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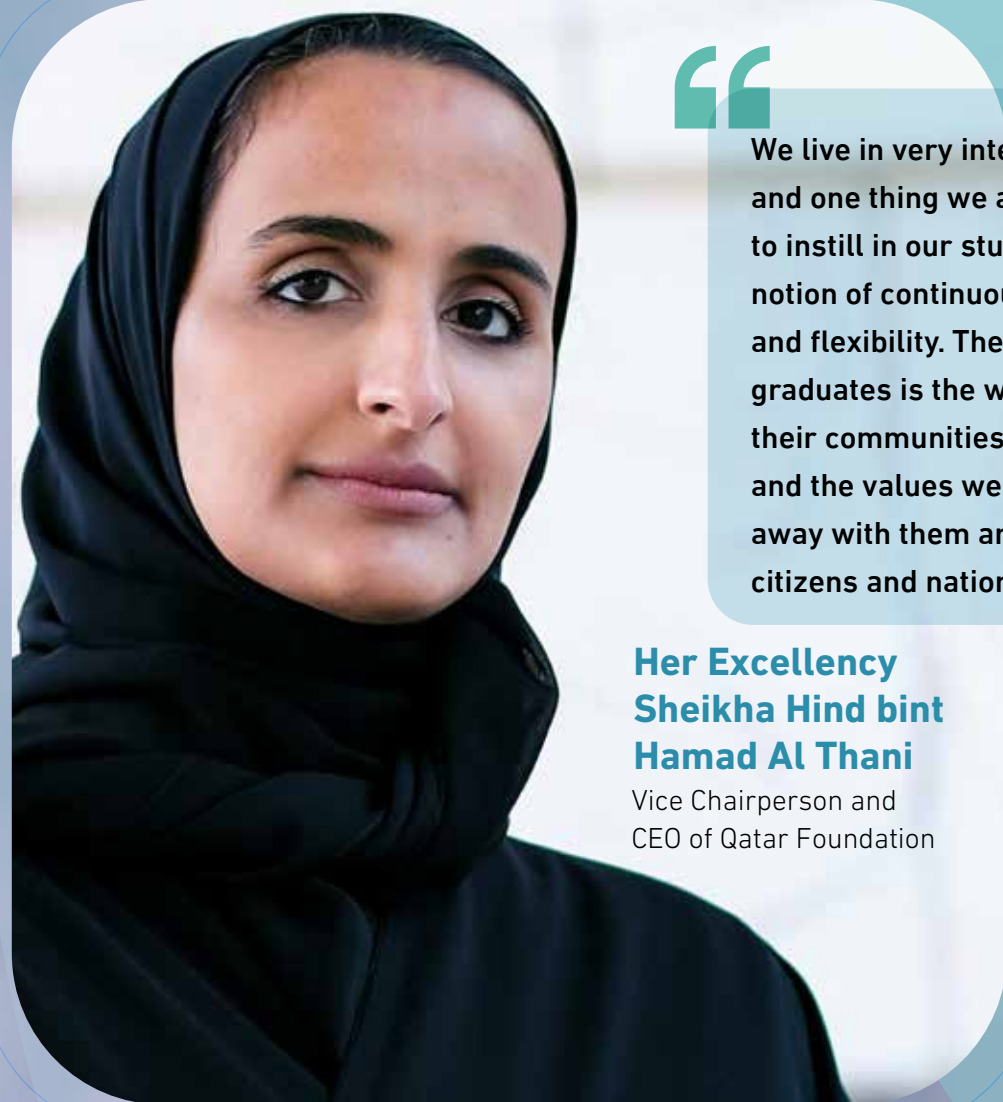
CAREERGuide

CAREER FUTURE
BEYOND COVID-19




مؤسسة قطر
Qatar Foundation





“

We live in very interesting times, and one thing we always want to instill in our students is the notion of continuous learning and flexibility. The value in our graduates is the way they support their communities and the nation, and the values we hope they take away with them are being active citizens and nation-builders.

”

Her Excellency Sheikha Hind bint Hamad Al Thani

Vice Chairperson and
CEO of Qatar Foundation

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'Career Guide' app
available to download at:



TOGETHER WE OVERCOME THE CHALLENGE

Dear readers, this is the eleventh issue of Career Guide – our second issue of 2020, a tumultuous year that has seen the coronavirus pandemic hitting all corners of the globe and every aspect of our lives.

Since March, we have been facing an unprecedented challenge that has totally changed our perspective on education. Having successfully resolved the problems the virus inflicted on the 2019-2020 academic year by exploiting the many distance-learning capabilities offered by smart technology, the new academic year sees the adoption of “blended learning”. It combines both smart and traditional educational approaches, providing students with greater opportunities to acquire skills and develop personally and professionally through training, practice, and innovation.

Our students should be aware of their crucial role in the success of this exceptional educational model. They will need to abide by guidelines as much as we will need to train them on how to make the most out of the programs on offer, so that they can achieve the best for themselves and their beloved nation.

Of course, no one can predict how things will be in the coming months, but we should remain optimistic and work together to overcome the challenges facing us, as each of us has a role to play. In this issue, we aim to provide a clear picture for students, parents, and fresh graduates of how things may look in the future. To that end, we have interviewed experts in various fields to offer us some insights on how to evaluate the current situation, overcome the biggest challenges, and put into practice the lessons learned, so that we can shape a bright future for education.

We aim to answer an important question through the articles and interviews in this issue: How can the education sector and labor market withstand the current challenges? The coronavirus pandemic has affected the lifestyles and priorities of everyone around the world. It has significantly impacted how students choose specializations, as they opt for the fields that match their future projections of

particular professions. For example, more focus is expected on jobs that can be practiced remotely, or can respond directly to ongoing job market developments. Perhaps unsurprisingly, we have recently seen a rise of interest in scientific and medical specializations, together with associated fields of research, technology, and epidemiology.

Moreover, given the constant change in overall market trends, we need to cope with the rapidly evolving labor market. This calls for career guidance programs that direct students to the best and most rewarding specializations – which precisely entails our area of expertise here at the Qatar Career Development Center (QCDC).

This crisis has highlighted the central role that career guidance is going to play in the coming period. Now, students feel confused when they consider their future or select their academic specialization. It is our direct responsibility to support them, their parents, and their career advisors and counselors to plan their paths in accordance with the ongoing changes and in line with the vision of the State of Qatar. To that end, we have developed our digital services and programs to remain compatible with the new situation and involve more students, parents, and career practitioners.

Today, more than ever before, there is an urgent need to promote a career guidance culture in our society, including the introduction of a career guidance and counseling major at universities. Career guidance helps you better understand and discover yourself, your interests, capabilities, strengths, and areas for learning and growth. It also helps you learn more about the labor market and enables you to make informed, professional decisions and stand firm in the face of all challenges. Career guidance services are the primary source of information for youth about the skills and capacities that will help them achieve a successful future career in the teeth of threats and sudden changes in education and the labor market, both locally and globally.

In this issue, we also celebrate health care workers who

remain on the front lines fighting against the deadly virus. In recognition of these heroes, and following the massive success of our “White Army” online series, which hit 1.5 million views on social media and was widely covered by local media, we decided to dedicate the “Exploring Careers” section in this issue to medical professions.

In the following pages, you will read interviews with inspiring Qatari figures and benefit from their experience to make better decisions regarding your future. You will also discover the art of speed reading, learn the benefits of debating, realize the importance of being emotionally intelligent, and learn about many other subjects that help you sharpen your skills and excel in your career.

In conclusion, I would like to send this message of encouragement to our youth:

We might all be going through challenging times, but you have a unique opportunity to utilize your time at home to develop your skills and better plan your career path. Do not let any negative impacts of this crisis frustrate or discourage you. You may not have the power to change it, none of us do, but you can decide how to react to it. There is no reason to feel too anxious as long as you stick to the preventive measures against coronavirus. Focus on your future, and benefit from the abundance of information, tips, and insights available

in this issue, so that you can make the best possible use of your time. Wish you all the best!

Abdulla Al-Mansoori

Director

Qatar Career Development Center



"MY CAREER-MY FUTURE" GOES VIRTUAL

Over the period of 19-30 July 2020, Qatar Career Development Center (QCDC) held the second edition of its 'My Career-My Future,' a program designed to introduce secondary school students to career tracks available in Qatar's labor market.

Under the preventive measures imposed due to the coronavirus pandemic, this year's program went virtual. Live videos on Instagram featured interviews with selected professionals from six sectors: education, media, aviation, career counseling, banking, and energy and gas.

Guest speakers talked about their careers and experiences throughout education up to employment, in addition to the qualifications, capacities, and skills required to work in each field. Answering questions directed by attendees, the guests provided students with a clearer picture of working in each sector and valuable advice to better plan their careers.



Such QCDC programs are intended to raise career awareness among school students to help them unlock their potential and develop their career paths. The ultimate goal is to secure the young workforce needed by Qatar to build a diversified and buoyant economy.

You can watch all episodes of "My Career-My Future" via IGTV on our Instagram.



"WHITE ARMY" CAMPAIGN ACHIEVES REMARKABLE SUCCESS



In recognition of the tremendous efforts made by health care workers over the past few months, and the exceptional courage they showed while fighting the coronavirus pandemic, Qatar Career Development Center (QCDC) and Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) co-produced a series of videos that highlighted the vital role played by the front line heroes in promoting public health and protecting society against diseases and epidemics.

Titled "The White Army ... The First Line of Defense Against the Coronavirus," the videos featured short interviews with 15 physicians, nurses, and other health care professionals. They talked about their daily tasks,

gave advice to the students who seek to pursue the same career paths, and suggested guidelines for the public to prevent infection. The series went viral, recording over 1.5 million views on different social media platforms and was also extensively covered by local media.

Through this initiative, QCDC seeks to inform the youth about the available health care professions and subspecialties, encouraging them to weigh how these professions match their potential and personal ambitions, and to consider them when planning their careers.

QCDC PUBLISHES "CAREER GUIDANCE" BOOKLET FOR PARENTS

QCDC has published a digital booklet that aims to provide parents with expert advice on the vital role they can perform in supporting their children toward a successful future career. The guide, produced by QCDC career guidance experts, is packed with tips, information, and practical advice that enable parents to take the necessary steps that help their kids plan their career paths and make career decisions that fulfil their potential and ambitions.

To download the guide, please scan the following QR Code:



You can watch all the interviews of the "The White Army ... The First Line of Defense Against the Coronavirus" series on QCDC's YouTube channel by scanning the following QR Code:



QCDC SPEARHEADS STEPS TO ARABIZATION OF CAREER GUIDANCE RESOURCES

In an effort aimed at addressing the gap in Arabic resources in the field of career guidance and career development, QCDC has collaborated with the Asia Pacific Career Development Association (APCDA) to Arabize the "Glossary of Career Development Terms," which was published by the APCDA in 2014. An APCDA team from several English-speaking countries compiled the glossary, and it was translated into all the languages spoken by the association's members to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and expertise.

Through this initiative, QCDC has made an important contribution to promoting the Arabic language, offering a resource to Arabic speakers and professionals worldwide for creating impactful content and training programs.

To download the glossary, scan this QR code:



THE CAREER CAFE BRINGS TOGETHER CAREER GUIDANCE PROFESSIONALS IN QATAR

QCDC has launched the Career Café, an initiative featuring virtual career development sessions that facilitate the provision and sharing of information with relevant career professionals on career development topics during the COVID-19 crisis.

It also provides an opportunity for career professionals to discuss current trends, challenges, and opportunities, which in turn can further inform QCDC's service offerings.

You can view all sessions of this initiative by scanning the following QR code:



QCDC WEBSITE RECEIVES MADA ACCREDITATION

QCDC has obtained the digital accessibility accreditation from Mada Center, making its platform accessible to all community members, including people with special needs and the elderly.

Over several months, QCDC worked hard to meet all the global standards for digital access to web content (WCAG 2.1) to promote digital inclusiveness and empower people with special needs and support their independence.



THE CAREER STUDIO ANSWERS ALL YOUR CAREER-RELATED QUESTIONS

In line with QCDC's efforts to offer effective digital programs and services that power its digital transformation journey during and after the COVID-19 crisis, the center has launched the "Career Studio" initiative. It provides students, parents, and job seekers with an opportunity to submit their career-related questions via email (qcdc@qf.org.qa) or through the center's social media channels. QCDC's career guidance experts provide the answers to these questions via a recorded video published on the same social media channels.

You can watch all Career Studio episodes by scanning the following QR code:



"KAWADER" PLATFORM LAUNCHED



Qatar's Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor, and Social Affairs (MADLSA) has announced the launch of the National Employment Platform (Kawader), a digital platform where job vacancies available in public and private sectors are displayed to facilitate the process of finding jobs for Qatari citizens.

It offers job opportunities that match all specializations, qualifications, and experience. First, job seekers can apply directly for the advertised job vacancies. The hiring employers will then examine candidates' applications, hold interviews, and select the ones who meet the requirements for the available job.

MADLSA does not intervene in the selection of the matching job or the hiring employer. Instead, its role is limited to coordinating among different entities to advertise job opportunities for job seekers, providing consultation,

supervising the registration and creation of résumés, and, together with employers, arranging for the interviews and the hiring process.

In July, the Cabinet of Qatar approved a ministerial decision to raise the percentage of Qataris working in state-owned and state-supported companies (as well as other authorities that are subject to the retirement and pensions law) to 60%.

Job seekers can now register on the platform by scanning the following QR code:



LUSAIL UNIVERSITY ACCEPTS FIRST BATCH OF STUDENTS

Lusail University has accepted the first batch of students in its various disciplines offered for the fall semester 2020. A total of 833 students were accepted to join the university out of more than 3 thousand enrollment applications for study at the university's three colleges: College of Managerial, Financial, and Economic Sciences; College of Law; and College of Education and Arts.

In its first academic year, the university offers the following Bachelor programs in the following disciplines: Public Law, Private Law, Marketing and Distribution, Business Administration, French Studies, and English Language Teaching, with plans to launch more programs in the future.

Comprising 52 medium-size and large-size classrooms, the university's campus is located in Lusail City, with an

area of 11 square kilometers. For now, classes are held remotely due to the coronavirus outbreak.

