



SHEIKH SAUD BIN SAQR AL QASIMI  
FOUNDATION FOR POLICY RESEARCH

# 2012 ANNUAL REPORT

“SUPPORTING RESEARCH, DEVELOPING MINDS”



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### SHEIKH SAUD BIN SAQR AL QASIMI FOUNDATION FOR POLICY RESEARCH

We are so proud to present this year end report highlighting the Al Qasimi Foundation's remarkable achievements. We have come a long way in a relatively short period of time. In its early stages of operation the Foundation focused on education, one of the nation's critical policy areas. By sponsoring innovative research from world-class visiting scholars and providing professional development opportunities for local educators, the Foundation continues to demonstrate its commitment to addressing national priorities. Progress in these projects is on track, and as it looks toward the future the Al Qasimi Foundation will expand its work into other national priorities including public health and urban development.

We are keen to rigorously pursue our strategic goals and realize the vision of our founder and patron, His Highness Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi. Grounding the policy making process in research and sound policy analysis is in the best interest of the nation and will help Ras Al Khaimah achieve its future.

**Dr. Mohamed Abdulatif Khalifa**  
**Managing Director**  
**Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research**

## Executive Director's Message



We are delighted to be issuing this, our first Annual Report, as 2012 has been a time of great change and expansion at the Sheikh Saud Bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research. From our small beginnings with an office of two people in 2009 to our own premises and the addition of 10 new staff members, the Al Qasimi Foundation has grown in size, in talent, and in productivity. I am extremely proud of the work that has been accomplished by our exemplary team in 2012 as it provides the bedrock for our direction in the coming years.

This year the Al Qasimi Foundation has conducted and collaborated on research across the UAE, published a range of policy papers, developed educators, and built relationships with key stakeholders both within and outside of the UAE. Staff presented research at conferences, trained over 200 educators, and worked with vulnerable populations in order to empower them. We ended the year with the launch of our new website that highlights our activities and the work that we do in a clear and comprehensive manner.

The Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research is committed to serving the needs of the people of Ras Al Khaimah with an emphasis on education and development. We remain focused on helping the local community come together and providing a range of development opportunities for people across Ras Al Khaimah, the UAE and the GCC. We hope that 2013 will be an even more productive year in each of our three key areas: research, capacity development, and outreach, and that we would continue to serve the emirate of Ras Al Khaimah to the best of our ability.

**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 (RAK), a northern emirate in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Established through Emiri decree, the Foundation is considered 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 RAK. His Highness places great value on education and research, and the Al Qasimi Foundation was created to generate a world-class body of research on RAK and the broader UAE, develop local capacity in the public sector, and engage the community in its work.

His Highness seeks to firmly ground policy decisions in relevant bodies of research that reflect the best thinking in the world as well as the local RAK and UAE contexts. To this end, the Al Qasimi Foundation serves as a bridge between the research and policy making communities – bringing to scholars' attention public policy questions important to RAK, and in turn, disseminating research findings to promote innovative policy tools and models that will impact positive social change. The Al Qasimi Foundation approaches its work collaboratively, and aims to establish relationships with talented scholars and world-class universities, innovative public policy research centers, established government institutions, and strategic partners in the private and non-governmental sectors.

Although education was the initial focus for Al Qasimi Foundation initiatives, the Foundation is branching into other public policy areas as it matures, including public health as well as urban planning and development. Even as its portfolio of programs and activities expands the Al Qasimi Foundation's research grants and teacher professional development workshops remain among its signature offerings.

## 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.

“ The Al Qasimi Foundation was created to generate a world-class body of research on RAK and the broader UAE, develop local capacity in the public sector, and engage the community in its work. ”



# About the Al Qasimi Foundation



## Mission

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 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.

“ His Highness seeks to firmly ground policy decisions in relevant bodies of research that reflect the best thinking in the world as well as the local RAK and UAE contexts. ”

## Values

We strive to:

- Contribute to the positive development of the **PEOPLE** and **COMMUNITY** of Ras Al Khaimah and the United Arab Emirates.
- **COLLABORATE** with individuals and organizations, both inside and outside of the United Arab Emirates, to further strengthen and enhance the impact of our work.
- Cultivate a culture of **RESPECT** and demonstrate **INCLUSIVENESS** for all those around us.
- Achieve the highest **QUALITY** and levels of **PROFESSIONALISM** in all we do: our approach to our work, our research, our service offerings, and our engagement activities.
- Approach our work with **PASSION** and practice **INTEGRITY** in everything we do.
- Model **STEWARDSHIP** in the use of community resources, knowledge, and relationships as we work toward advancing our mission.

## At a Glance: By the Numbers



**8**

Total number of publications, which includes 6 policy papers, 1 working paper, and 1 conference proceedings



**4**

Total number of research grants awarded to visiting doctoral and faculty scholars



**195**

Participants in the teacher professional development courses

**416**

English teachers tested for English language proficiency

**1,300**

Books and educational resources available in the RAK prison library

**700+**

Partners and organizations entered into the new contact management system

**4,053**

Unique visitors to the RAK Teachers' Network website

**175**

Participants attended the UAE Education Policy Forums

**200**

Participants attended the 2012 GCES symposium in Bahrain

**117**

Individual pages on the Al Qasimi Foundation's new website

**19**

Teachers and school leaders who visited from Switzerland

**8**

Presentations given by staff



# At a Glance: 2012 Highlights

## JANUARY



**Publication:**  
Teachers', Parents' and Children's  
Perceptions of Childhood Obesity in  
Ras Al Khaimah

**Visiting Scholar:**  
Christine Farrugia joins the Foundation as a  
Doctoral Research Grant recipient

## FEBRUARY



**Special Event:**  
Made in the UAE -  
An evening of Emirati  
Short Films

**Capacity Development:**  
Spring teacher professional  
development program  
commences: five different  
courses on offer including  
mentorship pilot program

**Outreach:**  
UAE Ed Policy Forum  
on Teacher Education  
in the UAE

## MARCH



**Outreach:**  
Annual GCES Symposium

**Capacity Development:**  
416 English language teachers  
take TOEFL paper-based test  
as a baseline assessment of  
English language proficiency

**Publication:**  
Education Quality &  
Competitiveness in the  
UAE

## APRIL



**Publication:**  
30%: Who Are the Males in  
Higher Education in the UAE

**Strategic Planning:**  
Al Qasimi Foundation's strategic plan  
finalized after broad consultation with staff  
and stakeholders

## MAY



**Publication:**  
Universities and Innovation  
Networks in the UAE

**Outreach:**  
UAE Ed Policy Forum on  
English Language and Higher  
Education in the UAE

**Capacity Development:**  
Spring Professional  
Development Graduation  
Ceremony to honor 96  
teachers who successfully  
completed workshops

## JUNE



**Visiting Scholar:**  
Dr. Chetan joins the Foundation as  
a Faculty Research Grant recipient

**Intern:**  
Ilya Bozhenkov joins the Foundation for  
his 6-week internship

# At a Glance: 2012 Highlights



## JULY

### **Intern:**

Ibrahim Adefila joins the Foundation for his 6-week internship

### **Publication:**

Building Citizens for the Arab Knowledge Economy: Evidence from the United Arab Emirates

### **Capacity Development:**

RAK Prison Project Library opens



## SEPTEMBER

### **Capacity Development:**

Fall teacher professional development program commences: six different courses on offer

### **Capacity Development:**

English language teachers pedagogy and language skills development program commences

### **Strategic Planning:**

Al Qasimi Foundation strategies and priorities finalized for Research, Capacity Development, and Community Engagement areas



## OCTOBER

### **Visiting Scholar:**

Nader Alyani joins the Foundation as a Doctoral Research Grant recipient

### **Capacity Development:**

Swiss Teachers in RAK as part of the RAK Teachers Exchange Program



## NOVEMBER

### **Intern:**

Arshiah Parween joins the Foundation for her 5-week internship

### **Special Event:**

RAK Reading Roadshow

### **Outreach:**

UAE Ed Policy Forum on Vocational Education and Skills Development

### **Publication:**

International Branch Campus Quality in a Segmented Quality Assurance Environment



## DECEMBER

### **Capacity Development:**

Fall Professional Development Graduation Ceremony to honor 99 teachers who successfully completed workshops

### **Outreach:**

New and expanded Al Qasimi Foundation website launched

### **Publication:**

GCES Third Annual Symposium on Global Innovation, Local Transformation: Trends & Reactions – Conference Proceedings

### **Publication:**

Cultural Border Crossings in the UAE

# Making an Impact through Research

Conducting and promoting high quality research to help inform policy makers in RAK, the UAE, and broader Gulf region is a key component of the Al Qasimi Foundation's mission. 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 RAK and the UAE and to promote collaboration among highly recognized international universities and the UAE public sector. In addition, the Al Qasimi Foundation is committed to connecting policy makers with researchers in order to promote evidence-based decision making. Most research undertaken by the Al Qasimi Foundation is applied and focuses on three key areas: Education Quality & Impact, Community Development, and Health & Well-Being.



## ON-GOING RESEARCH PROJECTS

The Al Qasimi Foundation's research portfolio is a mixture of in-house studies and sponsored projects commissioned through its competitive grant programs. When the Foundation undertakes new research, it seeks to ensure the project aligns with needs identified by policy makers and the public sector, fosters collaboration among different entities, and provides new information and insights relevant to decision making and policy development.

Four studies were underway or being conducted in partnership with the Al Qasimi Foundation during 2012. Several of these projects will continue into 2013:

### **Patterns and perceptions in male secondary school dropouts in the United Arab Emirates**

Sponsored by the Emirates Foundation in collaboration with the Al Qasimi Foundation, this study examined the causes and differences among the high dropout rates of males across the UAE utilizing a comprehensive mixed methods approach. Policy goals of the study included:

1. Raising awareness of the issues surrounding the school experiences of young men in the UAE.
2. Identifying strategies and associated policies for re-engaging young men into the UAE educational system.

The study formally began in 2011 and data analysis was nearing completion in December 2012. A short documentary sharing the research findings and chronicling the stories of several study participants will be created in early 2013.

### **Teacher effectiveness in English language instruction**

This two-phase study seeks to identify and address potential factors contributing to the low level of English language proficiency among public school students in RAK. Policy goals of the study include:

1. Identifying strategies and associated policies for improving teacher effectiveness.
2. Improving student engagement and achievement in English lessons.

The study's first phase was completed in 2012 using data from the RAK Educational Zone to create econometric models that statistically analyzed the relationship between students' performance in English language courses and instructors' level of English language mastery, academic background, and teaching experience. The second phase will be carried out in 2013 and will incorporate economics experiments to measure patience, risk aversion, cooperative tendency, and teaching ability of actual RAK teachers. The data will be used to develop an index of teacher effectiveness in the instruction of English as a foreign language.



# Making an Impact through Research



## Educational systems in the United Arab Emirates

Through the compilation of primary and secondary data sources, a series of education case studies for each of the seven emirates (Ras Al Khaimah, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Fujairah, Umm Al Quwain, Ajman) will be developed into a book. The regulatory environments for K-12 and higher education will also be discussed at both the federal and emirate levels. The project is in collaboration with Dr. Jason Lane and Christine Farrugia, two of the Al Qasimi Foundation's visiting scholars during 2012. Policy goals for the project include:

1. Providing educators, policy makers, researchers, and graduate students with a comprehensive overview on the evolution of the UAE's educational landscape and associated regulatory systems through comparative emirate-level case studies.
2. Facilitating effective decision making and generate further research on education issues in the UAE.

In-country site visits and interviews were conducted during spring 2012. It is anticipated that the book's manuscript will be finalized and submitted for publication by the end of 2013.

## Participatory urban development lab for Ras Al Khaimah

This study, undertaken in collaboration with ICOS, sought to develop a participatory urban plan for RAK using novel urban lab methodology and cultural domain analysis techniques. The project addressed key considerations related to the optimal use of public space, zoning for public well-being, and sustainable landscaping. Policy goals for the study included:

1. Incorporating urban planning best practices from around the world with local traditions and knowledge.
2. Using a participatory approach to ensure the final plan reflects the unique cultural heritage, values, and opportunities of the city and emirate.
3. Providing an overview on the future vision of RAK, but also offer specific insights into the four key areas of circulation, residential areas, shared spaces, and business.

Background research and stakeholder interviews were used to develop a questionnaire that was circulated among the RAK community. The information gathered was then used to develop a series of participatory live sessions for further engagement and vetting of ideas. The final urban plan is expected to be delivered in early 2013.

# Making an Impact through Research



*Calvert (Callie) Jones, Doctoral Research Grant Recipient and Visiting Scholar 2011*



*Christine Farrugia, Doctoral Research Grant Recipient and Visiting Scholar 2012*

## RESEARCH GRANTS & VISITING SCHOLARS

The Al Qasimi Foundation currently offers two research grant programs that support doctoral students and faculty scholars in undertaking high quality research in RAK that will help inform policy making in the UAE. The broad objectives of these grant programs are to:

- Provide opportunities for distinguished PhD students, faculty researchers, and scholars to conduct innovative, applied research and make a positive impact on the RAK community.
- Foster high quality research that supports the development of the region's research capacity.
- Build a community of scholars and promote collaboration among highly recognized international universities and national institutions in the UAE.
- Promote cross-cultural exchange that sparks curiosity, new ideas, and creates understanding.

### *2012 Doctoral Research Grant Recipients*

#### **Christine Farrugia, Doctoral Student, State University of New York (SUNY) at Albany**

International branch campuses have emerged as one of the largest forms of higher education in the UAE. Given this trend, Christine was awarded a Doctoral Research Grant to investigate the legitimacy of policies to use foreign higher education institutions in the development of the UAE's higher education sector.

Using a framework of organizational legitimacy, Christine's study examined the nature of local stakeholders' expectations for international branch campuses and explored the relationship between legitimacy and the success of such campuses. The research design took a qualitative approach and used case studies to compare cross-border higher education in the federal university system and emirates of Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and RAK. Christine wrote two policy papers based on her research.

#### **Nader Alyani, Doctoral Student, University of London**

The UAE is actively seeking to build its capability for innovation in order to secure its economic future, enhance nationals' skills, and better position the country for global competitiveness. Nader was awarded a Doctoral Research Grant to investigate key factors for developing a national skills development policy that could help foster innovation. His interdisciplinary research takes a sector analysis approach for three cluster areas in RAK (retail, hospitality and tourism, creative and cultural sectors), specifically focusing on the relation between the labor market, learning processes within companies, and the skill outcomes of those relationships. Nader's findings will be compiled into one working paper and one policy paper (publication anticipated in 2013).



# Making an Impact through Research



*Dr. Jason Lane, Faculty Research Grant Recipient and Visiting Scholar*



*Dr. Ann Austin, Faculty Research Grant Recipient and Visiting Scholar*

## 2012 Faculty Research Grant Recipients\*

### **Dr. Jason Lane, Assistant Professor, State University of New York (SUNY) at Albany**

Jason was awarded a Faculty Research Grant to work with the Foundation on a book about educational systems in the UAE using a series of case studies (see On-Going Research Projects section). The book will be a seminal source of information for other scholars and graduate students, as there are currently no comprehensive texts on the UAE's complex educational systems and issues.

### **Dr. Chetan Dave, Assistant Professor, New York University Abu Dhabi**

Chetan was awarded a Faculty Research Grant to incorporate economics experiments into the Foundation's Teacher Effectiveness in English Language Instruction project as a way to measure the success of different pedagogical methods. This novel approach will allow the study to triangulate data and develop policy recommendations that address the key variables impacting students' success in learning the English language.

*\* Although Faculty Research Grant recipients typically work on independent projects, the 2012 faculty scholars both had projects that aligned with the Foundation's on-going interests and work.*

## PUBLICATIONS

In addition to its on-going research projects, the Al Qasimi Foundation has published one working paper, six policy papers, and one set of Gulf Comparative Education Society (GCES) conference proceedings during 2012. These publications are available for download on the Foundation's website, and print copies for select papers were also distributed to university libraries throughout the UAE:

- Third Annual Symposium on Global Innovation, Local Transformation: Trends & Reactions - GCES Conference Proceedings Edited Volume
- Education Quality & Competitiveness in the UAE Samar Farah
- International Branch Campus Quality in a Segmented Quality Assurance Environment Christine Farrugia
- Universities and Innovation Networks in the UAE Christine Farrugia
- Cultural Border Crossings in the UAE Peter Hatherley-Greene
- Building Citizens for the Arab Knowledge Economy: Evidence from the United Arab Emirates Calvert W. Jones
- The 30%: Who Are the Males in Higher Education in the UAE Natasha Ridge, Samar Farah
- Teachers', Parents' and Children's Perceptions of Childhood Obesity in Ras Al Khaimah Kelly Stott

# Making an Impact through Research



## RESEARCH SEMINARS & PRESENTATIONS

The Al Qasimi Foundation staff gave eight presentations at eight different venues over the academic year 2011-2012:

“Education Policy Analysis”  
Middlesex University, Dubai  
November 12, 2012  
Dr. Natasha Ridge

“What Should Continuing Professional Development  
Look Like in 2012?”  
Secondary School Admission Test (SSAT) -  
Abu Dhabi’s Lead Practitioner Conference  
June 13, 2012  
Charlotte Lamptey

“Addressing Challenges to Education Reform  
in the UAE”  
The General Secretariat of the Executive Council–Abu  
Dhabi  
June 7, 2012  
Dr. Natasha Ridge

“Curriculum Policies and Practices in the UAE”  
Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT),  
Ras Al Khaimah  
May 18, 2012  
Dr. Natasha Ridge

“Laboring to Learn: Scholars, Students,  
and the State”  
Comparative International Education Society (CIES)  
April 22-27, 2012  
Dr. Natasha Ridge, Calvert Jones, Elisabeth Wilson, and  
Maryam Borjian

“The 30%: Who Are the Males in Higher Education in  
the UAE”  
Gulf Comparative Education Society (GCES)  
March 24-25, 2012  
Dr. Natasha Ridge and Samar Farah

“The Middle East Student in Higher Education”  
Khalifa University of Science, Technology and Research  
(KUSTR)  
February 8, 2012  
Dr. Natasha Ridge

“Human Resource Development in Educational  
Organizations in the UAE “  
Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT)  
January 13, 2012  
Charlotte Lamptey

# Making an Impact through Capacity Development

Building the capacity of RAK and broader UAE is one of the main tenets outlined in the Al Qasimi Foundation's mission. This is primarily addressed by developing locally-based talent and supporting institutional improvements in the public sector. Although the Al Qasimi Foundation places particular emphasis on capacity development issues within education, its programs and initiatives also seek to serve other government sectors as appropriate. Specific initiatives are based on needs identified through conversations with practitioners and policy makers to ensure the resulting programs are both strategic and relevant. The Al Qasimi Foundation works in partnership with local institutions whenever possible, helping to break down inter-organizational barriers and encouraging a culture of knowledge-sharing and collaboration.



## TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### *Courses*

The Al Qasimi Foundation's program of teacher professional development courses has grown rapidly from just one course in 2010 to six different courses by the end of 2012. Courses on the use of educational technology in the classroom, classroom management, pedagogy, action research, digital communication for leadership, and mentoring skills have directly impacted 195 teachers and school leaders this year, and indirectly had an impact on many more teachers and approximately 4,000 students in RAK schools. While each course has individual objectives, broad goals for the overall professional development program include:

- Providing open access professional development opportunities for educators in RAK regardless of nationality, gender, language, or teaching experience.
- Fostering a community of educators and providing space to build relationships, share experiences, feel valued, and serve as resources to one another for peer-to-peer learning.
- Collaborating with teachers and administrators to improve students' success and experiences in RAK schools.

Course development is driven by the needs teachers and administrators express, and individual workshop curriculum are regularly refined in response to feedback from both participants and workshop instructors to maximize impact. Courses continue to be bilingual (Arabic and English) and are available for free to the teachers and education professionals of RAK. Local educators rapidly become involved in assisting with the workshops and eventually take the lead. This year three courses have been handed over to local teachers for peer-to-peer delivery.

### *English language teachers*

As a result of baseline data collected for the Al Qasimi Foundation's research on teacher effectiveness in English language instruction, two key training needs were identified to improve the quality of English language instruction in public schools: pedagogy skills and English language tuition. Funded jointly by the Ministry of Education and Al Qasimi Foundation, the Foundation has partnered with local organizations to deliver targeted training for 200 English language teachers:



# Making an Impact through Capacity Development



- The American University of Ras Al Khaimah is delivering a series of pedagogy training workshops and a program of classroom observations from September 2012 through May 2013.
- The Ras Al Khaimah Higher Colleges of Technology is running an English language program from October 2012 through March 2013, which will be followed by a standardized Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).

Both programs are tailored specifically to the needs of English language teachers.

## TEACHER SCHOLARSHIPS

Teacher Scholarship Awards are open to teachers from all nationalities teaching in a RAK government school or working in the RAK Ministry of Education. They provide funding to (1) cover up to 50% of the tuition costs associated with either a master's degree or short-term course related to education, or (2) conduct a small-scale research project that will improve teaching or enhance student learning. The broad objectives of these awards are to:

- Contribute to the overall development of the educational sector in RAK.
- Improve the status of teachers and increase interest in the profession.
- Provide an opportunity for distinguished teachers to improve their skills and knowledge.
- Enable schools to recruit and retain high quality teachers.
- Foster interest in action-based research, the importance of data-driven decision making, and the need for regular impact assessment.

### *2012 Teacher Scholarship Recipients*

#### **Mohammed Husni, Instructional Leadership Coordinator, Al Rams Secondary School**

Mohammed was awarded a Teacher Scholarship to pursue his Master's in Education at United Arab Emirates University. Prior to his current role, Mohammed counts over 15 years of professional experience as an English language teacher at Tunb Secondary School in RAK.

#### **Huda Abdalla Rahma Ahmed Al Shamsi, Math Teacher, Zainab School**

Huda was awarded a Teacher Scholarship to pursue her Master's in Applied Sociology at the University of Sharjah. Huda has been a teacher for over seven years and undertook her studies to improve her ability to build relationships and work with her students.

#### **Muhammad Ahmad Ata Khader, Biology Teacher, RAK Secondary School for Boys**

Muhammad was awarded a Teacher Scholarship to enroll in a short-course for advanced English language instruction at English World in RAK. As a local teacher who delivers instruction for one of the Al Qasimi Foundation's teacher professional development courses, Muhammad wanted to improve his English so that he could better work with course participants whose primary language is English.

# Making an Impact through Capacity Development



## TEACHER EXCHANGE PROGRAM

The RAK Teacher Exchange Program was formally launched in 2011 to provide opportunities for educators in RAK government schools to further develop their knowledge and skills of pedagogy and learning environments through exchange visits with schools in other countries.

Broad objectives of the program are to:

- Provide opportunities for distinguished teachers to deepen their knowledge and skills related to effective pedagogy and different learning environments.
- Create an international network of teachers and school administrators that fosters collaboration between overseas educational institutions and government schools in RAK.
- Promote cross-cultural exchange that sparks curiosity, new ideas, and creates understanding.

In October 2012, the RAK Teacher Exchange Program successfully completed its first full exchange with the Institute of Pedagogy (PZ.BS) in Basel, Switzerland when 19 Swiss educators arrived in RAK. They spent a week visiting RAK schools, meeting with local teachers and administrators, and learning about the educational system in the UAE. Hosting the Swiss cohort marked the second phase of the exchange, as 11 local and Arab expatriate teachers from RAK government schools participated in a similar week-long visit to Switzerland during November 2011.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

Given the diversity of government institutions and their respective needs, the Al Qasimi Foundation works with local policy makers to identify and develop individualized programs to ensure activities are targeted and appropriate to locally identified issues or concerns. During 2012, the Foundation worked with a number of local civil service departments:

- In collaboration with the Electronic Government Authority, the Al Qasimi Foundation delivered ICT training to 100 Ministry of Education personnel to promote effective, efficient, and professional digital communication skills.
- Working with the U.S. Consulate in Abu Dhabi, the Al Qasimi Foundation successfully nominated two individuals (one judge and one prosecutor) from the RAK Courts to participate in the 2013 International Leaders Visitors Exchange Program in the United States.
- Recognizing the importance of English proficiency as a skill for working in the public sector, the Al Qasimi Foundation helped organize English language lessons for a number of local government departments.



# Making an Impact through Capacity Development



## RAK PRISON PROJECT

The RAK Prison Project seeks to create a multi-purpose learning space in the RAK Correctional Facility that is accessible to anyone regardless of their gender, age, nationality, or educational background in order to:

- Foster continued academic, professional, and social development opportunities for inmates. It also provides similar opportunities for prison officers, as many have only attained basic educations themselves.
- Improve literacy, restore confidence, and contribute to the overall rehabilitation of inmates and professional development of prison officers.
- Provide concrete skill development training to help inmates reintegrate into society in constructive ways upon their release, either in the UAE or their respective countries of origin.
- The library includes more than 1,300 educational and recreational books, magazines, and newspapers in 16 different languages, and more than 450 books have already been loaned to inmates.
- The library space has hosted 23 educational workshops, lectures, and literary competitions, becoming a focal point for prison life.
- Continuing education courses were introduced, and the initial 10-week session of English language instruction attracted 36 inmates from 12 different countries.

Since the beginning of its operation in July 2012, the RAK Prison Library has continued to grow—both in number of visitations and resources available:

- A core group of prison officers and inmate volunteers run the library space and oversee its day-to-day operations.
- Over 25% of all inmates visited the library and accessed its resources, including 198 men and 83 women from 20 different countries.

“Prior to the set-up of this library, there were no opportunities for the inmates to visit the library and choose the books they would like to read. The prison atmosphere is definitely different from the library atmosphere where the library is more welcoming and encourages the inmates to read and learn.”

**General Adnan**  
**Director of Rehabilitation and Training**  
**Department, RAK Prison**

# Making an Impact through Community Engagement and Outreach

At the Al Qasimi Foundation engagement represents a purposeful exchange and leveraging of knowledge, resources, and partnerships to the mutual benefit of those involved and the local public sector. The Foundation's engagement efforts revolve around various communities: researchers, policy makers, civil servants, education professionals, students, and residents who call Ras Al Khaimah home. The Al Qasimi Foundation not only views engagement as a social responsibility, but also as a tool for improving the value, relevance, and effectiveness of its own work. Accordingly, community engagement and outreach activities are embedded across its research, capacity development, and outreach missions.

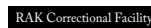


## COMMUNICATIONS & GENERAL OUTREACH

In an effort to better share and personalize the Al Qasimi Foundation's mission, initiatives, and impact in the RAK community, a communications inventory was conducted during 2012. The inventory built on the Foundation's overall strategic planning process and was used to develop a series of communication and outreach priorities. Noteworthy 2012 accomplishments related to these efforts include:

- Launching a new, expanded website with more information and resources available for existing and future partners as well as those who have a general interest in the Foundation's work. The website also further defines the Al Qasimi Foundation's branding and identity.
- Finalizing the Al Qasimi Foundation's overall strategic plan and creating five-year strategy documents (2013-2018) for each area of the Foundation's mission: research, capacity development, and community engagement. All plans will be made available in Arabic and English and published on the Foundation's website.
- Implementing a contact management system to better track existing relationships and partnership opportunities with individuals and organizations. This system will provide the backbone for communication and outreach efforts moving forward.
- Beginning a communications resource library (images, news coverage, videos, and individual profiles) to facilitate sharing the Al Qasimi Foundation's mission and impact.

### Government Partners



### Other Partners



# Making an Impact through Community Engagement and Outreach



## GULF COMPARATIVE EDUCATION SOCIETY (GCES)

The Al Qasimi Foundation continued to serve as the secretariat for the GCES in 2012. It also helped organize and sponsor the third annual GCES symposium in collaboration with Bahrain Teachers College. Entitled *Global Innovation, Local Transformation: Trends & Reactions*, the symposium was held at the Crown Plaza Hotel, Kingdom of Bahrain on March 24-25, 2012 and brought together more than 200 participants to discuss educational innovations in the Gulf region. The two-day event included one keynote address, four panels, and six breakout sessions and featured a total of 45 presentations made by invited speakers as well as those who submitted abstracts. Presenters and participants came from many countries, including the UAE, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar, Switzerland, England, and the United States and represented different voices in the education sector ranging from policy makers, academics and researchers, school providers and leaders, consultants, and teachers.

## UAE EDUCATION POLICY FORUMS

In partnership with Middlesex University in Dubai, the Al Qasimi Foundation hosted three Forums during 2012. The event series serves as an open conversation and collaboration platform for educational issues by bringing together stakeholders from across the UAE. Specifically, the Forums seek to:

- Identify and highlight topics that have emerged as major areas of concern or interest in the UAE educational system.
- Foster on-going discussion and experience sharing among key players in the local education community—including teachers, scholars, researchers, administrators, policy makers, parents, and students.
- Brainstorm potential ways to address some of the UAE's current education questions and explore opportunities for improvement of the national education system.

The 2012 forums attracted more than 175 people from over 30 organizations and helped raise awareness and formulate policy recommendations on critical issues facing the UAE's education sector:

- Teacher Education in the UAE: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities (February 28, 2012)
- Accessing Higher Education: The Language Debate (May 23, 2012)
- Technical and Vocational Education and Training: Addressing the Need for Skill Development in the UAE (November 13, 2012)



# Making an Impact through Community Engagement and Outreach



## SPECIAL PROJECTS

The Al Qasimi Foundation periodically undertakes special projects and events to build a stronger sense of community among residents and contribute to the social and cultural life of RAK. Such activities may eventually evolve into community traditions or become incorporated in the Al Qasimi Foundation's on-going work and program areas. During 2012, the Al Qasimi Foundation hosted three special events:

- *Made in the UAE: An evening of Emirati Short Films* brought local and expatriate residents together to view and discuss films created by students attending the Higher Colleges of Technology (February 1, 2012).
- A special seminar for local students to interact with world-renowned scientists during the RAK Center for Advanced Materials' annual international workshop (February 19, 2012).
- In collaboration with the RAK Chamber of Commerce, RAK Teachers' Network, and READ Magazine, the Foundation hosted the RAK Reading Roadshow to encourage reading and foster a literary culture in the UAE (November 28, 2012).

## RAK TEACHERS' NETWORK

The Al Qasimi Foundation established the RAK Teachers' Network in 2010 as a virtual learning platform to access course resources for its teacher professional development workshops. It has since grown and evolved into an online professional community of education practitioners who collaborate, share knowledge, and serve as resources to solve problems in their classrooms and schools. During 2012 the network expanded by 35% and now consists of more than 490 members. In addition, a quarterly newsletter was added to promote engagement and resource sharing. The newsletter highlights schools' news, online education resources (especially those that are free or in Arabic), and outstanding local teachers.

“ Our students in today's world are digital natives. Everything they're doing, thinking and breathing is digital... And if you can't talk to them through this medium, it's tricky to teach them. ”

Fay Ellis  
English Teacher  
Institute of Applied Technology

# Looking Forward: Plans for 2013

As the Al Qasimi Foundation looks forward to 2013, it plans to continue building upon existing research, capacity development, and engagement efforts to better serve the Ras Al Khaimah community. A number of key projects are anticipated, which reflect both refinement and strengthening of current programs as well as several new initiatives.



## RESEARCH

- In response to a growing number of funding requests, the Al Qasimi Foundation will establish a new seed grant program to provide modest funding for pilot projects and initiatives that fall beyond the scope of its current Doctoral Research and Faculty Research Grant programs.
- All policy papers, Al Qasimi Foundation reports, and select working papers will be translated into Arabic to increase their accessibility and potential for impact on other research and policy-making endeavors in RAK, the UAE, and broader Gulf region.
- As an extension of the male dropouts study, a short documentary will be produced to highlight key findings from the research. The documentary will include interviews with select study participants whose personal stories and experiences are representative of several key issues affecting male secondary students' decisions to stay in school or dropout before graduation.
- As a part of the English language teacher effectiveness study, the research team will conduct a series of economic experiments with English language teachers in RAK to evaluate the effects of different pedagogical approaches on student engagement. Research findings will be published in the form of a policy paper and submitted to relevant journals for publication.
- Dr. Natasha Ridge will complete the first draft of a book on gender in the Gulf region.

## CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

- The launch of a new purpose-designed active learning classroom and event space will coincide with expansion of the professional development courses. The new space will use an innovative layout to maximize collaborative group work, and includes significant audio-visual technology to enhance information sharing. As a result of the new space, the Foundation will be able to increase the number of professional development courses it offers. Three new curriculums will be added to its overall professional development program, serving an additional 210 educators each year: Research II, Teaching Methods II, and Mentorship for School Leaders.
- In response to a growing number of funding requests, the Al Qasimi Foundation will establish a new school grants program to support individual schools in creating more positive, student-centered learning environments for students through special initiatives or infrastructure improvements.
- The Al Qasimi Foundation will begin managing a student development program for talented Emirati students and administering a related scholarship program for overseas university studies. Both programs are being transferred from the Foundation's sister organization, the Sheikh Saqr Program for Government Excellence, as they align with the Foundation's existing capacity development work with teachers and school administrators.





## CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT (cont)

- Preparation will begin for the next RAK Teacher Exchange Program in Bangalore, India. The first phase of the exchange is tentatively scheduled for November 2013 when local teachers will travel to the country for a week-long visit.
- Based on lessons learned from the English language teachers study and the targeted professional development that accompanied it, planning for a similar development program will be undertaken for math teachers in the emirate.
- Based on the increased demand for coordinating English language instruction for government entities, the Prison Project, and new Emirati student development program, the Foundation plans to hire a dedicated English language instructor during 2013.

## ENGAGEMENT

- A series of public relations materials will be developed to more effectively share the impact of the Al Qasimi Foundation's research, capacity development, and engagement efforts. The materials will seek to personalize the Foundation's work and highlight stories from grant recipients, partners, and the community.
- A series of regular cultural activities and special events will be organized to bring cross-sections of the community together and foster stronger relationships between individuals and organizations. The signature event will be a RAK Film and Arts Festival at the beginning of March 2013.
- As the Foundation work expands, it anticipates a growing need to engage volunteers in various initiatives. A pilot volunteer program will be launched in 2013, with initial focus on incorporating volunteers into the RAK Prison Project and community events.
- The Al Qasimi Foundation will partner with the RAK Education Zone to renovate and finance the maintenance for two adult education centers in RAK: Al Madeena Adult Education Center for Men and Al Hind Adult Education Center for Women.

## Our Team

The Foundation's accomplishments and impact in the Ras Al Khaimah community would not be possible without the vision of His Highness Sheikh Saud Bin Saqr Al Qasimi and hard work of its dedicated staff and partners. In 2012 the Al Qasimi Foundation was pleased to welcome six new members to its team and wished three others the best as they departed to pursue new endeavors. In addition, a growing number of workshop instructors and teaching assistants continued to play critical roles in the Foundation's teacher professional development programs. Thank you to all of the staff, visiting scholars, and other individuals who have made personal investments in the Foundation's efforts and contributed to the future vision of Ras Al Khaimah.









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