Annual Report 2014



SHEIKH SAUD BIN SAOR AL QASIMI FOUNDATION FOR POLICY RESEARCH

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Managing Director's Message	4
Executive Director's Message	5
About the Al Qasimi Foundation	6
Overview	6
Vision & Mission	7
Executive Summary	10
Research	10
Capacity Development	10
Community Engagement & Outreach	11
Policy Focus Areas	12
Education	13
Educators	14
Students	14
Vulnerable Populations	15
Health and Well-being	16
Community Development	18
Urban Planning	19
Arts & Culture	19
Publications	20
Presentations	22
Our Team	24
Partners	26
Visiting Scholars & Interns	28
A Personal Commitment	30



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 AI 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 AI 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 AI 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 AI 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."





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

RESEARCH



CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT



Scholarships awarded through the Sheikh Saqr Overseas Scholarship Program



Teacher scholarships awarded



Participants in the Sheikh Saqr Student Enrichment Program



6 semester courses 3 modular workshops

Teacher professional development courses offered



Participants in the teacher

professional development



School grants awarded

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



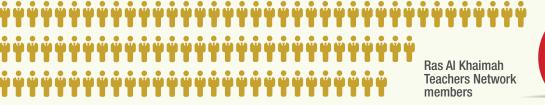
Guide to Living in Ras Al Khaimah published



Interns



Quarterly newsletters published





POLICY FOCUS AREAS

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EDUCATION

OVERVIEW

As Ras Al Khaimah and the United Arab Emirates work toward achieving a more knowledgebased 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 nonprofit 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



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



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



2014 Majis: "Does Privatizing Educational Services for the Poor Make Sense?" discusses benefits and drawbacks of educational privatization for the poor

April

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 *sadaga* tradition



October 2014

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



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



Sheikh Saqr Student Enrichment Program begins new semester of English courses and collegepreparatory workshops

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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



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 excercise. 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."

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.

[&]quot;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."

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

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

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

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

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

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

October 2014

Publication: Guide to Living in Ras Al Khaimah

November 2014

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

December 2014

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





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

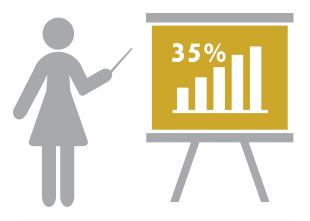
Presenter: Dr. Natasha Ridge

"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 AI 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 AI 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."



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.

[&]quot;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."

GOVERNMENT **STRATEGIC** CLIFFORD **Al Ghail Youth Center** CHANCE **I ERNST & YOUNG** هـــِـــَـة الـحــكـومــة الإلــكـتـرونــيــة Electronic Government Authority HANDS MLEARNING 🛞 كلّيات التقنية العليا HIGHER COLLEGES OF TECHNOLOGY RAS AL KHAIMAH مَتْحَفْ رَاسَ لَخْبَمَةَ الْوَطْنَ NATIONAL MUSEUM OF RAS AL KAHAIMAH JOHNS HOPKINS CENTER for TALENTED YOUTH THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY**Ras Al Khaimah Correctional Facility** منطقة رأس الخيمة التعليمية **RAK Educational Zone COMMUNITY Ras Al Khaimah Human Resources Department** American University of Ras Al Khaimah **Ras Al Khaimah** BON EDUCATION **Project Management Office** A Learning & Development Company ESکو ROCK جامعية نيويورك أبوظي 😤 NYU ABU DHABI برنافج الـشيــــخ صـقـــر للـتـمـيــز الـحـكـومــــي Sheikh Saqr Program for Government Excellence

27

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 Aaesha Al Ahmed, Media Intern Maitha Al Mansoori, Education and Reseach 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."



SHEIKH SAUD BIN SAOR AL QASIMI FOUNDATION FOR POLICY RESEARCH

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