Lusail University has already established strategic partnerships with several regional and international universities, including the University of Hassan II Casablanca (Morocco), the University of Jordan (Jordan), Sorbonne University (France), and the University of Sussex (UK).

For more information about Lusail University, please scan the following QR code:



ULSTER UNIVERSITY OPENS BRANCH CAMPUS IN QATAR



Ulster University has launched a branch campus in Qatar in partnership with City University College.

In the academic year 2020-2021, the university offers an opportunity to study for a BSc (Hons) in Business Studies, which prepares students for a career in business management in the fields of industry, commerce, and the public sector. This program is available through both morning and evening classes to accommodate students who wish to pursue their study while working. The program is managed by Ulster University Business School, one of the largest business schools in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

Another program currently available at the Qatar-

based branch is the Diploma in International Foundation which qualifies students to enroll for university education in business administration, art, humanities, and social sciences.

The university's temporary campus is located in Abu Hamour, and a new state-of-the-art campus is under construction in Lusail City.

Learn more about the programs offered by Ulster University – Qatar by scanning the following QR code:



EDUCATION IN QATAR ... CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

HE Dr. Ibrahim bin Saleh Al-Nuaimi
Undersecretary of MOEHE

Since the onset of COVID-19, Qatar's Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE) has made huge efforts to help the education sector overcome the COVID-related challenges. It ensured that the educational process continued remotely and smoothly despite the abrupt suspension of classroom teaching. Teachers and educators at public schools easily adapted to the new situation, thanks to the distance education training they had already received under MOEHE's strategy of integrating technology into education during the past few years.

Selecting Microsoft Teams as the central distance

learning platform, MOEHE made sure that schools were well prepared, that teachers knew all the features of the software, and that all students and parents received user accounts. Tablets and home broadband Internet access devices were distributed to students who lacked such assets. This was not everything for MOEHE: E-lessons were broadcast over 19 YouTube distance learning channels and two TV educational channels; a new student distance learning assessment policy was developed; and semester plans were revised for all subjects and levels based on prior content analysis, aiming to match distance learning mechanisms and

duration of application, thus ensuring there are no gaps when students move to the next grade.

Meanwhile, the Private Schools Affairs Department at MOEHE closely watched and supported the educational process at private schools, safeguarding their ability to handle their own issues. Moreover, MOEHE monitored the higher education institutions as they offered programs via approved online platforms. In coordination with the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH), new policies were put in place regarding teaching applied academic modules. Lastly, arrangements were made for admissions in the new academic year.

In an exclusive interview with Career Guide, HE Dr. Ibrahim bin Saleh Al-Nuaimi, Undersecretary of MOEHE, talks about dealing with the challenges posed by COVID-19, distance learning, and the education system development efforts.

How could Qatar's education sector cope swiftly with the impact of COVID-19?

There are many reasons. Over the past few years, MOEHE has achieved considerable progress in establishing its online learning system based on the directives of our wise leadership which emphasized the important role of online learning in keeping pace with the contemporary exponential growth of knowledge, toward attaining the goals of Qatar National Vision 2030. Distance learning at schools worked well as planned, with a very good response from both students and parents. This was evident from feedback indicators, including completion of assignments, daily and weekly assessments,

number of video lessons and views among other things.

What are key lessons to learn from COVID-19?

The first lesson is that online learning has become a top priority for education at all levels, along with qualified teachers and conveniently adjusted curricula, so that we can build a capable generation that can keep in step with the spectacular development in today's world. This can be achieved only by integrating technology into education across the relevant curricula and systems.

Does MOEHE provide teachers with specific training to maximize the outcomes of distance learning?

MOEHE is always keen on bolstering the technological proficiency of teachers, embracing the latest advances in educational technology, and providing continuous training in state-of-the-art systems.



It monitors the quality of implementation throughout the academic year through classroom visits and online learning evaluation. Upon the coronavirus outbreak, project coordinators at public schools trained all teachers in the Learning Management System (LMS) and Microsoft Teams application, even before the launch of the distance learning system, to ensure that they had the needed skills to manage such systems properly.

Do you pay attention to the constant development of academic curricula?

A few years ago, MOEHE adopted an initiative to develop educational curricula, with a particular focus on the competencies needed by students (competency-based curriculum). We have a clear approach that conforms to Qatar National Vision 2030 on the basis of a set of values, principles, and objectives. Our curricula are designed to meet the job market needs and higher education requirements. Technology is effectively involved in teaching, and textbooks are produced in both electronic and print forms.

The structure of education was updated to encompass all the paths that cater to the capabilities and preferences of students. In tandem, the educational path scheme was improved to meet present-day demands for academic curricula that allow lifelong and innovative learning opportunities. Besides the science and literature curricular concentrations, a third concentration was introduced (i.e. technology) to combine technology with science and its applications. This provides students with outstanding learning opportunities during and after secondary education, enabling them to enter the future career specializations that Qatar needs in the fields of science and technology.

What should teachers, students, and parents do for distance learning to have the same results as traditional education?

No plan will go anywhere unless it receives a favorable response from society. At MOEHE, we back our plans with informative media campaigns to highlight the important role played by every individual in fighting the pandemic and addressing its negative impact on education. Students should follow the lesson schedule, do their homework, and keep in touch with their teachers. Parents should keep an eye on their children and make sure they are not lagging behind in homework. The matter goes beyond personal responsibility to everyone's genuine national loyalty and sense of duty.

What value does the Tomoh program add to education? And how to attract more students to join it?

MOEHE attaches great importance to the Tomoh program, which seeks to recruit large numbers of secondary school graduates among Qataris, children of Qatari women, and those born in Qatar, to enroll in specializations under the College of Education. We are trying to increase the number of students joining this program to meet the job market needs in educational areas and localize education professionals at Qatari schools, which will reflect positively on the educational process as a whole. Together with Qatar University's College of Education, we work to further enrich academic specializations by creating departments for physical and art education and hiring more Qatari teachers. Several benefits are given to members of the program, such as monthly allowances, to encourage their retention in the field. Once they graduate from the College of Education and complete the required training, MOEHE guarantees them jobs at public schools, depending on their specializations.

As for universities, was it easier to adapt to distance learning compared to schools?

And does distance learning work well for all specializations?

Of course, distance learning at the university level is relatively easier, as university students are better able to manage their education on their own than school students. By contrast, primary school students need help from their parents. In fact, the coronavirus pandemic inspired all educational institutions around the world to administer education remotely and expand the scope of distance learning in the future. As you may know, how this is done depends on the nature of university majors and tracks. Distance learning does not apply to the majors that require physical attendance on campus to receive the education and training necessary for the achievement of learning goals.

How did MOEHE support students overseas who are on scholarships during the crisis?

Once regular classes were halted, and most universities of the world switched to distance learning, all overseas students on scholarships were notified that they could return to Qatar to continue their study remotely. Embassies and cultural attaché offices were directed to facilitate travel procedures. Most of those students have

already returned to Qatar. If their universities decide to go on with distance learning in the coming year, the students will enjoy all possible facilities, and their allowances will be paid as normal.

As more universities around the world adopt distance learning, is it time to change how we perceive university degrees obtained through distance learning, especially in terms of accreditation?

The university degree accreditation policy is governed by many strict criteria which are in accordance with international university degree accreditation standards. Like any other policy, it must be reviewed in light of the current situation. However, we cannot take the risk unless the quality of output in the future is verified.



ADAPTING TO THE NEW NORMAL

A Discussion on The Future of Education

Education was one of the worst-hit sectors by the COVID-19 crisis, as most schools and universities worldwide were forced to suspend in-person teaching due to the strict lockdowns imposed by most countries. By mid-April 2020, 94 percent of learners worldwide were affected by the pandemic, representing more than 1.5 billion children and youth, from pre-primary to higher education, in 200 countries, according to the UNESCO Global Monitoring Report.

The pandemic's impact on education in Qatar was less severe, thanks to the prompt action from the officials and the existence of the necessary infrastructure to offer online education. Virtual classes enabled educational institutions to complete the 2019-2020 academic year before they adopted a blended learning approach for the new academic year. This approach combines online learning and traditional in-class lessons at schools.

The situation has left education stakeholders with so many questions to be answered: What should we expect in the upcoming months? What did we learn from this crisis? How can we use it to build a better future for education? How can we be better prepared for the next crisis?

There is no way to provide definitive answers to these questions, as we are still in the middle of the battle against the pandemic. It would require years of in-depth research to know its long-term effects on education. However, we did our best to give you a clearer picture of the current situation through "Q & A," a new section in our magazine.

We spoke with five prominent education experts representing Qatar Foundation to seek their opinions on the aforementioned topics and learn about their vision for the future of education. Read their answers through the following pages.



PROF. FRANCISCO MARMOLEJO

Education Advisor
Qatar Foundation



What lessons have the education sector learned from the COVID-19 crisis so far?

The first lesson we have learned was that the education environment was much more fragile than we think and was not ready for this crisis. We also learned that transitioning to remote teaching is a short-term solution, not a panacea. But most importantly, the crisis also showed us that we need to challenge our assumptions about what is bad and what is good for education. It provides us with a good opportunity to disrupt our education systems. We can use it to rethink and reshape education, and help the education systems overcome the challenges they have been facing for decades. We need to benefit from it to create a better future for education and to prepare the students of today to be socially responsible professionals who have a sense of solidarity and are more committed to their communities.

How can we prepare students to be more socially responsible in the future?

The need for more socially responsible citizens is a clamor applicable to both educators and future graduates. It is a collective effort starting from the family nucleus that involves all relevant players: government, companies, schools, civil society, and of course, teachers and students. As French philosopher Edgar Morin has indicated, the current pandemic has shown in society a strong sense of solidarity but also a lack of empathy. Preparing new generations of socially responsible future graduates requires socially responsible educators.

Do you think that countries that fail to utilize the COVID-19 opportunity to reassess their education systems may risk falling behind in terms of their education systems' long-term achievements?

Definitely. Paradoxically, the current pandemic crisis has opened a unique and novel opportunity to induce a well-managed disruption in the educational systems. Considering that the pandemic has a global scope, no education system in the world is immune to its effects. Many of the inadequacies and shortcomings in education have been exposed during the crisis, mostly related to unequal access to education, high inefficiency of academic programs, questionable quality, and more importantly, limited relevance of the educational experience. For each of those areas, opportunities for improvement abound. In order to respond more

effectively to the needs of the economy and society in the "new normal," there is no doubt that "more of the same" will not be the right response.

What is the main challenge facing higher education, and how can we overcome it?

Higher education tends to work in a silo, and the crisis has shown the significant limitations of such a narrowed approach. Unless we see higher education as part of the entire educational system and in the context of a broader societal ecosystem, its capacity to respond to new challenges will be marginal. The very limited articulation of higher education with the previous levels of the education system limits its ability to equip future graduates with critical thinking and team building, integrity, empathy, and other essential skills for career success. Those are not the kind of skills that can be learned in a particular course, and it would be too late to learn them only at the university level. Research shows that the best age to build these skills is between 6 and 12 years old, so we need to embed them in the early levels of education.

This is one of the reasons why Qatar Foundation constitutes a unique educational ecosystem, not existing at the same scale in any other part of the world, which allows higher levels of articulation from pre-school to doctoral education. In fact, Qatar Foundation has already taken the lead with the Global Education Innovation Initiative at Harvard University in convening higher education experts across the globe to learn together about the different efforts currently in place to have higher education institutions that support the continuation of education in the previous levels of education. Currently, more than 15 cases globally, including our case at Qatar Foundation, are being analyzed and will soon be shared internationally.

What is your advice to university students and fresh graduates who may be feeling uncertain about their future due to the pandemic?

I would tell them: you are part of a unique generation that faced a challenge that no one else has ever faced before in contemporary history. It might be a challenging time, but you must understand that the concept of a job is changing. To be successful, you must develop your ability to work within teams inside a multicultural ever-changing environment. You have to be flexible as you might not only need to change jobs, but also professions. More importantly, you must be prepared to continue learning and acquiring new skills for the rest of your life.

MR. STUART LEEMING

Executive Director
Qatar Foundation Schools



Should we tailor e-learning to the needs of individual students?

As with everything in education, it is crucial to be open to doing whatever is necessary to remove barriers to learning. That means being open to confronting uncomfortable truths as well as being innovative. Sometimes, it is necessary to break a traditional approach rather than trying to replicate it. And this is at the heart of disruptive education, one of the Qatar Foundation themes, where counter-cultural developments can lead toward a new paradigm. The measure of success is student progress and achievement.

Every school in Qatar needs to integrate technology into their curriculum. What is your advice to administrators based on what QF Schools have already achieved in this field?

When technology works really well, we should be unaware of it – it should just work. So, before educators and students can benefit from the opportunities presented, the supporting infrastructure must be assured. The challenges often lie within the external elements rather than internal factors, especially where an 'anytime, anywhere' approach is to be adopted. The technology must work for those students with restricted bandwidth and VoIP restrictions as well as for students studying within the school's own network. It is essential to know what the limiting factors are and plan accordingly. We should also capitalize on existing networks that connect our students, such as 4G and 5G via smartphones and other devices.

When we design online curricula, should we work on increasing the role of parents?

The ideal is to facilitate independent learning. Our children learn an enormous amount anyway through their use of the Internet and personal devices, though that is usually rather chaotic;

the challenge is to channel productively that innate thirst for information. Online learning that relies on parents doing anything other than encouraging their kids is unsustainable and undesirable. Innovative curriculum design should reimagine how we think of teachers, casting them more as facilitators of learning rather than simply the expert source of all knowledge and wisdom.

What is your advice to students who are currently surrounded by negative news and uncertainty about the future?

This is an extraordinary time for our young people, and I know that many are finding it hard, especially those whose families have suffered illness or loss, and my heart goes out to them. It is a time of rapid change, and we shall emerge into a new era that we shall see through fresh eyes. The world is being rebooted, and there are opportunities presenting themselves that were not there previously, and the generation presently in school is the one that will build that new future. I would say to our young people, by all means, be aware of the challenges but do not wallow in the past; it can't be changed. Look to the future, and remember, we have been preparing you for a future you could not possibly imagine.

In general, what are the most important lessons we have learned from the crisis so far?

