

Sheikh Saqr Student Enrichment Program begins new semester of English courses and college-preparatory workshops



April 2014

Publication: Education and the Reverse Gender Divide in Gulf Cooperation Council Countries: Embracing the Global, Ignoring the Local



September 2014

Publication: Challenges to Building a "Knowledge Society": The Role of Literacy in Promoting Critical Thinking in the UAE



November 2014

Sheikh Saqr Student Enrichment Program partners with Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth to identify gifted national students in Ras Al Khaimah



HEALTH & WELL-BEING

OVERVIEW

Although the UAE technically offers a universal health care plan to its citizens, who represent approximately 15% of the country's population, and employers are required to provide health insurance to their workers and their families, there remain significant challenges on the region's public health front. This year, the Foundation focused its research and outreach activities on lifestyle factors, as many of the UAE's most common ailments are

highly preventable. Events focused on educating the community about healthy eating and exercise. To address the dearth of health research on Ras Al Khaimah, the Foundation also partnered with researchers from the University of Sydney to conduct a study on breast cancer diagnosis and welcomed its first Fulbright Scholar, whose research focuses on the medical tourism industry in Ras Al Khaimah and Dubai.

“In the end, our country is only as strong as the knowledge we possess. For us to prosper and reach greater heights, we need to cultivate a robust culture of innovation and research.”

His Highness Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi

HEALTH & WELL-BEING

March 2014

Community Gathering:
“Archery for Everyone”
teaches residents the basics
of an ancient sport



May 2014

Community Gathering:
“Nutrition for Health” offers
participants ways to improve
their health and wellness
through nutrition

June 2014

Community Gathering:
“Thai Cooking for
Everyone” acquaints
participants with a
culinary tradition known
for its fresh flavors and
ingredients

September 2014

Community Gathering: “Basic
Yoga for Everyone” introduces
participants to the benefits of
this exercise

September 2014

Sarath Ganji, Fulbright
scholar, begins research
on medical tourism and
development opportunities
in Ras Al Khaimah and
Dubai

December 2014

Seed grant and Majlis:
“Transforming Breast Cancer
Diagnosis in Ras Al Khaimah”
in partnership with the
University of Sydney, RAK
Hospital, and Ras Al Khaimah
Medical and Health Sciences
University





COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

OVERVIEW

Ras Al Khaimah is the UAE's fastest growing emirate, and the Al Qasimi Foundation seeks to promote its sustainable growth on at least two fronts. The first is related to the emirate's physical development and the preservation of its natural resources. The second

focuses on the region's culture and heritage as a way of engaging and unifying its residents. All of the Foundation's community development efforts are fueled by the goals of sustainable growth and local participation.

“At the Ras Al Khaimah Fine Arts Festival, we have the opportunity to engage with a variety of interpretations and perspectives . . . It is my hope that, over these three days, this Festival brings together artists and our wider community to celebrate Ras Al Khaimah and the role of fine art in our society.”

His Highness Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi

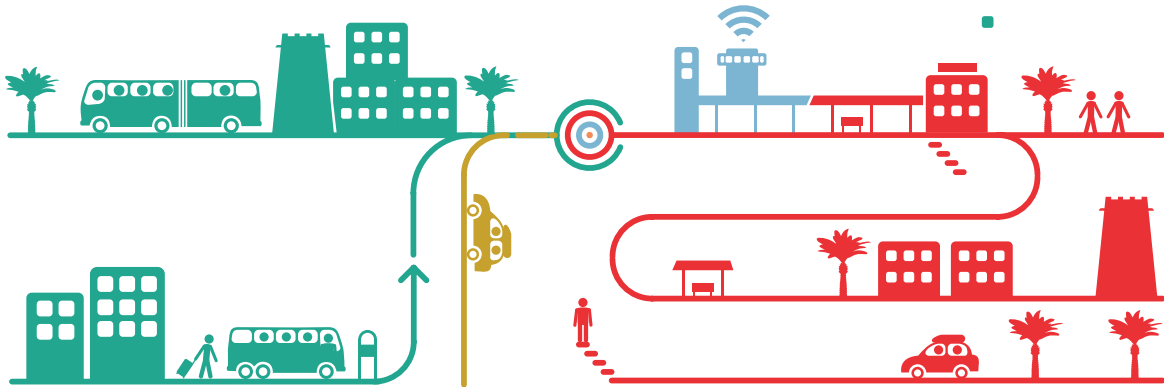
URBAN PLANNING

January 2014

Community Gathering: "Nature Reserve Expedition for Everyone" introduces guests of all ages to local and protected wildlife

May 2014

Publication: Urban Development Lab: A Participatory Urban Design for Ras Al Khaimah



June 2014

Publication: Sustainable Desert Development: A Case Study of Al Jazeera Al Hamra

October 2014

Majlis: "Inspiring Outdoor Liveability in Arid Coastal Environments" proposes the revitalization of a local abandoned village through environmentally conscious development practices

ARTS & CULTURE

February 2014

Special event: 2nd Annual Ras Al Khaimah Fine Arts Festival brings local and international artists and art enthusiasts to the northern emirates

July 2014

Community Gathering: "Ramadan Iftar for Everyone" welcomes community members into an Emirati home for a festive meal

October 2014

Community Gathering: "An Evening of Music with Della Mae Band" brings American bluegrass stylings to the heart of Ras Al Khaimah



April 2014

Community Gathering: "Photography for Everyone" led by local photography club

October 2014

Community Gathering: "Fashion for Everyone" welcomes Emirati designers for creative workshop

November 2014

Community Gathering: "Made in the UAE, An Evening of Emirati Films" highlights local and other Arab cinematic accomplishments

April 2014

Majlis: "Too Much of a Good Thing? Nationalism, Praise, and Motivation" provides an overview of research on praise and external incentives for positive student behavior

October 2014

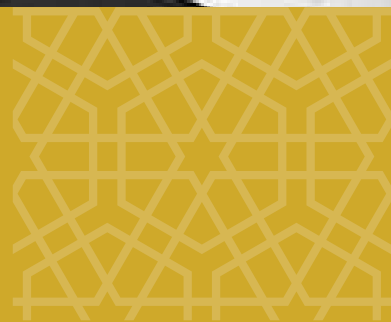
Publication: Guide to Living in Ras Al Khaimah

December 2014

Community Gathering: "Holiday Feast for Everyone" explores holiday traditions as they are celebrated by Ras Al Khaimah residents



PUBLICATIONS



PUBLICATIONS

Fact Sheet

Education in the United Arab Emirates and Ras Al Khaimah
(January 2014)

Policy Paper 08

**Reshaping Attitudes, Beliefs, and Opinions:
The Key to Emiratization in the Private
Sector**
(January 2014)

**Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation
for Policy Research 2013 Annual Report**
(March 2013)

**Education and the Reverse Gender Divide
in Gulf Cooperation Council Countries:
Embracing the Global, Ignoring the Local**
(April 2014)

Working Paper 06

**Urban Development Lab: A Participatory
Urban Design for Ras Al Khaimah**
(May 2014)

Policy Paper 09

**Sustainable Desert Development: A Case
Study of Al Jazeera Al Hamra**
(June 2014)

Working Paper 07

**Education Reform in the UAE: An
Investigation of Teachers' Views of Change
and Factors Impeding Change in Ras Al
Khaimah Schools**
(July 2014)

Fact Sheet

Ras Al Khaimah
(August 2014)

Policy Paper 10

**Challenges to Building a "Knowledge
Society": The Role of Literacy in
Promoting Critical Thinking in the UAE**
(September 2014)

**Gulf Comparative Education Society's
Fifth Annual Symposium on Locating
the National in the International:
Comparative Perspectives on Language,
Identity, Policy, and Practice**
(October 2014)



Policy Paper 11

**Expatriate Teachers and Education
Quality in the Gulf Cooperation
Council**
(November 2014)

Report 01

**Professional Development for Faculty
and Staff in Ras Al Khaimah's Higher
Education Institutions**
(December 2014)



PRESENTATIONS



PRESENTATIONS

“At-Risk Youth Program”

Doha Evidence Symposium: “What Works” To Improve Youth Labour Productivity?

March 6, 2014 - Doha

Presenter: Susan Kippels

“Unfair Advantage: Private Education in the Absence of a Public Option, the Case of the United Arab Emirates and Qatar”

Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) Annual Conference

March 11, 2014 - Toronto

Presenter: Dr. Natasha Ridge

“Embracing the Global, Ignoring the Local: Creating a Reverse Gender Gap in the GCC”

Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) Annual Conference

March 13, 2014 - Toronto

Presenter: Dr. Natasha Ridge

“Education and the Reverse Gender Divide in the Gulf States: Embracing the Global, Ignoring the Local”

Gulf Comparative Education Society (GCES) Annual Symposium

April 9, 2014 - Dubai

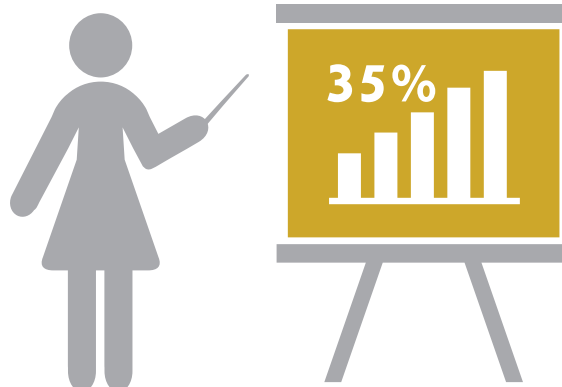
Presenter: Dr. Natasha Ridge

“Understanding and Addressing the Reverse Gender Gap in Education”

Symposium on The Male Dilemma at Sultan Qaboos University (keynote presentation)

May 25, 2014 - Oman

Presenter: Dr. Natasha Ridge



“The Reverse Gender Divide in Education in the GCC: Implications for the Labor Market”

Research Seminar: Current Issues in the UAE and Gulf Societies at Paris-Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi

May 28, 2014 - Abu Dhabi

Presenter: Dr. Natasha Ridge

“Teacher Quality & Employment Policies in the GCC”

Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research (ECSSR) Annual Education Conference

September 24, 2014 - Abu Dhabi

Presenter: Soha Shami

“Embracing the Global, Ignoring the Local: Creating a Reverse Gender Gap in the GCC”

Middle East Studies Association (MESA) Annual Meeting

November 22, 2014 - Washington, DC

Presenter: Dr. Natasha Ridge

“Migrant Teachers and Education Quality: The Cases of the United Arab Emirates and Qatar”

Middle East Studies Association (MESA) Annual Meeting

November 25, 2014 - Washington, DC

Presenter: Susan Kippels



OUR TEAM



OUR TEAM

OVERVIEW

As a think tank that focuses on policy research and recommendations, the Al Qasimi Foundation is invested in a variety of initiatives across its emirate and nation. Its work in the fields of education, public health, and community development has produced many productive partnerships with both institutions and individuals. Such partnerships help to fuel Ras Al Khaimah's progress toward sustainable cultural, social, and economic development and take a

variety of forms—from internships to research grants, from joint projects with local government agencies to collaborations with international education pioneers. At the Foundation's core, though, is a group of professional staff members who have rooted themselves in the community and dedicated themselves to the future of, in the words of His Highness, "Ras Al Khaimah's vibrant, diverse, and evolving society."

"The Foundation is a resource for all those who are committed to learning, especially teachers and public sector employees, by providing strategic access to programs of continuing education and training to improve their knowledge and skills."

His Highness Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi



PARTNERS

The Al Qasimi Foundation is always looking for ways to improve Ras Al Khaimah and serve its people. Yet our work would not be possible without the vision of His Highness Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi and partners who remain dedicated to pursuing the

interests of Ras Al Khaimah through sustainable development efforts. These partners draw on private and governmental, local and international resources to provide a variety of competencies that further the Foundation's unique mission.

“To date, the Foundation has . . . served as a bridge for some of the best new scholars from top international universities to discover Ras Al Khaimah and make it the focus of their research.”

His Highness Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi

GOVERNMENT

Al Ghail Youth Center

هيئة الحكومة الإلكترونية
Electronic Government Authority

كليات التقنية العليا
HIGHER COLLEGES OF TECHNOLOGY
RAS AL KHAIMAH

متحف رأس الخيمة الوطني
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF RAS AL KHAIMAH

Ras Al Khaimah
Correctional Facility

منطقة رأس الخيمة التعليمية
RAK Educational Zone

Ras Al Khaimah
Human Resources Department

Ras Al Khaimah
Project Management Office

RAK ROCK

برنامج الشيخ صقر للتميز الحكومي
Sheikh Saqr Program for Government Excellence

STRATEGIC

CLIFFORD
CHANCE

ERNST & YOUNG

HANDS ON LEARNING

JOHNS HOPKINS
CENTER for TALENTED YOUTH

THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

COMMUNITY

American University of Ras Al Khaimah

BON EDUCATION
A Learning & Development Company

GOCES
The Gulf Comparative Education Society

جامعة نيويورك أبوظبي
NYU | ABU DHABI

VISITING SCHOLARS



Sarath Ganji, Fulbright Scholar and graduate of Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government: "Healthcare Professionals and Medical Tourism in the United Arab Emirates"



Lee Rensimer, University of Wisconsin-Madison in the United States: "Internationalization as Process and Practice: Transnational Partnerships and their Outcomes in UAE Higher Education"

INTERNS

Fatimo Adedeji, Accounting Intern

Aesha Al Ahmed, Media Intern

Maitha Al Mansoori, Education and Research Intern

Brian Chung, Research Intern

Tania Farrington, Research Intern

Hee Eun Kwon, Research Intern

Mastewal Taddese, Research Intern



FOUNDATION TEAM MEMBERS





A PERSONAL COMMITMENT

After welcoming eight new staff this year, the Al Qasimi Foundation has grown to include more than twenty professionals from nearly a dozen countries. All members of the Al Qasimi Foundation's team share a dedication to the community of Ras Al Khaimah and to the United Arab Emirates. These personal commitments take many forms, including

philanthropic gifts to organizations that benefit the under-privileged and participation in local staples such as the Ras Al Khaimah Half Marathon. Personal investment in and a people-centered approach to community development continue to unite Foundation staff to one another and fuel their devotion to the region.

“In Ras Al Khaimah we want to create policies that are based on sound research to address relevant social issues across different sectors in our emirate and the country.”

His Highness Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi



SHEIKH SAUD BIN SAQR AL QASIMI
FOUNDATION FOR POLICY RESEARCH