



## **CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND PRIORITIES 2019-2023**

**“SUPPORTING RESEARCH, DEVELOPING MINDS”**





## INTRODUCTION

A key part of the Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation's mission is to develop and deliver strategic programs and initiatives that strengthen the quality and performance of Ras Al Khaimah's education and other public sectors.

This Capacity Development Strategy and Priorities document (Capacity Development Plan) denotes and focuses on the Al Qasimi Foundation's role and priorities in funding, designing, and delivering professional development opportunities, to those within the education sector and other local government agencies. It cites the current and past professional development programs undertaken by the Foundation since it was founded in 2009, and also identifies new sectors of the local community that could benefit from professional development support over the five years (2019-2023).

Core capacity development areas identified in this plan include:

- Improvement of the educational system through informing policy, teacher training, and professional development opportunities.
- Support for secondary school students to access university and career opportunities.
- Guidance and support for secondary boys' schools in Ras Al Khaimah through the implementation of programs for at-risk students.
- Development of marginalized members in the community, including the Ras Al Khaimah prison population and elderly.
- Targeted skills development of the Ras Al Khaimah civil service.

While these five areas form the central focus of the Al Qasimi Foundation's capacity development activities, the Foundation is committed to collaborating with community partners for sustained growth using creativity to inspire new sets of ideas that will foster change. Underpinning all of the Al Qasimi Foundation's capacity development efforts is a commitment to both excellence and integrity.



## AL QASIMI FOUNDATION'S VISION & MISSION

### 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 approaches that aid in the social, cultural, and economic development of Ras Al Khaimah and the United Arab Emirates.

- Generating and supporting innovative, high-quality research focused on education and related policy areas in order to inform decisions and support the creation of relevant, effective public policies.
- Developing and providing strategic services and support to build individual and local capacity in education and the public sector.
- Building a spirit of community, collaboration, and shared vision through purposeful engagement that fosters meaningful relationships among individuals and organizations.

This Capacity Development Plan seeks to fulfill the second part of the Al Qasimi Foundation's mission.



## PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The Capacity Development Plan is intended to provide a framework from which opportunities for developing strategic programs and capacity building initiatives can be identified, prioritized, and pursued within Ras Al Khaimah. These include:

- Supporting the development of teachers to ensure schools can consistently offer high-quality education for all students;
- Offering programming to increase student engagement, particularly among boys, to reduce drop-out rates and close the reverse gender gap in academic achievement;
- Collaborating with local government to offer professional development trainings for their employees (e.g. English language, leadership skills, computer literacy, etc.) so they can access further opportunities for career enhancement and affect organizational improvement;
- Supporting secondary students to explore future careers and prepare for enrollment in higher education at competitive universities in the United Arab Emirates and overseas.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Capacity Development Plan identifies four primary objectives:

- To strengthen the quality of education in Ras Al Khaimah by investing in teachers and school leaders through exceptioned professional development and learning exchange programs;
- To integrate and support the development of vulnerable adults, including elderly residents and prisoners residing in Ras Al Khaimah;
- To support the development of Emiratis working in Ras Al Khaimah's government sector;
- To develop and prepare Emirati students to achieve their full potential by engaging with secondary schools to equip them with the knowledge and skills to access quality higher education in the United Arab Emirates or overseas.



## FRAMEWORK OF GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Al Qasimi Foundation's Capacity Development Plan is situated within a framework of guiding principles which support the Foundation's values of contributing to the positive development of the local community, promoting collaboration, and striving for the highest quality.

The Al Qasimi Foundation will:

- Take into consideration the long-term sustainable development of Ras Al Khaimah when developing and delivering any program or initiative;
- Listen to the local community to ensure that all services and programs are need-driven;
- Base decisions for the selection and development of initiatives on the most up-to-date research;
- Strive to maintain the highest quality of provision when engaging training providers and developing programs;
- Acknowledge the influence of power relations, mindsets, and behavior change, and emphasize the importance of motivation as a driver of change;
- Strive to work in cooperation with existing local institutions to support and strengthen them;
- Recognize that capacity development has unplanned consequences that should be kept in mind during the design process and be valued, tracked, and evaluated as appropriate.

## PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

In order to achieve the goals and objectives set out in this Capacity Development Plan, the Al Qasimi Foundation has implemented a number of programs and initiatives for the benefit of Ras Al Khaimah's educators, students, and local government personnel. This document sets out existing and anticipated programs and initiatives which will continue to be monitored and evaluated over the five years (2019-2023) and adjusted according to perceived needs.



## TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Since 2010, the Al Qasimi Foundation has provided professional development programs for teachers at government and private schools in Ras Al Khaimah. The programming has sought to help them solve challenges they face in their schools and increase student engagement and learning, thus raising the overall standard of education in the emirate. Presently, activities include courses, a virtual platform called the Ras Al Khaimah Teachers Network, and an international teacher exchange program. In May 2018, the Al Qasimi Foundation and the Ministry of Education (MOE) signed a memorandum of understanding to formalize the ongoing collaboration they have related to professional development programming.

### TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSES/WORKSHOPS

In the last 10 years since the teacher professional development courses began, roughly 55 courses have been offered, which have engaged close to 2,000 educators. The courses and workshops aim to improve teachers' skills, allow them to stay up-to-date with technology, solve challenges, and improve the educational quality of schools in Ras Al Khaimah. Teachers' needs drive the overall professional development program, and new courses are piloted before they become part of the Al Qasimi Foundation's standard offerings.

Over the next five years the Al Qasimi Foundation intends to:

- 1- Continue to offer a suite of courses tailored to the expressed professional development needs of local educators;
- 2- Continue to deliver courses bilingually ensuring access for both Arabic and English speakers;
- 3- Expand the number of Teacher Professional Development workshops delivered regularly in remote areas;
- 4- Increase the number of Emirati teachers participating and instructing in the professional development courses;
- 5- Formally evaluate the Teacher Professional Development programs' impact on schools and the education sector.



## **RAS AL KHAIMAH TEACHERS' NETWORK**

The Ras Al Khaimah Teachers' Network (RAKTN) was set up by the Al Qasimi Foundation in 2010 as an online professional network to connect educators across the emirate. The RAKTN aims to draw together teachers who are geographically spread out and sometimes isolated in different schools in order to build professional relationships and share best practices and resources. It also serves as a platform to access course materials and interactions that support teacher professional development.

The RAKTN is managed and moderated by have the Al Qasimi Foundation. It currently has over 1500 members, many of whom also participated in the Foundation's Teacher Professional Development workshops.

Over the course of the next five years, the Al Qasimi Foundation intends to:

- 1- Redesign the RAKTN website to increase the number and engagement of RAKTN members;
- 2- Increase the number of active participants;
- 3- Increase RAKTN participant engagement;
- 4- Develop a frequent newsletter as a tool for engaging members;
- 5- Commission regular blog contributions for the Al Qasimi Foundation's blog on teaching.



## UNITED ARAB EMIRATES TEACHER EXCHANGE

The main goal of the Teacher Exchange Program is to provide Emirati educators and administrators of Ras Al Khaimah and other Emirates with opportunities to further develop their knowledge and skills of pedagogy and learning environments through international exchange visits. The exchange allows participants to experience different cultures and educational systems, as well as a variety of viewpoints from teachers, students, parents, and others within the education sector.

The Teacher Exchange Program runs every three years. In the first year, United Arab Emirates educators and administrators go overseas to visit schools in the host country and learn about their education system. During the second year, educators and administrators from the host country come to Ras Al Khaimah to learn about the education system and practices in the United Arab Emirates. In the third year, the foundation explores, plans, and communicates with new potential countries and organizations for the upcoming teacher exchange.

The Al Qasimi Foundation has successfully completed three exchanges to date: Switzerland (2011), Malaysia (2015) and Vietnam (2018).

As part of its commitment to providing high quality professional development opportunities for educators, the Al Qasimi Foundation intends to:

- 1- Identify suitable countries or states with which to hold informative exchanges;
- 2- Continue planning further exchange visits and receive exchange visitors from exchange-partner organizations in the intervening years;
- 3- Consider lessons learned from previous exchanges in the planning of subsequent exchange visits to ensure that participants are properly prepared to visit another culture and are able to capitalize on the experience.



## VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

The Al Qasimi foundation is committed to meeting the needs of all members of the Ras Al Khaimah community, and pays particular attention to underserved or otherwise vulnerable groups. While the Foundation has historically had strong capacity development initiatives with the local prison, a new area of focus over the next five years is the elderly and elderly care.

### PRISON EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

The Ras Al Khaimah Prison Program was founded in 2011 to further the Foundation's mission and vision to support all members of the community. Similar to other countries around the world, the program seeks to support the inmates of the Ras Al Khaimah Correctional Facility during incarceration and help them reintegrate into society upon release through the provision of education programs that prepare them for employment and help them become contributing society members. The prison program started with the establishment of library for male inmates, which included related printed resources and computers, in 2011. Two years later, the program expanded to include educational courses for inmates. Complimentary professional development courses for prison staff were launched in 2016, and a library for female inmates was established in 2017. At present, there are more than 2,500 books in different languages in both libraries and 50 laptops for inmates' use.

During the five years, the Al Qasimi Foundation intends to:

- 1- Continue offering a large collection of courses tailored to the expressed professional development needs of inmates.
- 2- Continue delivering courses bilingually ensuring access for both Arabic and English speakers.
- 3- Equip inmates with the skills needed to obtain a job when released.
- 4- Continue supporting the professional development of correctional officers.
- 5- Formally evaluate the impact of Prison Programs on inmates in terms of recidivism rates and reintegration into the community.



## ELDERLY CARE

While the elderly are deeply respected in Emirati communities, little public focus is given to important issues that affect their wellbeing and support their active participation in society. The Foundation believes that the elderly benefit society as a whole, by increasing social cohesion, regional development, and enriching the cultural environment and intergenerational learning. Over the next five years, the Al Qasimi Foundation will introduce a new initiative that aims to increase society's awareness and knowledge on issues related to the elderly Emirati population. The initiative also targets the development of those working with the elderly population to enhance elderly people's quality of life and improve the care system in the emirate.

Over the next five years, the Al Qasimi Foundation intends to:

- 1- Raise awareness of issues related to elderly Emiratis.
- 2- Support the professional development of elderly carers.
- 3- Evaluate the impact of training offered to those working with this vulnerable population.

## CIVIL SERVICE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In the process of conducting various research studies, the Al Qasimi Foundation has been approached by government departments looking for continuous professional development opportunities and up-skilling. To date, the Al Qasimi Foundation has funded and managed trainings related to English language, digital literacy, and leadership development. Moreover, an exchange program for Ras Al Khaimah civil servants was piloted in September 2019 to expose future leaders to new ideas, best practices, and to encourage their continuous learning and development.

Over the next five years, the Al Qasimi Foundation intends to:

- 1- Continue funding, developing, and delivering high-quality professional development opportunities for local government personnel—meeting needs expressed by the various local government departments.
- 2- Assess the impact of professional development.
- 3- Explore suitable opportunities and countries for future government exchanges.



## STUDENT PROGRAMMING

Supporting students to achieve their full potential and raising the standing of Ras Al Khaimah's education system is the ultimate goal of the Al Qasimi Foundation's capacity development activities in the education sector. In addition to providing teacher professional development, the Al Qasimi Foundation is well-placed to provide development opportunities for motivated secondary school students preparing to enter competitive programs at universities in the United Arab Emirates and overseas that align with their career goals. In addition, the Foundation supports programming for at-risk boys in secondary schools and provides guidance to schools in effective programming for this often under-served group of students.

Over the next five years the Al Qasimi Foundation intends to:

- 1- Identify and recruit a large number of motivated and talented youth into the College Preparation Program.
- 2- Offer more intensive training for students preparing to apply to higher education institutions, enabling them to:
  - Develop academic success skills
  - Explore career options through work experiences
  - Navigate the university application process, especially for overseas universities (with their parents' involvement).
- 3- Coordinate educational enrichment activities for students to expand their knowledge and skills (through participation in university fairs, community service opportunities, and literary discussion groups).
- 4- Support secondary schools in the emirate in the implementation of programming for at-risk students (in particular Hands on Learning in a Box).



## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Al Qasimi Foundation recognizes the importance of monitoring and evaluation all of its Capacity Development Plan initiatives. Through consistent assessment of each initiative, the Foundation will be able to ascertain the impact it has and determine the return-on-investment in terms of time, skills, and finances.

While evaluation components are built into existing courses and initiatives, the Al Qasimi Foundation will develop a systematic approach to monitoring and evaluation. The Foundation will also engage with different entities to formulate impact evaluation studies.

The Foundation aims to monitor and evaluate the different programs offered in order to track implementation and outputs systematically and measure the effectiveness of each program. This will aid in determining exactly when a program is on track and when changes may be needed, ensuring an evidence base to inform intervention modifications and quality assessments.

A monitoring plan will be produced for each program that will usually focus on the processes occurring during implementation. These can include tracking the following during defined periods of time:

- When programs were implemented
- The location or region in which programs were delivered
- Which departments or teams delivered activities
- How often certain activities occurred
- Number of people reached through a program's activities
- Number of products delivered (or number of hours of a service)
- Costs of program implementation



Following each program, evaluation reports will be produced with a focus on the performance of the intervention. These reports will principally be used to determine whether beneficiaries have benefited from the programs. The reports will focus on outcomes, assessing whether a change occurred between the outset and termination of the intervention (or at least between two specific time periods). Ideally, that change should be able to be attributed to the programs undertaken. Baseline data will be acquired to be used to compare progress at every evaluation interval and at the end of the program period. Evaluation considers:

- Did the activities make a measurable difference in our target beneficiary group(s)?
- How much can the changes observed be attributed to our activities?
- What contributed to our success (or failure)?
- Can we scale observed changes? Or replicate in other contexts?
- Did we achieve impacts in a cost-effective way?
- Have any unexpected results occurred?

Through these evaluation methods, we hope to ensure success in our commitment to sustained capacity development by adopting the latest techniques and shifting to a progressive and inclusive mindset.

2019  
2020  
2021  
2022  
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SHEIKH SAUD BIN SAQR AL QASIMI  
FOUNDATION FOR POLICY RESEARCH

P.O. Box 12050, Ras Al Khaimah, United Arab Emirates | Tel: +971 7 233 8060 | Fax: +971 7 233 8070

E-mail: [info@alqasimifoundation.rak.ae](mailto:info@alqasimifoundation.rak.ae) | [www.alqasimifoundation.com](http://www.alqasimifoundation.com)