The motto of the worldwide scouting movement is, 'Be Prepared.' It is hard to think the unthinkable and to avoid complacency, and it is hard to decide to act before the effects of a crisis are felt locally. The single most important lesson, I would venture, is that the world is a very small and intensively connected place. Global issues are everyone's concern, and a failure to act early can have cataclysmic consequences. This time, quite apart from the lamentable loss of life, we have come close to breaking the world's economy; imagine if we break the climate.

DR. OMAR AL AGNAF

Executive Director

Qatar Biomedical Research Institute (QBRI)

Hamad Bin Khalifa University



How vital is biomedical research in facing health care system emergencies?

Biomedical research plays a crucial role in supporting health care systems. It focuses on studying biological processes and diseases to improve prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of diseases, leading to a healthier population and a more robust economy. When health care systems face challenges similar to the COVID-19 pandemic, biomedical researchers and scientists are always on the front lines to work on solutions while studying the disease to better prepare the system for similar emergencies in the future.

How did QBRI support the health care system in Qatar during the COVID-19 crisis?

One of QBRI's main goals is to provide solutions to the health care challenges facing the State of Qatar and the region. From day one of the pandemic, QBRI used all its resources to support the health care sector. The first step was to provide advanced equipment and technologies that included robotics to increase the testing capacity at Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC). QBRI also employed all of its efforts to provide high-caliber volunteers to HMC. The institute also placed its research staff's capabilities at HMC's disposal, as they provided technical assistance within the corporation's laboratories where needed. In addition, we developed our own in-house COVID-19 test kits as a backup, in case of shortages like what happened during the early months of the pandemic. Finally, QBRI has recently launched an Inter-Disciplinary Research Program (IDRP) that focuses on infectious diseases in collaboration with HMC.

Meanwhile, QBRI's experts participated in various national committees to provide advice on the ideal measures to fight the pandemic. We also published bilingual insights on our website to update the public about the latest discoveries and findings relating to COVID-19, based on reliable sources, in a clear and simple language.

QBRI is currently operating three research centers that focus on neurological disorders, diabetes, and cancer. Was it a huge challenge to shift focus to infectious diseases?

No, QBRI has the expertise necessary to help tackle different health care emergencies. We quickly responded to the crisis by launching a special program that focuses on infectious diseases. We have already established a solid three-year research program related to infectious diseases, which received massive acclaim from international reviewers. We are also in the process of hiring infectious disease experts to join the program. Such a program will prepare the country to better deal with any future outbreaks.

How do you see the future of biomedical research in Qatar?

The country's leaders have given particular care to science and research over the past decade because they believe that building a healthy population is part of building a strong economy. The Qatari youth have access to top-class education at all levels, and I can notice a growing interest in biomedical research among them.

In order to attract more young people to join this field, we need to expose kids to science from an early age to make them more curious about it. Students should be well-informed about the impact of biomedical research on society and the economy. They should understand the vital role of researchers and scientists in improving people's lives. They also need to know that biomedical research is a field that offers endless career opportunities in various sectors. Achieving this will require the collective effort of parents, teachers, government institutes, and other entities.

What was the most valuable lesson learned from the COVID-19 crisis?

The crisis showed how crucial it is to integrate all our efforts and knowledge as institutes, academia, and health care service providers to offer solutions to national challenges. The experience we gained during this crisis was invaluable, and we should work together during challenging times as well as good times to move forward with our country.

PROF. AMIR BERBIC

Dean

VCUarts Qatar



University students might be feeling the pressure now because of uncertainty surrounding the future of their chosen careers. What would be your advice to them?

Every generation faces a challenge in finding its place in the workforce. You are never being educated for the world that you graduate into but are being prepared to take your education and use it as the basis for the career you will have. If you regard your university degree as 'vocational training,' you won't get as far and will be much more disappointed than if you regard it as a springboard into your future.

Online degrees have always been regarded as less valuable than traditional ones, especially by employers. Is it time to change the way we look at online degrees?

We always need to innovate how education moves forward. For many students, online presence is the life they live, whereas off-line reality seems increasingly old-fashioned. However, a physical object cannot always be replaced by a digital one. What we have found through our first exercise in fully online education is that both online and face-to-face forms of education have their places.

The COVID-19 crisis has changed the way we look at education. What are the most important lessons we learned from this crisis?

One of the critical lessons we learned was how much a community can evolve in its working structure. Students found that they had to be both more independent in their work and, at the same time, found that independency led them deeper into their art. Faculty put deeper trust in their students to be creative and meet challenges with innovative solutions. Another lesson was the reverse: how much the art and design community needed their fellow students and teachers around them to engage fully. One of the hardest lessons many people learned was about the loneliness of working alone. On the other hand, one of the best lessons many people learned was about how they can work alone and when they need to call others for support.

How was the online teaching experience at VCUarts Qatar? Does the university plan to offer a curriculum that mixes online and traditional approaches in the upcoming years?

For an art and design school such as VCUarts Qatar, creativity comes foremost. We only have to look at the enormous variety of art created by students who are all in the same class to understand the role creativity plays in their learning process. Online teaching in Spring 2020 faced an incredibly steep learning curve. Faculty had to change overnight from an in-class to an online mode. Everything from lectures, through demonstrations, to grading and assessment had to be rethought. An example of this is the Fashion Show, one of our traditional end-of-year showcases, which went completely online, and instead of a few minutes onstage, students now have a professional video of their collections to take to their future employers. Having seen the advantages of online learning, I do not think any university can step back from it. For students who cannot attend class in the future, the classes they miss will not be a permanent hole in their education.

What should universities expect from their students at this stage? Did the COVID-19 crisis add more obligations to students?

Universities should always expect the best from their students. The face-to-face class time has now changed to what can feel like a less personal online class, and students are more on their own than perhaps they would like to be. While it would have been easy for students to fall between the cracks and just withdraw from contact, students have done the reverse – they came together to advise each other, help each other, and ensure that everyone could learn. The other side of the crisis is that students will have to bring some of their own skills forward: learning new software, mastering the new requirements of their classes, and understanding and expanding their arts and design work. Networking with their classmates, many of whom they have never met before, will be critical to their success as online students. Once classes start again, however, all of this will be to their advantage, as they will already have a strong support system of their peers behind them.

DR. ASMAA AL-FADALA

Director of Research and Content Development
The World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE)



How can education benefit from the COVID-19 crisis?

The COVID-19 crisis presents an opportunity to reassess education models completely; that is, to rethink the goals and modes of learning required for the current generation of students of all ages. For decades, we have been stressing that education should be more about teaching students the social and life skills necessary to make them active members of society, and to help them overcome future challenges, rather than being just about memorization, indoctrination, or doing homework. The coronavirus pandemic has given us an opportunity to achieve this and push for change. Applying such change does not require resources or time as much as it requires the education system's stakeholders to fully believe in the importance of change.

We have to be aware that introducing this type of learning will entail new responsibilities for students, parents, schools, and policymakers. We will have to apply "assessment for learning" rather than "assessment of learning."

How can we achieve the best outcomes from online education?

To achieve the best outcomes from online education, we must consider it as more than just a process of delivering information to students through a digital platform. Our focus should not be limited to technology, as it is just a tool that students use for learning, and there is nothing wrong with adopting other innovative tools. During the COVID-19 crisis, we saw many examples of this in developed countries that lacked the digital capabilities and resources that enable them to reach every student, so they relied on other solutions, such as communicating with students via WhatsApp or distributing booklets to

students' homes. These tools achieved significant and encouraging results.

When we design curricula that will be delivered online, we need to make sure that students will not spend most of their time receiving information. Instead, they should be encouraged to gain practical experience by interacting with teachers, solving problems, and collaborating with their colleagues in groups.

What is your advice to students and parents when it comes to online education?

I will talk here out of my own experience as a mother of school-aged and college-aged children who also works full-time and has to attend meetings and participate in conferences outside traditional work hours or even during weekends. There is no doubt that the crisis has put unprecedented pressure on everyone, especially students whose lifestyles have suddenly changed. Many of them may suffer from anxiety due to the uncertainty surrounding their vision of the future.

First, I have to say that regular cooperation and coordination between parents and school significantly improve the whole learning process for kids. We must provide them with a comfortable, stress-free environment that allows them to focus on learning and overcome the crisis's psychological effects.

But the most important thing is to make students assume full responsibility over their learning. We might help them in creating a realistic and easy-to-follow schedule, defining their priorities and tasks, or setting attainable goals, but in the end, they have to manage their learning. They should rely on themselves, perform the tasks required from them, and deliver them to the teachers on time. Giving them confidence will be an

incentive that encourages them to strive. We should also think beyond the curriculum and focus on developing their life skills and creativity through activities such as sports, gardening, and cooking.

What were the main goals of this year's "Education Disrupted, Education Reimagined" conference?

We organized the first edition of this virtual conference last April, and it was open for everyone to attend. It brought together education experts from around the world, and opened up an excellent opportunity for the WISE community to meet thousands of education professionals from all over the world to discuss the challenges facing education as the result of the pandemic and the change needed to ensure a better future for education.

It also allowed us to learn and benefit from the experiences of different countries worldwide in dealing with the COVID-19 crisis. In China and Italy, for instance, the impact of the pandemic was more severe, and some countries in Africa have experience in dealing with other pandemics like Ebola, whereas some countries have experience in dealing with refugee crises.

The international community highly praised the

conference, so we organized a second edition in June, and then a third one in September.

We have also published the "Education Disrupted, Education Reimagined" special edition e-book, which features articles written by some of the world's top education thinkers. It documents the experiences of key institutions on education's front line from all over the world, offering everyone an opportunity to study them and benefit from them for a better response to any similar crisis in the future.

What are the other main projects WISE is involved in at the moment?

We work on several projects, and members of WISE regularly participate in international conferences and meetings, which allows us to share experiences and discuss the best ways to develop education. We are also working on a significant research project that studies the impact of the pandemic on the education of young students with learning challenges who cannot benefit from online education, as well as its effects on students with special needs, especially in countries that lack the digital infrastructure required for online education.

Scan the following QR code to read more about the people interviewed in the Q & A section, and browse additional articles related to the subject of education during and after the COVID-19 crisis.



EXPLORING CAREERS

During the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, health care professionals showed tremendous courage as they fought the pandemic on the front lines. They spared no effort to protect the community against the deadly virus, risking their lives to provide treatment for the patients. In recognition of their role, we decided to dedicate the Exploring Careers section of this issue to medical professions.

In the following pages, you will learn about the nature and responsibilities of five different medical careers in addition to firsthand experiences of those who work in them.

To learn more about the medical careers available at Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC), you can inquire about training and volunteering opportunities by calling any of these numbers: 44395226 – 44395245, or by visiting the volunteering department at building 318 in Hamad Medical City.

Obstetrician-Gynecologist

Obstetrics and gynecology (OB-GYN) are two closely related medical specialties. The former concentrates on maternal and fetal health from the beginning of pregnancy until the postpartum period, whereas the latter deals with the diagnosis and treatment of diseases that affect female reproductive health.

First appearing in Europe and the United States during the 19th century, modern OB-GYN immeasurably helped reduce maternal mortality rates. Gradually, it blossomed into a key and indispensable medical specialty. Women's health is a priority for any country that looks for a great future. The State of Qatar provides the highest quality of specialized health care for women and children at different medical facilities across the country. In 2018, Sidra Medicine, a member of Qatar Foundation (QF), was inaugurated as one of the MENA region's leading facilities specialized in providing health care for women and



children. This promises a bright future for the graduates with this specialty here in Qatar.

An OB-GYN should get used to working under pressure. He/she has to be always geared up for any unexpected cases. Good communication skills are also essential because he/she will help build up trust with patients, making the job much more comfortable.

As in any medical education field, the route to a successful OB-GYN career begins with passing the entry-level education at a medical school, then studying a selected specialty, followed by residency, where physicians receive practical training in their field to become ready to undertake their responsibilities.



DR. BOTHINA ALI AL-MULLA
Obstetrician-Gynecologist
Obstetrics and Gynecology Department

I graduated from Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar (WCM-Q), then obtained a Master of Health Administration degree from The City University, UK.

This interesting specialty involves a variety of job duties requiring attendance at various hospital departments, as each case supervised by an OB-GYN is different from all the rest. During one working day, an OB-GYN may have to examine cases at the outpatient department, then take care of natural childbirths at the labor ward, and probably perform C-sections at the operating room.

During the COVID-19 outbreak, our work generally remained the same. When possible, we offered our services by phone to minimize the number of outpatient visits, and

when in direct contact with patients, all preventive measures were strictly observed. Sometimes, we had to do more shifts, but we could carry it off. I feel proud of being a member of the "White Army," which helped protect the country and its people in such adverse circumstances. It is the least I can do for my nation.

From my point of view, Qatar needs more female medical professionals, and I believe that every member of society can do their part in making this happen. It is not only a matter of girls choosing to study medicine; their success in this field depends on other important factors, such as the confidence of parents in their potential and the support they receive from their siblings and husbands.

Medical Laboratory Scientist

A laboratory is the heartbeat of any institution providing health care services. How many times have you visited a clinic or hospital and were not asked to do some medical tests? Any time you feel unwell, it will be difficult for your physician to diagnose your condition and prescribe the right medicine for you without doing more investigations. They will most probably include sending blood samples, body tissue, or fluids to a laboratory to determine if anything is not right.

Medical laboratory scientists (MLSs) are the ones who perform laboratory tests on such samples using sophisticated instrumentation and technology, after ensuring sample validity and quality. Laboratory tests' techniques and applications vary depending on which illness to uncover as well as on the type of sample and purpose of analysis. Laboratory medicine is a discipline that encompasses many subspecialties, such as virology, oncology, immunology, bacteriology, parasitology, toxicology, microbiology, and hematology.

MLSs play a significant role as leading contributors to effective health care services and public health. Without accurate test findings and pathologic evidence, physicians will not be able to



identify the illness or give the right treatment.

This wide variety of subspecialties makes laboratory medicine one of the most sought-after careers in the labor market. Apart from medical care facilities, MLS services are in demand at research centers, universities, pharmaceutical and food industries, security institutions, and many other places.

If you like science subjects, such as chemistry and biology, and wish to have a medical career that does not require direct contact with patients, put laboratory medicine among your options. It is available for study in Qatar. In collaboration with HMC and Sidra Medicine, Qatar University's College of Health Sciences offers an outstanding program that ends with a Bachelor of Biomedical Sciences. It is the only academic program outside the United States that is accredited by the US National Accreditation Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS).



DR. NAEMA HASSAN AL-MAWLAWI
Consultant Clinical Scientist
Laboratory of Molecular Virology
Laboratory Medicine & Pathology Department

After getting my Bachelor of Biomedical Sciences from Qatar University's College of Arts and Sciences, I decided to pursue postgraduate studies in the UK. I earned a Master of Medical Microbiology and a PhD in Virology and Molecular Biology from the University of Surrey.

In the field of laboratory medicine, a basic university degree is not enough. You have to select a subspecialty to go on with your study, and the value of this specialty lies in its scarcity. The scarcer your specialty is, the more distinguished you become.

Laboratory medicine is a fundamental branch of medicine with good prospects in the local and global labor markets. Humanity is always faced with new diseases or new strains of existing ones. Laboratories will always be a central component of the first line of defense against such challenges. The COVID-19 crisis has shown everyone the critical role of MLSs within the health system.

During the outbreak, we were under considerable pressure, having to examine an unprecedented number of specimens every day and provide the physicians with the results as soon as possible to take the necessary action of isolating the patients if tested positive. But we managed to deal successfully with these burdens, thanks to the experience we had gained from fighting past epidemics like influenza A virus subtype H1N1 and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). However, COVID-19 remains one of the most severe viruses in the world.

I am proud to serve my country during these difficult times by working in a field that I love. It is a great responsibility, and we have to do our best to help our country overcome this crisis. I hope that everyone will strictly follow the precautionary and preventive measures laid down by the government. Doing so will ease the pressure on laboratories and their staff by reducing the number of specimens tested.

Medical Engineer

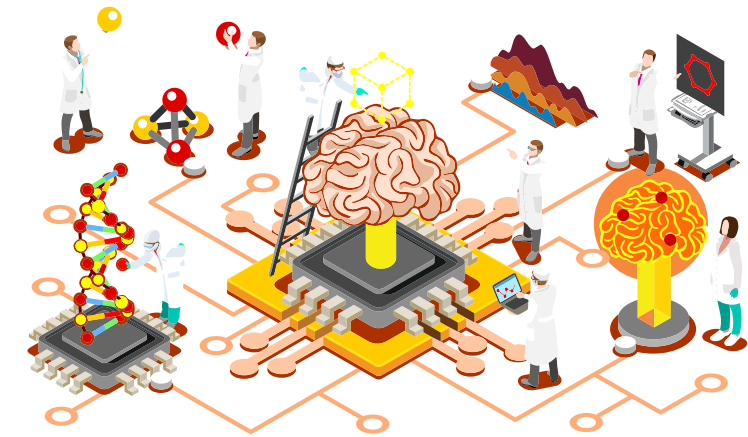
Do you love both engineering and medicine and cannot decide which to choose as a career? Then, why not consider medical engineering?

This discipline is concerned with applying engineering principles and design concepts to medicine and biology to improve people's health and help health care providers better do their job.

Medical engineering involves multiple career paths for graduates. For instance, they might work in the design, manufacturing, or maintenance of medical equipment used at hospitals, medical facilities, and clinics, such as electrocardiography (ECG), radiography, laboratory, and physiotherapy machines.

A medical engineer may also specialize in designing and developing artificial limbs or prostheses, such as cardiac pacemakers. This variation allows for working with health care institutions, medical facilities, or medical equipment manufacturers, in addition to research centers.

Sometimes, you may hear the term "biomedical engineering," which is very similar to and even more common than medical engineering. It usually involves additional tracks like cellular, tissue, and genetic engineering.



Medical engineering programs and subjects of study differ from one university to another. You have to know the detailed study plan you want to pursue before registration to make sure that it matches your career goals and ambitions. Typically, university-level medical engineering programs involve subjects like electrical engineering, electronic engineering, mechanics of movement, programing, and biomedical sciences.

Medical engineering is a promising field, and it is expected to grow exponentially in the future due to its close association with technology. Nowadays, you can see robots performing surgeries and 3D printers being used to construct prostheses. The future possibilities of how this field can affect medicine seem endless.



ENG. HADEEL AL-MOMANI
Biomedical Engineer
Biomedical Engineering Department

I chose to study medical engineering because it is an exciting field that combines engineering and medical sciences. After graduating from the Hashemite University in Jordan with a Bachelor of Medical Engineering, I began my career as a medical engineer.

My current job duties involve regular maintenance of medical equipment at different hospital departments, as well as repair of any breakdowns that may happen. We make sure that the machinery is functioning correctly at all times. Disruptions are absolutely unacceptable, especially for the machines that provide life support for patients.

During the COVID-19 outbreak, the most significant difference for

us as medical engineers at hospitals was the overload on specific devices, such as ventilators, vital-sign monitors, and laboratory equipment. We had to check them on a daily basis to ensure their smooth and safe operation.

This field is for those who like such subjects as physics, biology, and programing. It requires having a keen eye for detail, creativity, and problem-solving skills.

If this is the field of your choice, you have to realize how important it is, as you will be responsible for maintaining and improving people's health. As the field is rapidly changing in tandem with technology, you will also need to refresh and upgrade your skills on a regular basis to stay abreast of this development.

Paramedic

At any health care institution, the Emergency Department is unquestionably one of the most crucial departments. It is the front office where patients and injuries are received around the clock, without prior appointment. Its staff offer immediate life-saving medical services or stabilize the cases until admitted into other departments for further treatment. But what about the cases that may require an emergency medical intervention in an out-of-hospital setting, such as an accident, disaster, or unexpected health incident? Here comes the Ambulance Service Department's role to deploy ambulance units and provide medical services in such cases.

The number and respective roles of members of an ambulance unit vary depending on the unit's size and level of specialized services it offers. As a general rule, however, it must always include a paramedic responsible for doing whatever necessary to save the life of the ill or the injured, and stabilize the cases until transported to hospital.

Along with administering first aid to critical patients, paramedics are also trained in initial diagnosis and advanced medical care. Sometimes, they have to make fateful decisions to save a life, such as giving a particular medication or performing some medical procedure for specific conditions like heart attack, asthma, fracture, or burn.



MUHSEN ASHOUR
Paramedic
Ambulance Service

I chose this specialty because I loved it. Since I was a child, I wanted to become a paramedic. This profession combines medical practice and community service. I enrolled at CNA-Q and obtained the Advanced Paramedic and EMS Diploma. After that, I specialized in acute emergency incidents.

We take action once we receive the information about the patient from the Emergency Department. We immediately head for the location, assess the condition, and diagnose the case to provide medical help or to stabilize it until arrival at the hospital.

Being a paramedic means that you will be responsible for the



Paramedicine was born in the past century. It immensely evolved in the past few decades thanks to technological advancements and better education. Now, paramedics are trained to provide more sophisticated medical services, and ambulance vehicles are fully equipped to help patients.

By nature, this profession requires unique characteristics, mainly: working under pressure, patience, and staying calm in all circumstances. A good paramedic should be highly self-confident and quick-witted, making the right decisions at the right time. Above all, a paramedic should be aware of his/her work's humane dimension and its essential role of serving the community.

You can study emergency medicine in Qatar through the Paramedic and EMS Diploma, a program offered by College of the North Atlantic – Qatar (CNA-Q), which qualifies you to start a career in this field after receiving solid training.

lives of people at decisive moments. So, you must be able to keep your nerve and remain self-possessed and balanced at all times.

It was not difficult for us to deal with the challenges brought about by COVID-19. Stress is a regular part of our job. The most significant difference was the stricter preventive measures implemented while handling the patients, taking all possible precautions when transporting them to the hospital.

I advise students to consider this career seriously. It is a noble profession. Your feeling when saving a life is incomparable. Study and job opportunities in this field are available in Qatar.

Internist

Internists are always the first choice for sick adults when visiting a hospital for health issues of unknown causes. With their extensive expertise in diagnosing and treating a wide range of diseases affecting our internal organs, internists are most of the time able to identify the cause of illness and provide the right medication, or refer the patient to a relevant specialist physician.

Internal medicine is one of the oldest medical specialties, dating back to ancient times. In 19th-century Europe, the field saw a revolutionary development with the emergence of laboratory studies and clinical trials.

Some people have the misconception that internal medicine is related only to the abdomen. In fact, the word "internal" generally refers to any organ inside the body. Internists are skilled in diagnosing, assessing, and treating most disorders in such organs. Internal medicine involves the following subspecialties: cardiology, pulmonology, hepatology, gastroenterology, endocrinology, nephrology, oncology, hematology, and intensive care.

Internists are qualified enough to provide medical care for



DR. ABDULRAHMAN AHMED AL-ABDULMALEK
Internist
Internal Medicine Department

I seriously considered studying medicine since I was at school. After joining a voluntary program at HMC, I loved this field. I enrolled at WCM-Q, from which I graduated in 2018. Then I joined HMC's Department of Internal Medicine training program, just to become a specialist physician at the hospital.

Our work begins with talking to the patient and asking some questions as a first step to finding out about the symptoms they feel and their case history. After that, there is a bedside clinical examination to look precisely and thoroughly for any signs of a medical condition in the reported organ or system. If needed, more complex investigations are carried out using advanced medical devices, tests, or X-rays.

Obviously, there was more workload in the wake



patients with multiple chronic diseases, such as the combination of heart disease, hypertension, and diabetes — which is very challenging. They have the experience to solve undifferentiated diagnostic problems, so that physicians from other specialties seek their consultation in some cases to ensure accurate diagnosis and treatment. That is why an internist is widely called the "doctor of doctors".

In Qatar, you can study general medicine at Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar (WCM-Q) or Qatar University's College of Medicine to be awarded a Bachelor of Medicine degree. Then you can specialize in internal medicine by having postgraduate training at medical facilities.

of the COVID-19 pandemic, but health workers stood together and managed to mitigate the effects of the crisis. During the outbreak, my job was to receive patients at the Emergency Department, diagnose the cases, and prescribe appropriate treatment. I was also responsible for patients in the intensive care until their conditions stabilize.

We urge students to consider working in any branch of medicine, as there is an urgent need for medical professionals here in Qatar. But they also need to know that medical education is a long journey that requires patience and real passion for this field. Moreover, those wishing to pursue this career need to be humane and compassionate. Medicine is a noble profession where you save people's lives.

Sheikha Latifa Khalid Al-Thani
Education Industry Executive at Microsoft Qatar

DISCOVERING YOUR PASSION IS KEY TO CAREER SUCCESS

Career decisions represent a crucial moment in any profession, and it was no different for Latifa Khalid Al-Thani who had to settle on a choice for higher education. Eventually, she opted for the Information Systems program at Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar (CMU-Q).

Information systems is not a popular choice for Qatari female students, but Latifa deemed it perfect. She had always been fascinated by the power of science in finding solutions to human challenges, and at the same time, she always nurtured a creative side and adored all forms of art. Studying information systems was the perfect choice, as it offered her a chance to combine both passions.

On campus, Latifa's talents were apparent as she contributed to the success of major research projects, and was part of teams that developed award-winning applications, before graduating with University Honors, Dietrich College Honors, and Phi Alpha Theta Honors. An intern at first, Microsoft Qatar handed her the role of Education Industry Executive in February 2018, as she became the first-ever Qatari to be hired by the tech giant. She now works with the education industry entities in Qatar to support their digital transformation.

We virtually met with the inspiring young lady to know more about her academic and professional career journey and have a few tips on how to ignite career passion.

Can you first give our readers an idea about information systems?

Information systems is a broad field that uses technological tools to generate, process, and distribute information effectively and efficiently. In other words, it is about finding ways to use technology in enhancing our work and overcoming business challenges. It is an excellent field, and I recommend it to anyone who loves science and technology.

Why did you choose to study this program at CMU-Q?

I had options to study abroad, but in the end, I chose to stay in Qatar. The information systems program at CMU-Q is one of the best in the world, and it is amazing to have the opportunity to study while being near family. Also, the small-capacity classes in the Qatar campus, compared to universities abroad, allow students to build stronger connections with their professors, which means a better understanding of the subjects.

Do you hope to inspire more female students to pursue your field of study?

Definitely, as I am confident that women are more than capable of succeeding in this field. Perhaps they are demotivated to choose this field because they believe it is difficult, time-consuming, or more suitable for men. I think they just need to learn more about it, find the right motivation, and believe in themselves.

What is your advice to school students who are planning their careers at this point? How can they discover their best career passion as you did?

My best advice to them is to do as many extracurricular activities as possible, explore new fields, join courses, and read about different topics. That is precisely what helped me shape my vision of what I want to be in the future. It helped me know what I like and what I do not like, so I understood what I have to do next. It is normal at a young age to not know what you exactly want.

Should they wait until the COVID-19 crisis is over before taking any serious decisions?

Nobody can foresee the future effects of the current global crisis or predict how long it will last, but you need to know that the current situation is not here to stay. Keep planning and continue to pursue your career goals, while keeping an eye on the situation, so as to know where things are going. Also, benefit from the opportunities that exist due to the crisis. You now have more time to explore new fields and learn new things, so join an online course that teaches you something new and enriches your experience.

How is your feeling being the first Qatari to work at Microsoft?

I feel proud to be part of a global technology giant like Microsoft. It has been my dream ever since I went on a trip to Silicon Valley in the USA, organized by Qatar Science and Technology Park (QSTP). Visiting global and leading technology giants like Microsoft and seeing how they operate was an eye-opening experience. I was asking myself then if I would ever

have an opportunity to work in a company like this one day. It happened while I am in Qatar; I could not be more grateful.

What do you like most about your job?

What I love most about my role is that it allows me to help people and directly impact the community. When I see our true partnership with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education during the COVID-19 crisis, and how we played a pivotal role in empowering the education model while enabling and encouraging distance learning, I feel proud being part of this journey and showing an impact with the power of technology. I enjoy working on projects that shape and transform how people and organizations operate through technology. Working in a leading industry as technology and with a giant like Microsoft encourages me to work on more projects that allow me to give something back to my country that invested so much in me.

You have experience in coding, and many voices claim that it is essential to teach our kids coding because it is the language of the future. Do you agree with this?

When people hear the word "coding", most of them think of it as something very complicated, but that is not true, and there are currently many platforms and apps that teach kids simple coding through games. Teaching kids how to code is important, but it is not about the coding itself; it is more about the concepts that the kids learn when they know how to code. They learn things like logical thinking, computer skills, problem solving, and project building which help them later during their lives.

Some parents might believe that technology is ruining their kids' lives. Can this be true?

We should not be afraid of adopting technology; all we need to do is use it correctly. Technology has become an integral part of our lives, and I think the COVID-19 crisis has reaffirmed this. People need to look at it as an enabler and not as a replacement.

Do you have any other hobbies?

I like baking and forms of art, as I have an artistic side in me. I also maintain an active lifestyle and practice sports regularly. It is essential to keep a balance between work and life. We live in a fast-paced world, and there is always something happening. Physical exercise is good to release stress, and it helps keep me on track.

Who is your role model?

My father has always been my role model, and that is mainly because of his work ethics. Even though he is a doctor, he never pushed me to follow a similar career path. Instead, he taught me that it is always important to do what I love and pursue what I believe in, and he always encouraged me to dream big and follow my dreams. This is exactly what I did.

THE FUTURE OF WORK

WHAT SHOULD WE EXPECT?

The COVID-19 crisis has cast its shadows over the lives of millions of working professionals around the world. As governments forced lockdowns to contain the spread of the virus, the crisis was felt by every industry, and the effect was disastrous for some of them. Economies shrank, unemployment rose, and millions lost their jobs, while the rest had the options of either to go through the experience of working from home, or fight the pandemic on the front lines.

But we have to say that the crisis has left us with many valuable lessons to learn too. It highlighted the

importance of technology in every aspect of our lives, changed the way we think of jobs, and forced us to rethink the essential skills needed to build a successful career in the future.

Whether you are a working professional, a job seeker, or a fresh graduate, you would probably have some concerns about your career prospects amidst the current global economic crisis. We worked on addressing a few of them through this story which features interviews with experts in the fields of economics, human resources, and futures research.



Sheikh Jassim Al Thani

Senior Assistant General Manager
Chief Human Capital Officer
Commercial Bank



Our youth are ready for the challenge

In light of the precautionary measures that were imposed by the State of Qatar during the early months of the COVID-19 crisis, many businesses successfully applied a work-from-home policy, but the process was not free of challenges.

The crisis also cast a shadow on the labor market and decreased employment rates, which left fresh graduates and job seekers with many questions that need answers.

We spoke with Sheikh Jassim Al Thani, Senior AGM - Chief Human Capital Officer at Commercial Bank (CBQ), to get his opinion on Commercial Bank's "work-from-home" experience during the pandemic, and his advice to employees and job seekers in the time of COVID-19.

Despite applying a work-from-home policy for most of its employees during the crisis, Commercial Bank continued to provide its services at the highest level, thanks to its well-established digital foundations and infrastructure. The Bank's set of innovative strategies and procedures also contributed to its culmination of several awards during the year 2020, which included the "Excellence in Leadership" award in the Middle East by Euromoney, and "Innovation in Digital Banking" award in the Middle East by The Banker.

Sheikh Jassim believes that organizations can achieve good results through the work-from-home process if the tools, connectivity, and private space are available, provided that there is commitment from both sides. He gives the following advice to any employee seeking an ideal work-from-home performance: "Apply self-discipline and set the mood. Wear your business appropriate outfit, as well as start and finish on the normal working hours. I would also recommend doing a check-in and a check-out by the end of the day with your leader, or call for a meeting. If you have finished the task

you have in hand, ask for more and deliver more! Hold this as a trusted relation and deliver as much as you can. Let your performance speak for you and you will learn while delivering excellence."

Although the COVID-19 crisis has slowed down the recruitment process in most businesses, Sheikh Jassim believes that the current generation of graduates is ready for the challenge, as he says: "The new generation who is digitally savvy is more prepared and equipped than we think. In fact, the world has changed, and businesses need to reshape and adapt to meet the growing demand conveniently and safely. This capacity requires a lot of digital space development, and the new generation is there and ready."

Fresh graduates are facing a dilemma, asking questions like: what will happen after I apply for a job? Will they interview me virtually? What kind of skills are needed at this stage? Sheikh Jassim believes that remote interviews and virtual meetings with job seekers can serve the purpose of correctly identifying and assessing job applicants. At the same time, he considers "learning agility" as one of the most essential characteristics to look for in any job candidate. "We can describe learning agility as knowing what to do in a situation where you do not normally know what to do. It is the ability and willingness to learn from experience and then apply that learning to perform successfully in the new situations!" he explained.

Sheikh Jassim offers the following advice to fresh graduates who hope to achieve success in any career: "Own your experience, be the leader in your field and never stop learning. When you are looking for a job or for a change in your career path, always choose the experience makers and not the highest payers!"

Dr. Al-Anoud Al-Maadeed

Assistant Professor of Economics
Qatar University



Qatar faces the crisis with a solid economy

As most countries around the globe imposed strict lockdown to contain the deadly coronavirus pandemic and ease the pressure on their health care systems, their economies were severely hit. International trade saw a sharp fall, and certain industries like airlines and tourism suffered massive shocks. Last June, the World Bank forecast that the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) will go down by 5.2 percent, which may indicate the worst global recession in decades.

In Qatar, the impact of the crisis was less severe compared to many other countries, thanks to the effective management of the crisis by the country's leadership. Avoiding full closures for extended periods of time while implementing strict precautionary and preventive measures was crucial for the economy, especially for the small and medium enterprises supported by local government scheme.

It was clear that the experience gained by the country through dealing with the blockade since 2017 played a significant role in dealing effectively with the COVID-19 crisis. "The crisis caused by the unjust blockade has strengthened Qatar's economic independence and reinforced its independent role in the international and economic forums. Government entities became more flexible and more capable of adapting and dealing with emergencies. We have seen this clearly as the country mitigated the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic," said Dr. Al-Anoud Al-Maadeed, Assistant Professor of Economics at Qatar University.

Following the blockade, the State of Qatar focused on developing its agricultural and industrial sectors to achieve self-sufficiency, and to increase its strategic reserve to meet the country's needs throughout the crisis. During 2018 and 2019, investments in the agricultural sector increased by 120%, while the Agricultural GDP reached a record 390 million Qatari riyals in July 2020. "These figures are a strong indication that Qatar has adopted new policies that aim at

supporting local agricultural production. The current crisis highlighted the importance of investing in this sector. The increase in Agricultural GDP levels during the COVID-19 crisis is also an indication that investments in this sector will continue to grow, because investors and businessmen have witnessed the benefits of investing in these sovereign sectors," she said.

Qatar's industrial sector had also achieved remarkable growth after the blockade, with the total investments in the sector reaching 262 billion riyals by the end of 2019, a 3.5 percent increase compared to 2018.

Studies suggest that education plays a significant role in stabilizing and developing the local economy. There are many reasons for this: it contributes to the introduction of advanced technologies in the mechanisms and facilities of the economy, to the increase of human capital productivity, and to the equitable distribution of national income. "Without qualified national manpower, it will not be possible to achieve economic growth, so we need to focus on education and training," she said.

"At the same time, we also need to keep developing the sectors that contribute to self-sufficiency and stabilize local consumption, like agriculture and medical sectors. Further development of the country's infrastructure will also lead to an increase in local investments in all major sectors like agriculture, industry, service, and education."

Dr. Al-Anoud believes that students should not let the current crisis stand in the way of their career ambitions, and advises them to continue planning for their future in line with their aspirations, while considering the local market needs of the workforce and businesses. "The long-term effect of this crisis will be limited, and the world will overcome it sooner or later. It will be a thing of the past, but it would be essential for us to find a way to cope with any similar crisis in the future," she concluded.

Mr. Jerome Glenn

Futurist & The Millennium Project Founder



A new future for jobs

The COVID-19 crisis highlighted the deep connection between work and technology. Imagine our work-life if we had to face the deadly pandemic without technology; the consequences could have been disastrous. Millions could have lost their jobs instead of working from home via the Internet, whereas many industries would have suffered more significant losses if not for emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and robotics. But a discussion about the impact of technology on work should not be limited to the benefits that we have gained from it during the crisis, simply because its projected future impact will entirely change our understanding of the concept of work.

Over the upcoming decades, some jobs might disappear, and new ones will appear because of technology which will also impact the way most of the other jobs are being practiced.

"Some may think that international trade and substitution of jobs will be the main causes of unemployment in the future, but in reality, studies suggest that most of the unemployment will stem from technology-based automation that does not require human intervention," said Mr. Jerome Glenn, founder of The Millennium Project, a global futures research think tank that focuses on researching and analyzing the challenges facing humanity to work on finding solutions that help in building a better future for the next generations.

"The main issue will not be with Artificial Narrow Intelligence (ANI) that can replace humans in performing some tasks, because that is predictable anyway. ANI is a single purpose software like driving a truck, diagnosing a disease, or interviewing a human being! The number of truck drives made unemployed by ANI can be predicted by what times and where; and hence, prepared for. The real threat will be posed by Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) after 10 to 20 years from now. It is an advanced form of AI where machines and software can address novel problems in novel ways similar to how we do. This means they will be able to perform more complex tasks in the future, like coordinating international economic development. When AGI will combine with other emerging technologies, such as the Internet of Things (IoT), many jobs will suffer, or even disappear," he added.

The Millennium Project has worked on a three-year international study of strategies that address the future transition of work and technology. It resulted in a comprehensive report entitled "Work/Technology 2050:

Scenarios and Actions." It predicts three possible scenarios for the future of work thirty years from now, and also suggests 93 actions that can help governments, business, education, arts & media, and the science and technology communities prepare for the impact of technology on work.

"There is no way everyone will agree with all 93 actions, but the more these will be implemented, the smoother the transition will be to the next age. We still have time to work together and find solutions. The current crisis might be an opportunity to stop and think carefully and invent a fabulous future."

Mr. Glenn advises those who need to take crucial career-related decisions during these uncertain times not to let the current crisis affect their decisions. He says: "Always follow your passion. If you listen to interviews with successful people in any field, the most common thing you will hear is that they followed their passion. The world is becoming more connected than ever before, and people around the world are becoming more educated, and the internet provides unlimited opportunities to find markets for your passion rather than local non-existent jobs."

"If you are interested in a particular field and find yourself capable of excelling in it, you can gradually develop it even if it was just a hobby. It might take some time from you, but do not worry, this is normal. When you are ready to use your skill, look at the world as one big market for what you can excel in, instead of looking for a particular job around the corner. I know it might sound like a strange advice for some, but think carefully. If you achieve this, you will earn a living out of being yourself."

But Mr. Glenn believes that building generations who can view the concept of work in this way requires introducing radical changes in the education systems as he explains: "We are teaching students to look for a job, follow a leader, and work hard for promotions, ignoring the fact that every student has his or her own potential and unique personality. We are all different from one another."

"We need a different orientation to education. It should help students understand self-actualization, know themselves better, and identify their interests and strengths. Teachers should help students develop and evolve in what they do best. They should help them look at the world as a potential market for their skills," Mr. Glenn concluded.

For more information about the
"Work/Technology 2050: Scenarios and Actions"
report, published by The Millennium Project,
please scan the following QR code:



THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC... EIGHT LESSONS LEARNED

Early in 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a public health emergency, in the wake of an outbreak of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) in China. Within weeks, the outbreak expanded into a pandemic that struck all over the world, took thousands of lives, and changed the way of living for almost every human being.

Some countries coped successfully with this unprecedented challenge and survived it with minimal human and economic losses, while other countries suffered greatly despite having class-A health systems. The difference was in the way they managed the crisis.

Despite having one of the world's highest per capita rates of coronavirus infections, the State

of Qatar managed to record one of the world's highest recovery rates and lowest mortality rates compared to the number of infections. Achieving these outcomes was a result of the collaboration of every organization inside the country, the bravery of the front line workers, and the wise leadership of the Supreme Committee for Crisis Management, which mobilized all the available resources in all sectors to reduce the negative impact of the pandemic and provide effective solutions to restore normal life for its population.

Here are eight lessons from the way Qatar dealt with the coronavirus crisis that you can apply when you face any personal or career challenge:

1 Face Your Problems

Immediately after Qatar announced the first confirmed case of coronavirus infection in February, it began to implement a comprehensive plan to combat this serious challenge. While implementing the plan, the Supreme Committee for Crisis Management kept the public updated about the latest developments of the situation. Its decisions ensured maximum transparency and credibility.

Never ignore a crisis, or you will aggravate it. You have to acknowledge the problems and determine how much they affect you to find a way to overcome them.

2 Have a Plan

Following the diagnosis of the first coronavirus case in Qatar, a plan was developed to grapple with the spread of the virus by imposing strict, countrywide precautions and locking down the country's air space. A few months later, a detailed, multistage scheme was announced to ease the restrictions. That scheme was further amended from time to time based on the new facts.

To overcome any crisis, you need a plan that consists of clear steps. Even if the crisis has not yet been well understood, you can adopt a short-term plan until you know more details. When you get the full picture, you can adjust the plan or set a new one to achieve the desired results.

3 Learn from Others

Fighting an incurable, rapidly spreading pandemic was an unprecedented challenge for many countries. It was difficult for them to prepare effective plans against the crisis without the data provided by WHO regarding how China combated the coronavirus as well as the available information from previous experiences of some African countries hit by epidemics like Ebola.

Learn from the experiences of others to address your own issues better. No matter what you are experiencing, there must be someone who had already experienced and conquered it. This will save you a lot of time and effort.

4 Be Quick and Decisive

Qatar enforced some precautions even before discovering the first case on its territories. Then later took stricter decisions, such as locking down schools, universities, and shops. All forms of gatherings were banned, including family gatherings. Severe penalties and fines were issued against any violators. All these measures proved necessary to protect lives, as is proved when you look at the situation in the countries that underestimated the severity of the pandemic.

In the face of adversity, you have to make prompt decisions. The later you act, the worse the outcome! Sometimes, such decisions may seem harsh, but they are crucial to have things settled.

5 Communication Matters

The Supreme Committee for Crisis Management employed all available communication channels to ensure that every person living in Qatar had access to information about the pandemic and the decisions taken to combat it. Without this, it would have been more difficult to get a grip on the situation and achieve their plan's objectives.

Suppose you are responsible for handling a crisis that bears on other people. In that case, good communication based on transparency and honesty will be the only way to minimize the cost without resorting to unreliable sources of information, which may be even costlier.

6 Overcoming Crises Requires Patience

The coronavirus control plan in Qatar involved several stages, each with a different nature and duration. Even if a vaccine is discovered to treat or immunize patients against the disease, it may take several months to ensure everyone is inoculated.

There are no instant solutions to any crisis! You have to be patient, stick to your plan, and continue to work to offset the effects of the crisis and emerge from it. Keep an eye on the situation to make any necessary tweaks to your plan, so long as it will help achieve the desired objectives.

7 Depend on Yourself

As countries shut down their borders and struggled against the local outbreaks during the early stages of the pandemic, each country had to rely on its own resources. There was less room for cooperation on this, except for exchanging information about the best ways to contain the pandemic. In the case of Qatar, having an advanced health care system, and a good transport and communication infrastructure was central in the fight against the virus.

During a crisis, you will most likely have to act on your own, at least during its early stages. Utilize all the available resources to find a way out.

8 Learn from it

There is absolutely no way to avoid such an emergency as COVID-19, but there is always a chance to anticipate similar crises in the future and be better ready for them. The experience gained by all sectors during this grueling ordeal will give them a more concrete idea of how to deal more proficiently with any future crisis with similar consequences.

Overcoming a crisis and resolving your problems are not the end of the road. Learn from the experience and be well-prepared for any similar problems in the future. You will be in a much better position if you can anticipate a problem.



DO YOU SPEND MORE TIME AT HOME?

USE IT TO DEVELOP YOUR CAREER

If you are a school student, COVID-19 has undoubtedly affected your life in many ways. You had to attend classes remotely, spend more time at home, avoid gatherings, and adhere to the preventive measures in public places. It must have been no fun at all! But look on the bright side: millions of students worldwide faced the same challenges, but were not lucky enough even to complete the academic year due to lack of the technological infrastructure needed for distance learning.

This academic year will be slightly different for you, as the restrictions are gradually eased in Qatar. Under the newly adopted blended learning system that mixes online and classroom learning, you may return to some classes at school. Still, you will probably continue to spend a longer-than-usual time at home — at least until the introduction of an effective vaccination against the virus.

Staying at home may be frustrating and inviting laziness, but again, you have to think positive. Now, you have more time to do useful things for your life. Contemplate investing it in developing your skills and planning for your career. The best time ever to do this is NOW! Here are some ideas that you can apply.

Explore Career Options

Think of the following questions: What subjects do you like and excel at? What are the careers associated with each? Do such careers match your capacities and ambitions? What academic tracks should you pursue to work in those careers? Is there any future for the professions associated with those careers in the labor market? What are the financial incentives associated with them? What are the main tasks carried out by those who work in such professions? Where do they work? What are the challenges they face?

While staying at home, you can get answers to these questions and create a clearer picture of each career by using one of the

following ways:

- Searching the Internet.
- Attending online events by different institutions.
- Reading the biographies of successful figures in the same specializations.
- Approaching persons who work in the same specializations for advice.

Learn About Academic Tracks

Search for universities that offer your preferred programs. Navigate their websites and contact them to know about the details of their programs, admission requirements, chances of getting a scholarship, and the expertise of the university's faculty.

Get Career Consultation

Contact the academic advisor at your school, or any trusted career advisor, to discuss your interests and ambitions. Ask them to help you answer the questions we mentioned earlier. Let them tell you about the careers that may match your capabilities, as well as the academic tracks leading to them. Also, ask them about any available tests to evaluate your personal characteristics and career interests.

Focus on Your Weaknesses

If you find difficulty studying particular subjects, utilize your time at home to focus on improving your proficiency in them. Never think it is impossible to develop yourself in any subject, however difficult it is. Seek help from the subject's teacher, and work harder to understand it better.

Enhance Your Skills

Assess your skills. What are the skills that you need to develop? Do you lack some of the skills required in the job market? The Internet is packed with sources that will enable you to develop your skills or even acquire new ones. Those sources vary from videos and articles to open online courses; many are available for free. Choose what works for you and start learning.

Try out a New Hobby

There are many hobbies that you can learn online at home. Who knows? Maybe one hobby ushers in a successful career in a field that you have never considered. Choose a hobby that refines your creative abilities, such as painting, music, handicrafts, gardening, cooking, or embroidery. Of course, it depends on your preferences and interests. Why not try a digital creative hobby like design, programing, or building electrical circuits? Technology is the future!

Read

Try to make reading a daily habit, even if you read only a few pages of a book. It is an excellent way to expand your knowledge. The more you read in different areas, the more you broaden your mind and become a better thinker.

Tap into QCDC Programs and Services

If you have any questions or concerns about your future career, email them to us at: qcdc@qf.org.qa. Visit our website (qcdc.org.qa), and follow our social media pages to know about all the services and programs we offer. Discover our latest initiative, Career Studio, where you will find answers to any question related to your career. Visit the Publications section on our website to read all the previous editions of the 'Career Guide' magazine. They are replete with information, tips, and interviews with successful figures in all fields. The magazine's Exploring Careers section will help you familiarize yourself with a wide range of professions.



TIPS TO MAKE THE MOST OUT OF DISTANCE LEARNING

Benefiting from distance learning depends on how responsible you are. Only you can decide! You cannot be such an onlooker forever. If you take the experience seriously, you will reap the desired rewards; otherwise, much to your regret, you will lose opportunities to improve your academic performance.

To make maximum use of the experience of distance learning, do the following:

Pick The Right Place

Prepare your private space to attend the virtual classes. Make sure it is a quiet and well-lit place. Sit up straight to stay alert and concentrate on what your teacher says during the online session.

Act As If You Are In A Real Classroom

Deal with the virtual class as if you are in a real classroom because in fact it is a real classroom! Do not leave your place

during the class, and abstain from anything that can distract your colleagues. Keep your mobile phone away, and do not browse the Internet or check your social media timelines during the class.

Interact

Be proactive and participate positively. Do not hesitate to contact your teacher and ask them to explain anything related to the curriculum. Take part as much as you can in any discussions about the topic of the class.

Do Not Procrastinate

Study your lessons promptly. Do not wait until a few hours before an exam, or you will be in deep trouble. And why not utilize your time to prepare for your lessons in advance? It will help you understand your lessons better and interact more during the virtual class.

For more useful tips that will help you achieve the best results while studying your lessons, you are advised to read the topic of "Tips for Studying More Effectively" in the 9th edition of the Career Guide.

HOW TO COPE WITH STRESS DURING LOCKDOWN?



Staying at home to protect yourself against a fatal pandemic is an experience that you and most people around the world are going through for the first time. It is not strange that you feel under stress because of the abrupt change of your everyday lifestyle, or feel anxious about the future.

Do not panic! It is all normal. What matters is to face these fears and not become overwhelmed by them. To do so, first, you have to believe that there are things in life out of your control, and that all you can do if they happen is to control your reaction and do your best to withstand them.

The COVID-19 pandemic is just an emergency that must come to an end. Until then, all you have to do is adapt to its impact and continue working with patience and optimism to overcome it.

You will find below some tips that can help you mitigate the psychological effects of staying at home for a long time:

Plan Your Day

Organize your time well and arrange a clear daily schedule. When you wake up knowing the goals that you want to achieve during the day, and the tasks you need to do to attain your goals. This will significantly alleviate the pressure on your mind, especially if you successfully established a daily routine. Then, you will not need to think much before doing most tasks, and you will be saving your mental energy for the more challenging tasks. The more you relate your daily goals to bigger and longer-term goals, the more you will feel energy and enthusiasm.

Do Not Isolate Yourself

Home lockdown does not mean total isolation from other people. Make sure to spend some time every day with your family members at home. Share your interests with them, and talk with them about whatever concerns you have. Communicate with your

friends by telephone or via video chat applications. Discuss with them any topics of common interest, just like when you used to meet them at school or during weekends. All of this can lift your morale.

Protect Yourself Against Bad News

Bad news is always the main focus of daily news broadcasts. As screens are now everywhere around us, it is not easy to prevent your exposure to them, but you can still limit it. This will help you better concentrate and should make you less pessimistic. Turn off the notifications of news applications on your mobile. Follow the news from a trusted source only once or twice a day.

Preserve Your Health

Your mental health is closely linked to your physical health. Make sure to sleep for enough hours at regular times, avoid unhealthy food, and reduce caffeine consumption. Set a time for exercising, even if it is just light workouts at home. Also, try relaxation and meditation techniques to calm your nerves and release tension.

Entertain Yourself ... But Set Limits!

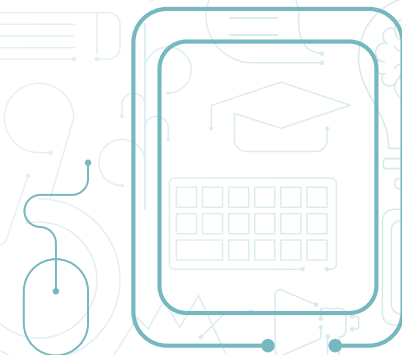
Set limits to the time you spend playing video games, watching movies, or surfing social media platforms. The longer time you give to these fun activities, the less time you have to pursue the more meaningful goals, which will mean more stress.

Be Organized

Exploit the duration of home lockdown in tidying your room and your studying space. Also, do not forget to arrange your digital files on a timely basis. When you are more organized and can tell where to find every item you use during the day, you will save much time and avoid stress.

HOW TO OFFER A MORE INCLUSIVE ONLINE EDUCATION EXPERIENCE

TIPS FROM mada



Online education added further responsibilities on teachers as they had to put more effort into adapting to the new work environment. To fulfill their noble mission of educating future generations under these unusual circumstances, teachers also need to be fully considerate of their students' individual needs and abilities. Our partners at "Mada – Assistive Technology Center Qatar" offer tips that should help teachers provide a more inclusive online education experience.

1 Practice Inclusion

Educators must ensure that their teaching is inclusive and that it focuses on all learners. It is essential that teachers recognize the various needs of learners, including the facilities available to them, their abilities (or disabilities), just as they would do face-to-face in a classroom. Digitally inclusive education is key to ensuring that everyone receives the same quality of learning online.

2 Create a Satisfactory Workplace

By and large, working remotely is a real challenge. Without the ideal conditions and a decent measure of self-restraint, staying home can turn into a nightmare, but it can be a lot easier with a bit of arranging. Set up a healthy workspace, and make sure it is amicable and welcoming but at the same time capable of empowering beneficial work conduct. Keep your workplace free from distractions like TV and family matters. Good lighting and an ergonomic seat can go far in setting up your optimal workplace.

3 Establish a Timetable

Schedule time to interact with students. Build in some type of synchronous interaction, such as a video chat or a phone call. This interaction is key to familiarize students with how to contact the teacher, especially during the first week. Moreover, continuing to interact regularly helps keep students engaged and reduces feelings of isolation.

4 Provide Reviews and Feedback in Due Time

Make sure that your students are constantly engaged. Be clear about how much time students should spend on the course, then regularly monitor their progress to identify those who need support. Keep in touch with parents to help students stay on pace.

5 Build a Support Network

Expand a support mechanism for students who need extra guidance to achieve more success, whether from online teachers, mentors, parents, or peers.

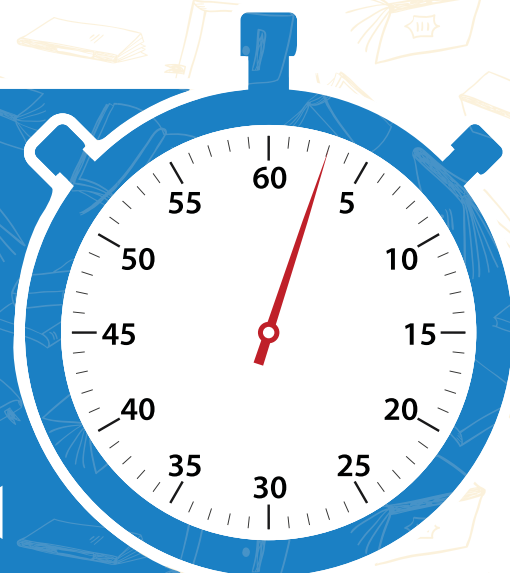
Mada – Assistive Technology Center Qatar is a private institution for public benefit. It was founded in 2010 as an initiative that aims at promoting digital inclusion and building a technology-based community that meets the needs of persons with functional limitations (PFLs) – persons with disabilities (PWDs) and the elderly in Qatar.

Mada has established itself as the world's center of excellence in digital access in Arabic. It provides a wealth of information and resources on digital accessibility through its website: mada.org.qa. One of the top platforms available through the website is the inclusive Digital

Education Platform, which provides tools and resources designed to support remote education. The center developed it as an initiative that assists the education sector to ensure the inclusiveness of education for all students, especially those with disabilities or functional limitations.

Another essential tool is the Mada AT Portal, a platform dedicated to assistive technology, the first of its kind in the Arab World. It offers people with disabilities, parents, and professionals a wide range of information about assistive technology in both Arabic and English.

EVERYTHING YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT SPEED READING



Have you ever heard about speed reading?

As the name indicates, it is a technique that enables you to read faster and obtain more information in a short amount of time.

The concept of speed reading first appeared in the 1950s when Evelyn Wood, a US teacher, began to research why some people can read faster than others without affecting comprehension. She found that this phenomenon relates to the ability of those persons to move their eyes more quickly over words and along passages, while grasping the meaning of what they are reading. Based on her conclusion that any person can develop this capacity with practice, Wood designed a speed reading learning model that was widely popular at the time. Over the years, more speed reading learning methods emerged, and many researchers took the theory further, but the basics remained almost the same. Learning speed reading may help those who want to expand

their knowledge in such a rapidly changing world. Even though there are more reading materials than ever, the frantic pace of modern life gives us little time to achieve all of our goals. Most of our reading is now on mobile phones, whereas reading books has become dull and boring for many people.

After all, you have to know that this method may not work for everyone. To master it, you need to work hard and not expect immediate results. Also, be aware that its benefits vary from one person to another. There are other factors at play, including your previous knowledge of the topic you are reading about, your language competence and vocabulary, type of the text, and even the page size.

It is worth noting that the main aim of speed reading is neither 'speed' in itself nor 'reading' the largest number of words at the expense of comprehension. The target is to improve your concentration while reading, and to be mentally trained to absorb the meaning of the text in a shorter-than-usual time.



You can find a lot of resources about speed reading and how to master it on the Internet. But why not start learning about it by reading a book? Qatar National Library (QNL) has many books on this topic. We recommend to you Tina Konstant's *Work Smarter with Speed Reading*. It is a practical guide to this technique, with an overview of the means that will help you to learn it.



What Is Your Reading Speed?

1. Count how many words are in the first three lines of a page, and divide the number by 3, to get the 'average number of words per line.'
2. Count how many lines are on the page, and multiply the number by the 'average number of words per line' to get the 'average number of words per page.'
3. Read for 5 minutes.
4. How many pages (or lines) have you read? Multiply the number of pages (or lines) by the average above to get the approximate number of words you have read.
5. Divide the number of words you have read by 5 to know your reading speed per minute.

Tips for a Better Speed Reading Experience

- Pick a place where you can concentrate. Make sure it is well-lit and comfortable. Take an active sitting posture.
- Before reading, determine your purpose. Why do you want to read this particular material? At the beginning of your speed reading training, start with simple books or topics that you like.
- Skimming and scanning before reading will give you an idea about the topic at hand and make you more familiar with it. For example, before going through a book, preview the table of contents and introduction, then the main headings and subheadings of each chapter. This can be followed by reading the introduction and conclusion of each chapter, quickly scanning the body text, or even reading random paragraphs. As a result, you might be able to decide if the book is useful for you and identify the sections that can help you fulfill your reading purpose.
- Make sure to take some breaks. Speed reading is more mentally exhausting.
- To measure how much you benefit from reading a book/topic, summarize it after finishing, either as bullet points or a mind map. You can also discuss it with any person you know who has already read it.
- Like any skill, it might take some time to master speed reading. You will not learn overnight. It is only by practice that you can develop this skill. Many mobile applications help you practice speed reading. Reading newspapers is also one of the best ways of practicing speed reading, as the texts are arranged in columns, which allows your eyes to move faster down from one line to another.

Basics of Speed Reading

Minimize Pauses

Train your eyes to move quickly over words, sentences, and lines. When reading, it is natural that your eyes sometimes stop at a particular word, or at the end of a sentence/passage, to take in the meaning. Try to minimize such pauses. Do not stop at every single word in an attempt to understand it; this curbs your speed. And do not worry! More often than not, the full picture will come out in the end. Remember that the purpose of reading is to make sense of the content as a whole, not mere individual words.

Do not Skip Back

Re-reading words/sentences is another habit that slows you down. To speed-read, do not let your eyes flit back to earlier words/sentences. Wait until the end of the text, and things might get clearer.

Use a Pointer

Using a pointer that keeps your eyes on while reading can help reduce

pauses and prevent regression. You can use your finger or a pen. Alternatively, you can also use a piece of paper or a ruler to cover the words you already read.

Look at Sentences

With your peripheral vision, you can gaze at multiple words at the same time. Focus on the phrases and sentences in each line, instead of reading the text word for word.

Avoid Pronouncing Words

Some people like to pronounce words as they read them, whether by reading out loud or just moving their lips. Others may prefer 'sub-vocalization,' which means to "hear" the words in their heads as they read. This is normal; almost everyone has learned reading through associating the letters and words with their spoken sounds. To benefit from speed reading, you have to stop, or at least reduce all forms of vocalization, to give your mind space to focus on the meaning of the words you read.

HOW CAN LEARNING TO DEBATE BENEFIT YOUR CAREER?



There are diverse cultural, sports, scientific, and social activities at school or university that you can practice alongside your studies. Some may think that engaging in such activities is a waste of time, but the reality is that each one of them will, one way or another, contribute to your personality, potential, and prospects.

Selecting an extracurricular activity depends on your preferences and interests, but you should explore as many of them as possible to broaden your horizons, so long as this does not affect your study, which should always remain a top priority.

If you are looking for a cultural activity that can significantly help you gain essential life and practical skills, consider debating.

A debate is a discussion between two people, each having their own point of view on a particular matter,

governed by a set of rules and regulations. The advocating side or team (Proposition) supports and argues for their perspective, while the other opposing side (Opposition) denies and argues against the Proposition's stance. People exercise debating in everyday life when different views are discussed between colleagues or family members. In the competitive debates held at school or university, things are more organized, as there is a panel of adjudicators to manage the process and judge the winning side.

Each organization has its own debate regulations, but there are universal features in all debates. Typically, a debate addresses controversial issues that cause disagreement among the audience. For example: Should violent video games be banned? Can e-learning achieve the same results as classroom learning? Etc.

Differences are naturally human and happen since the dawn of history. It is impossible that all people agree on the same opinions, attitudes, and ways of thinking. This does not mean that one side has to be right, and the other has to be wrong. The ultimate goal of debating is to prove an assertion or find a solution.

One significant outcome of taking part in debates is learning how to respect the right of others to disagree with you in any discussion and be able to grasp the underlying rationale for their viewpoints. You will also learn to make your standpoint persuasively presented by providing valid, reasoned, and evidence-based arguments. These acquired skills will be so beneficial for your career development.

And there is yet much more. As already said, debates are a perfect setting to develop your capacities and obtain many other qualities, such as:

Self-Confidence

Participation in debates improves your elocution, rhetoric, and expressive speech. This will boost your self-confidence, make you a better public speaker, and reflect positively on your day-to-day dealings with other people.

Critical Thinking

During a debate, you have to analyze things rationally and understand the other side's motivations and arguments before forming a judgment. By doing so, you can think and reply well.

Eloquence

While debating, you are expected to organize your

ideas carefully and express them clearly, so that the purport of your discourse is communicated thoroughly to the recipient. By extension, your rhetoric style and competence will be refined.

Research Skills

To have a successful debate, you have to capitalize on a comprehensive background knowledge on the topic at hand to help you put forward compelling and concrete arguments. This might mean hours of reading and researching.

Being in Touch

By participating in debates, you become in touch with, and more aware of, the public causes of interest both locally and globally. As a result, you can be a key influence on your society.

Interpersonal Skills

To be a good debater, you must cooperate with your teammates, something that will require effective communication skills and teamwork.

Creativity

When debating, you will need to develop plausible and articulate arguments in a limited time frame. Inevitably, your mind will be triggered to unleash its utmost creativity.

Now that you have discovered the benefits of debating, you may want to give it a shot. Talk to the debate coordinator at your school or the debate club at your university, and kick off your journey.



QatarDebate, a member of Qatar Foundation, organizes formal debate competitions at school and university levels. It hosts a wide range of year-round training courses and workshops. Visit www.qatardebate.org to know about the latest programs and services available. For more info, send an email to qatardebate@qf.org.qa.

Qatar Debate offers a free online course that provides extensive information about debating.

For more details, scan this QR code:





10 TIPS TO SURVIVE A LAYOFF

It is normal to feel angry, sad, depressed, stressed, and worried about the future, or perhaps you cannot even believe what happened. Afford yourself some time to deal with your negative emotions. Take some rest, maybe for a few days, or even a week so that toxic thoughts may not take over your mind. Later, you should be able to accept reality and adapt to the new situation. If you are still unable to do so, there is nothing wrong with consulting a psychologist to help you recover.

You have to stay positive and know that job loss is not the end of the world. Your attitude will define your future. If you believe that the problem lies in you or there are no solutions, you will never manage to bounce back, whereas if you consider the whole experience as a temporary adversity that can be overcome, believing things will be better even though the current outlook is uncertain, you will work it out.

Always look on the bright side. It may be an opportunity to work for a new company with ample room for self-fulfillment, make a career shift, or start your own business.

Now, do a careful situation analysis and reconsider where you are. Think of it as a transition period to further career development. Focus on your new temporary job, which is seeking a new job or even a new career track. Here are ten tips that can help you get back on track:

1 KEEP YOUR DAILY ROUTINE

At first, try to maintain a daily routine similar to that in your employment days — at least the wake-up time. If you later find that you are more productive during other times of the day, it is

Throughout your career, you will face different challenges every now and then, and you will learn from them new skills that will enrich your personality and experience. If you had your ideal job, it could be a challenging experience to lose it. People react differently to this significant challenge, depending on how it affects them financially and emotionally. Some may have financial commitments, whereas others may miss the status associated with their position or the passion felt every day practicing a profession they loved.

In any case, good management of the emotional shock of losing your job is key to overcome it.



If you read this article while you already have a job, still look for your first job, or even manage your own business, this does not mean you need not have a look at these tips or take them into account. Most of them apply to everyone willing to carve out a successful career.

okay to adopt a new routine. Generally speaking, it is advisable to get up early to make use of the daytime, when you are supposed to contact employers. More importantly, do not escape the world through sleep or let yourself become too lazy.

2 GET YOUR CV READY

As a job hunter, your CV is your biggest asset. Write a CV that highlights your strengths, such as the skills you have, the know-how you acquired, and the achievements you made at work. When applying for a vacancy, make sure to include a cover letter explaining how your skills and expertise match the requirements of the position, and can contribute to the growth of the company.

3 ESTABLISH YOUR BRAND

Personal branding became crucial for those who want to promote their expertise and capabilities. Pay attention to your page on LinkedIn. Use it to showcase your experience and communicate with individuals and companies in your field of work. Also, promote yourself on other social media platforms, such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. Select the ones that serve you best, based on their suitability to the content that would describe what gives you an advantage in the industry. Create a profile on other job search websites, such as bayt.com and monster.com. It is also a good idea to launch a personal website where you can post an interactive CV or publish a career blog.

4 COMMUNICATE

Contact your former colleagues and other connections to find out if they know about any vacancies in other companies. Do not be shy to do so; you are just requesting information, not asking them for a job. Do not presuppose that others will not help you nor expect too much of them. Moreover, do not be frustrated if you do not receive the expected help from them. Attend workshops, conferences, fairs, or any other career events related to your field. It will help you build up your social network, showcase your experience, and evolve your personal brand. You can also consider volunteering.

5 NEVER STOP LEARNING

No matter how considerable your expertise and potential are, some of your skills will necessarily need improvement, because they were not required for your former job. In addition, there must be new skills in your field that you have not possessed yet. Allot

a specific time every day to learn, through enrolling in academic/ training courses in your field, or even in other fields. Exploring new areas that match your capacities might lead to a career shift or open new doors for you.

6 BE FLEXIBLE

Do not expect a job with the same level and benefits as the one you used to have. Do not turn down a readily available job opportunity out of pride or shame from loss of prestige, so long as it would expand your experience and skills. And why not consider a career change if you have the competencies to land an available job in a different field? Other options for you may include independent or project-based work.

7 STAY FRIENDLY WITH YOUR EX-EMPLOYER

Whatever the circumstances surrounding losing your job, try to keep in touch with your former manager. Leaving your company is not the end of your story; it will feature in your CV forever. A future employer may want to talk to your former manager about their evaluation of your work performance or the reasons for laying you off.

8 LOOK AFTER YOUR HEALTH

Do not ignore your physical or mental health! Now, you have enough time to exercise. Even a walk can boost your mood and clear your head. Consider doing yoga, meditation, or any other practice that has a positive effect on your mind. Also, make sure to surround yourself all the time with positive people.

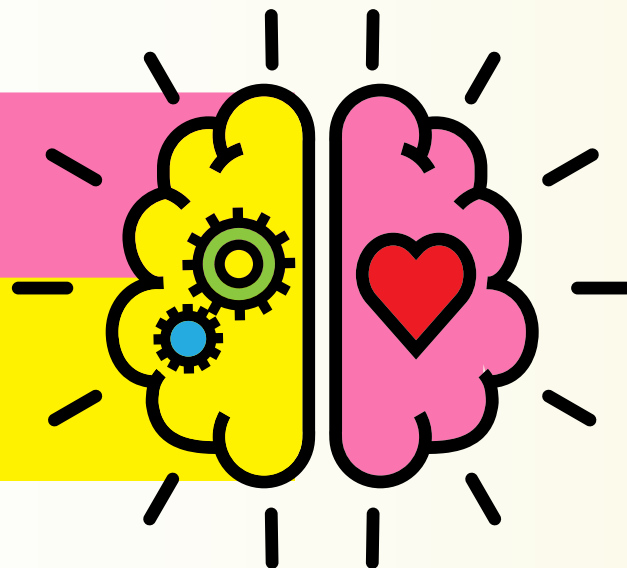
9 SORT OUT YOUR FINANCES

More often than not, job loss causes financial stress. One essential step you have to take immediately is to devise a financial plan for what we call the 'transition period.' Review your current resources and outstanding obligations, and try to cut your spending as much as possible. Purchase just what you need, and opt to invest in what would push your career forward.

10 PERSEVERE

Do not be disappointed if your early attempts at finding a new job fail. Every interview you attend, and every message you send to a prospective employer, is in itself an experience. Do not stop searching until you get what you want! Keep learning, and always be hopeful. Remember that only those who are persistent achieve the greatest success.

YOUR QUICK GUIDE TO EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE



When it comes to your career success, it is a matter of fact that being intelligent is crucial for overcoming challenges and achieving your goals. Intelligence is widely believed to be synonymous with the intellect, as manifested in extraordinary learning capacity, mastery of skills, and problem-solving. However, it is far from it! Many people have excellent academic achievement and outstanding results in the most challenging intelligence quotient (IQ) tests, but then fail to achieve career success.

The explanation is simple: There are several types of intelligence at varying degrees of proficiency in every person, depending on the environment they come from, as well as the knowledge, experience, and skills they acquired during their lives. Dr. Howard Gardner, Professor of Psychology at Harvard University, lists eight distinct types of intelligence under his theory of “multiple intelligences,” first proposed in his 1983 book *Frames of Mind*. These are: linguistic, logical, spatial, musical, kinesthetic, naturalist, intrapersonal, and interpersonal.

Later on, the theory provided the basis for further research on the different types of intelligence. In 1995, a book titled *Emotional Intelligence* was published, and quickly became one of the most influential books in the fields of personal development and business administration. In this book, Daniel Goleman, psychologist and science journalist, gives an in-depth analysis of two specific types of intelligence, intrapersonal

and interpersonal, and highlights their importance in our lives. Goleman defined emotional intelligence as the ability to recognize our own emotions and those of others and manage those emotions well in ourselves and our relationships.

Undoubtedly, emotion can influence the decisions we make. There are always such stressful moments that make us feel angry, sad, or afraid, while at other times, we may feel happy or excited. What matters is to deal intelligently with our emotions in different situations, and not to let them control our feelings, actions, and social relationships. Over the past decades, many studies have proved that emotionally intelligent people have a more substantial chance of success both on personal and career levels, because they can better make the right decisions at the right time and build effective social relationships. Today, many companies consider emotional intelligence as a key factor in selecting or promoting their staff, realizing the positive effect of emotionally intelligent people on the company’s performance and productivity.

Whether you are a school or university student, or you have already embarked on your career, training yourself to be emotionally intelligent is essential to achieve success. Even though the environment you come from and the experience you have in life must have played a role in shaping your emotional intelligence, you can always improve it regardless of your age or academic/professional background. Consider it a set of skills that can be acquired and developed. At least give it a try!

FIVE STEPS TO BECOME MORE EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT

1. SELF-AWARENESS

The first and most crucial step is to know your emotions well. Identify your reactions to the different situations you encounter. How do you feel? Is it a positive or negative feeling? How does this feeling affect your thought and behavior? For example: What angered you? What frustrated you? What made you feel happy? How do you act whenever you have such feelings? What caused things to be like this?

Always be mindful of your inner self and observe it closely. The answers to the above questions will give you a deeper insight into your feelings and a greater ability to notice them as they are generated. They will also help you spot the strengths and weaknesses of your personality. The more you understand yourself, the better your mental health and social behavior become.

2. SELF-REGULATION

Now that you recognize your feelings as they arise, see how you react to each one of them. To do so effectively, hold on once you start to encounter any sort of feeling, negative or positive. Before taking any decision, give space to reason for a few seconds. Think carefully about your reaction. Does the current situation require what you are about to do or say? Do not rush it and be driven by impulse, or you might find yourself in hot water. Instead, take command over your nerves, and redirect your emotions toward what will benefit you in each situation.

Look out! This is not a call for you to push your feelings down and down until they eventually explode out. It is much wiser to handle them promptly. Focus on the solution, not the problem.

Having a hold over your emotions will bolster your self-confidence and make it easier for you to adapt to change. You may find it difficult to control your feelings, especially if you have always reacted to some experiences in a specific way. But this does not mean that it is not possible to change this particular reaction. With concentration and daily training, you will make progress.

3. MOTIVATION

If you can instantly control your emotions, it is not beyond your capabilities to adopt the positive emotions that would motivate you to attain your goals. It is all in between your ears. Whenever you like, you can feel passionate, upbeat, or happy, but this necessitates setting personal and career goals above just money and position—goals that inspire you to commit yourself to your decisions and dive into work. This approach will give you the power and determination to pursue your goals at all times.

4. EMPATHY

You cannot live alone in this world! You will always have to deal with people with different cultures, behaviors, attitudes, and experiences. To get on well with others, you need to be good at discerning how they feel and understanding their actions in different situations.

Be trusting and empathetic toward those around you. Instead of being judgmental, think about the conditions that might have led them to act this way. Put yourself in their shoes, see what you would have done, or look at it from a neutral perspective. This entails a thoughtful mentality and, more importantly, being accustomed to calmness and self-control under pressure.

5. SOCIAL SKILLS

The last step is to properly manage your social relationships, which will not be difficult if you have already made it through the previous four steps.

Being considerate will help you build rewarding social relationships that boost your self-confidence, facilitate socialization, and make you a better team player and leader. By contrast, if you find difficulty being on good terms with others, you will be inviting such negative emotions as depression and frustration, which will hamper your personal and career development, even if you are academically perfect.

Social skills are easy to acquire over time—but only if you genuinely want to. All you have to do is to start working on your communication skills. Make sure that your personal and career relationships are friendly, straightforward, and respectful. State clearly to others what is acceptable and unacceptable to you to minimize disagreements, which might be occasional but inevitable. Take them as opportunities to build up trust between you and those disagreeing with you, not as win-lose conflicts.

Be open to different views. Accept and express constructive criticism. Always talk positively about yourself, and try to be a source of inspiration and optimism, rather than negative energy and pessimism.

All the above suggestions can change your life for the better and put you on the right track for making all of your personal and career goals a reality.



WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW BEFORE STUDYING ABROAD

There is a lot to be said for the experience of pursuing a university degree overseas. Besides the opportunity to study advanced programs that may not be available in your home country, it undoubtedly nurtures your personality by making you more self-dependent, open to new communities, and able to embrace different cultures.

When selecting a university to join, your assessment should be based on the quality of its programs, world rank, and, of course, relevance to your potential and ambitions. More importantly, the specialization you choose should be in demand on the job market and covered by the Government Scholarship Program (if you will apply for it). You have to check if the degree can be accredited by Qatar's Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

Another factor to consider when selecting your future university is the host country.

Qatari students tend to choose UK or US universities due to the excellent reputation of the higher education system in both countries. The fact that English is the official language in both countries is also a factor that allows students to integrate into campus and social life easily.

If you limit your choice to these criteria alone, you are making a mistake. The specialty you want might be available under a better program in another country. For example, medical schools in Switzerland, France, Germany, and Sweden offer excellent and unique programs in specific specialties. So, make sure to search diligently and talk to experts before making up your mind.

The following are three stories of Qatari youths who thought outside the box when planning their university education. They explain why they selected their universities, tell us about their experiences, and provide advice to those who want to make the most out of studying abroad.



Ahmed Al-Shafei
MSc Photovoltaics and Solar Energy
Faculty of Engineering
University of New South Wales
Australia

I studied electrical engineering in the UK. After obtaining my bachelor's degree, I returned to Qatar to work as an electrical maintenance engineer on an offshore platform. I always had an interest in optoelectronics, a subject that I studied in my last year at university. It is common knowledge that the sun is the source of all the energy found on earth, and I was particularly fascinated by the notion that electricity can be generated directly from solar energy. It seemed imaginative! Renewable energy holds great promise for the future, and it is given special attention here in Qatar. For all the above considerations, I decided to pursue graduate studies in a solar energy major.

I chose to study for a master's in Photovoltaics and Solar Energy Engineering at Australia's University of New South Wales (UNSW). As one of the world's renowned polytechnic universities, its research department has considerably contributed to the global advances in solar energy technology. Impressively, Australia boasts entirely solar-powered industries. It was an ideal environment for studying this field.

I had no problem traveling to Australia where I spent two years studying. My family was familiar with my frequent travels, me being such a globetrotter who likes to visit many countries across the globe. Besides, I had already spent four years in the UK as an undergrad.

I passed the admission and enrolment process easily. During my study, there were no significant challenges even though the Australian university was of a much higher level than the UK one, especially in terms of curricula. It applies a project-based learning

system, which requires more self-dependence.

My advice for anyone who wants to study abroad is to select a major where they are confident of performing well. Study without thinking that there is a job for you when you are back home. Do your best to outdo even the students from the host country. Remember that you enjoy more support than them. Achieving better results will boost your self-confidence.

Exploit your free time to discover the host country and socialize with other people. Build and maintain strong relationships with your professors and colleagues, even after you return to your country.

Once finished, I returned to Qatar, where I now work as a teaching assistant at Qatar University (QU). I love academia and plan to continue with it. Here, I have the opportunity to teach new generations the knowledge and experience I gained. I will always remain eager to serve my country in any position and any field.



Amal Al-Kubaisi
Bachelor of Computer Science
(Major in Multimedia)
Faculty of Computer Science and
Information Technology
Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)
Malaysia

I am studying multimedia at the Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). I chose this major when I was still in middle school, as I loved programming and design from childhood. My family greatly encouraged me to pursue my ambition and study what I wanted. The support from my friends and teachers played a significant role in my conviction that this specialization best matched me.

I selected this university for many reasons. First of all, it is among the universities recognized by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Qatar. It offers a wide range of majors and sub-majors. I have found that studying multimedia caters perfectly to me. Also, the university's facilities and research centers are very advanced. One good thing in the university is that its academic guidance department works closely with the students to improve their skills and prepare them for the job market. Moreover, the senior year involves a mandatory internship. For this purpose, the university facilitates the approval of students as interns in companies.

In the beginning, it was not easy to get a scholarship from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, but I was determined to strive for my goal. At first, I enrolled at the university at my own expense until my status could be adjusted later. My number-two challenge was that there was no cultural attaché. However, H.E. Eisa Al-Mannai, former Ambassador of Qatar to Malaysia, intervened personally to solve the issues I had in my early days, until I got used to living there.

Before you select a foreign university to join, make sure it is academically prestigious, and the major you will be studying is what you seek. When studying abroad, you have to be committed, take study seriously, and be up to any difficulties you encounter. You are also advised to learn the language of the host country, as this will make your everyday life much easier, broaden your mind, and open up new horizons for your learning.

After graduation, I aspire to work as a user experience (UX) and user interface (UI) designer. Both are important fields that are widely needed at present and in the future.



Rashid Abu Khadija
Bachelor in International Relations
School of International Cultural Relations
Tokai University
Japan

Believing in my potential to serve my country, my dream is to be a diplomat, as international relations is one of the specializations needed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). I tried and managed to win a government scholarship through MOFA. My choice was to study in Japan, because it has friendly relations with Qatar across the board, and it is one of the world's most developed countries in technology, science, and culture.

I joined the International Relations Department at the School of International Cultural Relations, Tokai University, one of the top Japanese universities. The admission process was strict, due to the limited number of international students accepted by the university. But I was determined to pass the required placement tests, and I was eventually admitted. By virtue of my family's support in every step I took, I got there.

In my first year, the biggest challenge was to adapt to the new culture. I overcame this challenge by learning Japanese, and I was lucky that the university has an institute that teaches this language. Initially, you may think that Japanese is difficult, but you can learn any language if you put enough effort into it.

From my perspective, deriving substantial benefit from studying abroad depends on your dedication and ability to integrate with the local culture. In general, seek distinction when selecting your major at university. Being a specialist in a unique field will open up opportunities for you in the labor market. If you face any difficulty in your study, never give up! Persevere, and you will get through.

After graduation, I plan to return to my country and devote myself to serving it through excellent work.

Nama's Tips FOR ENTREPRENEURS DURING COVID-19 CRISIS



Entrepreneurship has remarkably flourished in Qatar over the past few years, and we have witnessed many successful projects founded by entrepreneurs in various sectors. Therefore, the growing enthusiasm of Qatari youth for entrepreneurship is not surprising.

The State of Qatar has invested enormous efforts over the past two decades to create an ideal environment that fully supports entrepreneurs. It enables them to turn their innovative ideas into thriving projects which provide solutions to existing challenges while achieving greater economic diversity for the country.

Several entrepreneurship-support organizations (ESOs) exist in Qatar. One of them is the Social Development Center "NAMA", whose mandate is to build the capacity of entrepreneurial owners of small enterprises and microenterprises.

"NAMA seeks to qualify and empower the youth with new programs and innovative ideas. In line with the mission of the Qatar Foundation for Social Work, we contribute to expanding the opportunities available to youth, building their capacity, and empowering them in the State of Qatar. Our strategy places special importance on entrepreneurship, enhancing the knowledge and resources of the entrepreneurial owners of small enterprises and microenterprises in the 18-45 age group, enabling them to create and manage their own projects in a way that ensures growth and continuity," said Mr. Hamad Jaafar Al-Saffar, Head of Entrepreneurship Programs at NAMA.

The services provided by the center for aspiring entrepreneurs include technical, financial, and promotional support, as well as business incubation, market access, training, and consultation.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused many entrepreneurs and enterprise owners to incur losses. Consumer spending declined due to lockdown and strict preventive measures to control the virus.

Many enterprises apply traditional techniques to sell their products or services. However,

Mr. Al-Saffar believes that the entrepreneurial sector is well-positioned to survive the

COVID-19 crisis and introduce groundbreaking solutions to overcome its unpleasant consequences. He expects that, with the likely hiring slowdown in the corporate sector, more and more youths will be willing to engage in entrepreneurship.

In his opinion, the government's rapid response to the crisis substantially helped investors and entrepreneurs and raised confidence in the local economy. It proved to everyone that the government had a clear vision and strategy for the future in relation to economic policy. "From day one, Qatar has been working to cushion the impact on the economy," said Mr. Al-Saffar. "In implementation of the directives of H.H. Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Emir of Qatar, as he chaired a meeting of the Supreme Committee for Crisis Management in March, a set of decisions were issued to back the private sector. One important decision was to instruct Qatar Central Bank (QCB) to outline a mechanism that encourages banks to postpone private-sector loan payments and liabilities, with a grace period of six months. Similarly, Qatar Development Bank (QDB) was directed to postpone installments for all borrowers for six months."

Mr. Al-Saffar sends a message of advice to the entrepreneurs whose business was affected by COVID-19: "Do not wait until the crisis is over. No one knows when the pandemic will disappear. Start now! Evaluate your enterprise's performance and reset your goals to bring it back to growth, or at least go through this emergency without heavy losses. Be realistic! Keep in mind that your project may not achieve the same results that you hoped for before COVID-19, especially in revenues. But this does not mean that you surrender. Continue to do your best, and develop new assumptions. Keep in touch with your clients as much as you can."

The most important lesson learned by entrepreneurs from the crisis is to pay attention to digital trends, whatever the product or service they offer. Mr. Al-Saffar explains: "Digital transformation has become a necessity, and all enterprise owners have to embrace it. Digital transformation is not limited to using technology to offer your services or sell your products online. You have to make the most of technology in developing other aspects of your project, such as increasing productivity, improving staff performance, reducing costs, or ensuring a better customer experience. All of this will be beneficial to your project and make it better prepared for any future hurdles."



According to Mr. Al-Saffar, any person who wishes to enter the field of entrepreneurship must have ambition, strong self-confidence, and a clear perception of where they want to go. They will also need to have negotiation and persuasion skills to address unfavorable situations that may arise. And this is not everything. Here are some valuable tips for those who desire to find their way as entrepreneurs.

DOUBLE YOUR EFFORTS

When starting up your business, you have to be fully aware that it requires a lot of effort. You will need to work until late at night, particularly during the early stages of establishment. