As we reflect on the Al Qasimi Foundation’s seventh year of research and outreach, we can’t help but be grateful. The Foundation team continues to embody commitment to the people of Ras Al Khaimah and the United Arab Emirates and to partner with our community to bolster education, public health, and urban development efforts in the region.

One of the primary ways that the Foundation has supported the sustainable growth of these efforts is through the research that it has conducted this year. Talented visiting scholars and dynamic research collaborations have made 2016’s collection of studies and publications the Foundation’s most influential body of research findings to date. The practical implications of this are that its policy recommendations are both robust and relevant to Ras Al Khaimah and the UAE’s aspiration for sustained development. These contributions have led the Foundation to be recognized as one of the Top 50 think tanks in the Middle East and North Africa as well as only one of three Middle Eastern think tanks to be listed on the Best Free Standing Regional Studies Center list in the “2016 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report.”

At the same time, the Foundation has spent 2016 collaborating with local and international partners to apply this compelling research to its capacity development programs and community engagement initiatives. Partnerships with the local ministries, schools, and hospitals as well as scholarships, grants, and professional development opportunities represent an important part of the resources that the Foundation has provided to its stakeholders as the result of its research endeavors.

The Foundation shares with national leaders a vision of the UAE as a competitive and innovative nation that is thriving across its economic, social, and cultural landscapes. Evidence-based research is key to making policy decisions that help our community reach its long-term potential. To that end, we believe that what we have accomplished this year challenges us to go further in 2017, to embrace stewardship and excellence as part of the values of Ras Al Khaimah and the UAE. As we enter the Year of Giving, the Foundation looks forward to continuing to advance a culture of social responsibility and volunteerism in both the private and public sectors as well as supporting local initiatives that further develop our community.

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

Managing Director’s Message
The Al Qasimi Foundation spent 2016 investing in its research and programmatic endeavors, deepening and widening our engagement in issues related to education, public health, urban development and arts and culture. While pursuing these focus areas, we also took a closer look at our relationships with stakeholders, who motivate us and help us to remain committed to research and development initiatives.

This year, the Foundation’s ongoing research has built relationships with faculty at Columbia University in New York, experts at UNESCO Doha, and non-profit organizations across Ras Al Khaimah and the Gulf region. This included co-organizing the Seventh Annual Gulf Comparative Education Society Symposium with Arab Open University as well as becoming members of the UNESCO Education 2030 in the GCC Working Group. Long-term, it is hoped that these connections will produce additional research on education in the northern emirates and increase collaboration among community members.

Given the increasing events and activities around arts and culture, the Foundation made this an official priority area in 2016. These included the Fourth Annual Ras Al Khaimah Fine Arts Festival as well as the awarding of our first Documentary Film Grant, which seeks to support emergent directors. The Foundation recognizes the evolving role of arts and culture in sustainable community, urban, and economic development and we look forward to deepening our relationships with the arts in 2017.

Our local community engagement and capacity development activities have also been varied and fruitful. The Sheikh Saqr Student Enrichment Program piloted multiple new courses and workshops as well as saw its first group of graduates. The educator professional development programs and school reform initiatives continued to yield impressive results, bolstered by our formal collaboration with the Ministry of Education. Additionally, the Community Gathering events introduced local residents to health, cross-cultural and artistic experiences as well as to one another.

Relationships like these have renewed our commitment to strengthening the economic, social, and cultural sustainability of Ras Al Khaimah and the UAE through relevant research and evidence-based policy recommendations. Our team looks forward to working with our neighbors both here and abroad for a 2017 dedicated to the improvement of education, public health, urban development, and the arts in the UAE and beyond.

Dr. Natasha Ridge
Executive Director
Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research
Who We Serve
Our Community
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 and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The Foundation seeks to support public and private sectors by helping them 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.

All of the Foundation’s efforts are designed to support progress in our emirate and nation, and our activities impact a broad range of local and international stakeholders. From partnering with academics at New York’s Columbia University to collaborating with researchers at UNESCO Doha, all of our initiatives remain focused on our community. The Al Qasimi Foundation is grateful for the opportunity to partner with the people of the UAE and remains dedicated to championing their best interests through its research, capacity development, and community outreach efforts.
What We’ve Done

Our Progress in 2016
Research

As part of its mandate to support evidenced-based planning among the region’s policymakers, the Al Qasimi Foundation views research as the cornerstone of its mission. The Foundation both conducts and promotes—through diverse grant offerings—high-quality research focused on Ras Al Khaimah, the United Arab Emirates, and the broader Gulf region.

The Foundation collaborates with scholars and esteemed universities across the globe and works to connect these researchers with relevant policymakers. The result has been progressive, applied research in the areas of education, health and well-being, and community development. This year we were honored to co-organize the 7th Annual GCES Symposium as well as to collaborate with UNESCO Doha on the Ras Al Khaimah Case Study as part of the Momentum for Education Beyond 2015 research project.

“Hands on Learning, an AQF research pilot, is one of the most successful educational programs that have ever been applied at this school. The program increases the motivation of students by providing opportunities for them to discover their abilities and talents. It enhances the students’ observational and discovery aptitudes, as well as stimulates their mental and manual dexterities. I have witnessed firsthand the joy and the sense of ownership they feel when they complete their projects.”

Mr. Mohammed Al Mulla, School Principal
“Before I entered the program, my English wasn’t very good. In the program I learned more about university, English and life skills... I even learned a lot about myself, my skills, how to develop myself and how to manage my time. Before, I didn’t read, now this year I read seven books. I want to study abroad to learn more.”

Ahmed M.A. Elmelgy, Grade 11
Capacity Development

One way that the Al Qasimi Foundation stewards its research findings is by developing and providing strategic services and support in order to build individual and local capacity across public sectors. These capacity development efforts cultivate local talent and support institutional improvements through evidence-based initiatives related to education, health, and urban development. This year, the Foundation has focused on improving teacher quality, promoting school development, establishing formal collaborations with the Ministry of Education, developing gifted and talented students, and serving at-risk youth through supplemental life skills programming.
Community Engagement

Investing in people means nurturing collaboration and advancing a spirit of community while demonstrating a transparency in all of our operations. The Foundation therefore remains committed to inclusiveness, open-source (public) information, and straightforward communication as pillars of our community engagement activities. The Foundation's primary avenues of outreach include its quarterly newsletter, social media presence, and publications. Our community engagement is supported by Community Gathering events, Majlis presentations, and the annual Ras Al Khaimah Fine Arts Festival.

Our Progress in 2016

- 2 Documentary Film Grants awarded
- 35 Care packages donated and distributed to local laborers
- 11 YouTube videos uploaded
- 1600+ Guests at Foundation events
- 76 Artists from 30 countries participated in the 4th Annual Ras Al Khaimah Fine Arts Festival
- 2 Documentary Film Grants awarded
- 18,000 Ras Al Khaimah Fine Arts Festival Facebook page likes
- 2682 Local and international recipients of quarterly newsletters
- 10 Majlis events connected researchers to policymakers interested in their work
“The concept of the Ras Al Khaimah Fine Arts Festival is very unique; it combines films, photography and fine arts. I have been able to connect with painters who I could use as a source of inspiration for my short films. For these networks and connections I am willing to travel to Ras Al Khaimah every year.”

-Ali Al Ghanim (Filmmaker)
What We Do

Our Focus
Education

Education was the original and remains the primary research priority of the Al Qasimi Foundation, as we view education as the key to the sustainable health and growth of our emirate and our nation. Community advancement requires investments in public education and related social services, and the Foundation focuses its educational activities on primary stakeholder groups including students and educators.

Students

- **February-March 2016**
  Sheikh Saqr Student Enrichment Program pilots student Skills For Life workshops

- **March 2016**
  Sheikh Saqr Student Enrichment Program students visit the Emirates Literature Festival to learn from published authors and discover new books

- **April 2016**
  Sheikh Saqr Student Enrichment Program students volunteer to clean Wadi Shawka

- **April 2016**
  Sheikh Saqr Student Enrichment Program students visit American University of Sharjah

- **May 2016**
  Artist Ruzica Simonic leads mosaic art and design workshop for the Foundation’s Hands on Learning students

- **July-August 2016**
  Eleven Sheikh Saqr Student Enrichment Program students take part in summer English and university preparatory programs in the United States, United Kingdom, and South Korea

- **September 2016**
  McDonald’s Ras Al Khaimah hosts the Foundation’s Hands on Learning students for a work experience day

- **September-December 2016**
  Sheikh Saqr Student Enrichment Program pilots Community Engagement, Volunteerism, and Youth in Action courses

Educators

- **February 2016**
  Community Gathering: Parents, Children, & Play: A Child Development Workshop

- **February-December 2016**
  Phase one of the Education Technology, Parent Involvement, Teaching with Brain Research, and Building a Strong Foundation Program teacher and administrator professional development workshop series are held

- **April 2016**
  Majlis: Public Private Partnerships in Education in the UAE: A Model for Success?

- **April 2016**
  7th Annual Gulf Comparative Education Society Symposium held in Kuwait

- **May 2016**
  Held educator and policymaker focus group discussions for the Ras Al Khaimah Case Study included in UNESCO Doha’s report on Momentum for Education 2030

- **May 2016**
  Majlis: Strengthening the Basic Skills of Arab Students in the Emirates: Insights from Cognitive Science
Health & Well-being

In 2016, the Al Qasimi Foundation supported the transformation of public health policy, health education, nutrition and lifestyle choices in Ras Al Khaimah and the emirates. Initiatives ranged from scholarships to Ras Al Khaimah specific case studies.

- **January 2016**
  First Health Practitioner Scholarship awarded

- **October 2016**
  Majlis: 4get-me-not (I Love my Brain Campaign)

- **November 2016**
  Majlis: EatWell Assist: A feasibility study targeting expectant parents to improve diet and nutrition and prevent family obesity in Ras Al Khaimah

- **November 2016**
  Majlis: Streamlining and Modernizing Medical Workforce Governance: A Case Study of Ras Al Khaimah, United Arab Emirates

- **December 2016**
  Majlis: Transforming Breast Cancer Diagnosis in Ras Al Khaimah
Community Development and Urban Planning

The Al Qasimi Foundation is committed to working with local stakeholders and decision makers to strengthen local communities in Ras Al Kahimah and the emirates. As such, it encourages research and programming related to any aspect of the community. In 2016, the Foundation largely focused on issues related to sustainable community and urban development as well as the environment.

- **February-December 2016**
  The Foundation’s Prison Project delivers phase one of Information Technology, English, and Business Management workshops for prisoners at the Ras Al Khaimah Correctional Facility

- **May 2016**
  Majlis: Preserving and Promoting Ras Al Khaimah’s Cultural Heritage

- **April 2016**
  Seed Grant awarded for Raising Public Awareness of Ras Al Khaimah’s Mangrove Wetlands project

- **November 2016**
  Majlis: Ras Al Khaimah Really Recycles!
Arts and Culture

Given the increasing events and activities around arts and culture, the Foundation made this an official priority area in 2016. The Foundation recognizes the evolving role of arts and culture in sustainable community, urban, and economic development and looks forward to exploring new research avenues and community engagement initiatives.

- **February 2016**
  4th Annual Ras Al Khaimah Fine Arts Festival

- **March 2016**
  Community Gathering: A Musical Evening with the Henhouse Prowlers: Electrifying Bluegrass Music

- **May 2016**
  Community Gathering: Barbecue Master Class for Everyone: A Culinary Experience with Waldorf Astoria

- **June 2016**
  Community Gathering: Iftar for Everyone: A Ramadan Experience in an Emirati Home

- **September 2016**
  Community Gathering: Fashion for Everyone with Eman & Elham Al Flamrzi

- **November 2016**
  Community Gathering: An Equestrian Adventure for the Whole Family

- **December 2016**
  Community Gathering: Holiday Feast for Everyone, Exploring Traditions in Ras Al Khaimah.
What We’ve Learned

Our Publications
This year the Al Qasimi Foundation’s research team focused on establishing and deepening collaborations with both local and international partners. The scope of this year’s publications speaks to these burgeoning relationships.

**January 2016**
First, Business, and Economy Class Education: For-Profit Education Providers and the Implications for Public Education (Published in a chapter for the 2016 volume of the World Yearbook of Education by Routledge)

**May 2016**
What is the Status of State-funded Philanthropy in the United Arab Emirates?

**June 2016**
Teacher Professional Development in the UAE: What Do Teachers Actually Want?

**July 2016**
Emirati Identity and Social Interaction in the Emirate of Ras Al Khaimah

**October 2016**
Private Education in the Absence of a Public Option: The Cases of the United Arab Emirates and Qatar (Published in a peer-reviewed volume by Forum for International Research in Education, October, 2016)

**December 2016**
An Experimental Investigation of the Determinants of Teacher Quality: Risk, Patience or Altruism?
What We’ve Shared
Our Presentations

PPP 2.0 - Multistakeholder partnerships
- “pooling and managing of resources, as well as the mobilization of competencies and commitments by public, business and civil society partners, to contribute to the expansion and enhanced quality of education” as defined by UNESCO and World Economic Forum (in Draxler, 2008, p.16)
Community Engagement as a Key Response to Global Humanitarian Needs
Event: Majlis Series
Date: February 7, 2016
Location: Ras Al Khaimah, United Arab Emirates
Presenter: Mohammed Abu Asaker

Hands on Learning: Re-engaging At-Risk Youth Beyond Vocational Education
Event: 2016 Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) Conference
Date: March 9, 2016
Location: Vancouver, Canada
Presenters: Natasha Ridge & Sahar El Asad

An Experimental Investigation of the Determinants of Teacher Quality: Risk, Patience or Altruism?
Event: 2016 Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) Conference
Date: March 10, 2016
Location: Vancouver, Canada
Presenter: Natasha Ridge

Coping with (School) Culture: Assessing School Culture in Ras Al Khaimah's Public High Schools
Event: 2016 Gulf Comparative Education Society Symposium
Date: April 7, 2016
Location: Arab Open University, Kuwait
Presenters: Soohyun Jeon & Brian Chung

Overview of the Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research
Event: NYU Abu Dhabi Student Visit to the Al Qasimi Foundation
Date: April 24, 2016
Location: Al Qasimi Foundation, Ras Al Khaimah, UAE
Presenters: Natasha Ridge, Susan Kippels, & Brian Chung

Public Private Partnerships in Education in the UAE: A Model for Success?
Event: Majlis Series
Date: April 24, 2016
Location: Ras Al Khaimah, United Arab Emirates
Presenter: Samar Farah

Education Research in the UAE: Methodological Challenges and Possibilities
Event: Paris Sorbonne Master's Class
Date: May 3, 2016
Location: Paris Sorbonne Abu Dhabi, Abu Dhabi, UAE
Presenter: Natasha Ridge

From Classroom to Boardroom: A Learning Journey
Event: Women in Educational Leadership Summit (WELS 2016)
Date: May 4, 2016
Location: University of Wollongong in Dubai, Dubai, UAE
Presenter: Natasha Ridge

Strengthening the Basic Skills of Arab Students in the Emirates: Insights from Cognitive Science
Event: Majlis Series
Date: May 8, 2016
Location: Ras Al Khaimah, United Arab Emirates
Presenter: Dr. Helen Abadzi

Preserving and Promoting Ras Al Khaimah's Cultural Heritage
Event: Majlis Series
Date: May 22, 2016
Location: Ras Al Khaimah, United Arab Emirates
Presenter: Matthew MacLean

The Rise and Role of GCC Philanthropy in Education Development
Event: The Governance of Education and Training: Agenda 2030 and Beyond
Date: June 22, 2016
Location: Geneva, Switzerland
Presenter: Natasha Ridge
Role and Impact of Arab Fathers in the Gulf Context
Event: Centre for Research on Families and Relationships (CRFR) Conference
Date: June 30, 2016
Location: Edinburgh, UK
Presenters: Natasha Ridge & Soohyun Jeon

Proposal to Host the World Congress of Comparative Education Societies in Dubai 2019
Event: World Congress of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES), Executive Council Meeting
Date: August 23, 2016
Location: Beijing Normal University, Beijing, China
Presenter: Susan Kippels

4get-me-not (I Love my Brain Campaign)
Event: Majlis Series
Date: October 9, 2016
Location: Ras Al Khaimah, United Arab Emirates
Presenter: Desiree Vlekken

Exploring the Impact of School Curriculum on Student Success in Higher Education in the UAE
Event: 2nd International Conference for the Khalifa Award for Education
Date: October 17, 2016
Location: Abu Dhabi, UAE
Presenter: Natasha Ridge

The Big Talk: Redefining Education in an Increasingly Connected World
Event: 18th Global Women in Leadership (WIL) Economic Forum
Date: October 24, 2016
Location: Dubai Ritz Carlton, Dubai, UAE
Presenter: Natasha Ridge

Ras Al Khaimah Really Recycles!
Event: Majlis Series
Date: November 2, 2016
Location: Ras Al Khaimah, United Arab Emirates
Presenter: Sonia Yuarte Nasser

EatWell Assist: A feasibility study targeting expectant parents to improve diet and nutrition and prevent family obesity in Ras Al Khaimah
Event: Majlis Series
Date: November 13, 2016
Location: Ras Al Khaimah, United Arab Emirates
Presenter: Mary Steen

Streamlining and Modernizing Medical Workforce Governance: A Case Study of Ras Al Khaimah, United Arab Emirates
Event: Majlis Series
Date: November 23, 2016
Location: Ras Al Khaimah, United Arab Emirates
Presenter: Stephanie Short

Economy, Business, & First Class: The Implications of For-Profit Education Provision in the UAE and Beyond
Event: Research on Learning and Educational Innovation Seminar Series of the Faculty of Education and Social Work (University of Sydney)
Date: December 12, 2016
Location: University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia
Presenter: Natasha Ridge

Transforming Breast Cancer Diagnosis in Ras Al Khaimah
Event: Majlis Series
Date: December 15, 2016
Location: Ras Al Khaimah, United Arab Emirates
Presenter: Dr. Syeda Zakia Hossian
Looking Forward

Plans for 2017
Looking forward: Plans for 2017

In 2017, the Al Qasimi Foundation will remain committed to strengthening the economic, social, and cultural sustainability of Ras Al Khaimah and the UAE through relevant research and evidence-based policy recommendations.

Our team looks forward to working with our neighbors both here and abroad for a year dedicated to the improvement of education, public health, and urban development in the UAE and beyond. We are particularly excited to:

- Co-organize the Symposium of Philanthropy in Education: Global Trends, Diverse Perspectives with NORRAG in Geneva, Switzerland.
- Conduct research on the challenges and implications of a global decline in the educational attainment and retention of boys (funded by World Innovation Summit for Education [WISE]).
- Further our formal collaborations with the Ministry of Education as well as build a library for female inmates in Ras Al Khaimah Prison.
- Increase the number of graduates from The Sheikh Saqr Student Enrichment Program who travel overseas for university studies.
- Host the 5th Annual Ras Al Khaimah Fine Arts Festival and open our own gallery space and art studio to support the arts year round.
- Improve our communication efforts through surveys and focus groups with key stakeholders.
Who we are:
Our Team
Countries represented in our team:

What’s New:

- New Team Members: 3
- Interns: 10
- Visiting Scholars: 3
Saqr Almalki
*Human Resources & Events Intern*
Saqr holds a bachelor’s degree in human resources management from UAE University. Saqr is collaborating with the Foundation to assist in developing a clear, comprehensive vision for the organization’s approach to human resources and employee relations management which will showcase the best practices in the field.

Elizabeth Buckner
*Faculty Scholar*
Dr. Elizabeth Buckner is an Assistant Visiting Professor of international comparative education and Middle East studies at Teachers College, Columbia University. She is interested in globalization, education and international development policy. She has researched various aspects of globalization’s effect on education, including textbook portrayals of globalization, the growth of English language learning, and the privatization of higher education.

Raahima Bukhari
*Research Intern*
Raahima Bukhari is currently an undergraduate pre-medical student at Stony Brook University, New York where she is pursuing a bachelor’s degree in health science with a concentration in emergency and critical care.

Lauren Clingan
*Research Intern*
A rising senior at New York University Abu Dhabi (NYUAD), Lauren studies social research and public policy. Her academic and research interests center on qualitative research methods, human and labor rights, socioeconomic inequality, and gender.

Beth Derderian
*Doctoral Scholar*
Beth Derderian is a cultural anthropologist and is a doctoral candidate at Northwestern University in Chicago, Illinois. Her research focuses on the development of arts and cultural initiatives in the UAE. It explores professionalization and cultural infrastructure, critique, the role Dubai plays as art hub within the Gulf region, emerging arts initiatives across the emirates, and the relationship between commerce and art.
Max Jundt
*Capacity Development Intern*
Max Jundt is an incoming freshman at the University of California, Berkeley, and plans on majoring in economics. His interests are in education and cross-cultural communication.

Simon Pepper
*Research Intern*
A native of the UK, Simon is in the final year of his undergraduate degree in English literature and French at the University of St. Andrews. His studies have encompassed a variety of modules in literature, cultural identity, and translation.

Moonie Sohn
*Community Engagement & Outreach Intern*
Myung-In "Moonie" Sohn is a rising senior at New York University Abu Dhabi (NYUAD), where she is majoring in Arab crossroads studies and minoring in Arabic language. Her academic and research interests include the classical Arabic linguistic tradition and Arabic language.

Guillaume Sylvain
*Community Engagement and Outreach Intern*
Guillaume Sylvain is currently a student at NYU Abu Dhabi and majors in Arab crossroads studies with a minor in Arabic and political science. He has a strong interest in U.A.E. national history, heritage, and society.

Emily Winchip
*Doctoral Scholar*
Emily Winchip is currently a PhD student at the University of Nottingham. Her research focuses on the experiences of teachers with a specific focus on teachers in international and for-profit schools. Emily researches the business influences on teachers’ work in the United Arab Emirates.
Who we’ve worked with:
Our Partners
Partners

The Al Qasimi Foundation values collaboration as a key to building a stronger community. Therefore, the Foundation remains grateful and honored to partner with high performing organizations who remain dedicated to research, development, and outreach initiatives in Ras Al Khaimah, the United Arab Emirates and beyond.

Ras Al Khaimah and UAE Government Partners

- Dubai Tourism
- Electronic Government Authority
- Higher Colleges of Technology
- Ministry of Education
- RAK Correctional Facility
- RAK Educational Zone
- RAK Free Trade Zone
- RAK Hospital
- RAK Management Office
- RAK Schools
- RAK Waste Management Authority
- Ras Al Khaimah Municipality
- Ras Al Khaimah National Museum
- Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority
- Sheikh Saqr Program for Government Excellence
- The Knowledge and Human Development Authority

Other Local Partners

- 4get-me-not Alzheimer’s Organization
- Al Dahaisa Stables
- Al Jazeera Aviation Club
- Alive Advertisement
- Art 276
- Bon Education
- ColorfuLee
- Emirates Airline Festival of Literature
- Emirates Foundation
- German Emirati Joint Council for Industry and Commerce
- New York University Abu Dhabi
- RAK Bank
- RAK Medical Health Sciences University
- RAK Rock
- RAK Wild Life Project
- The Talent Enterprise
- Tips and Toes

Organizational Partners

- Dechert LLP
- Ernst & Young
- IDO
Other International Partners

Arab Foundations Forum
Arab Open University Kuwait
Australian Trade and Investment Commission
British Council
CCI Greenheart Program
Education USA
FIRE: Forum for International Research in Education
Georgetown University Qatar, the Center for International and Regional Studies (CIRS)
Hands on Learning Australia
NORRAG
Oxbridge Summers Program
Teachers College, Columbia University
The Gulf Comparative Education Society
The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)
UNESCO Doha
University of South Australia
University of Sydney
World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE)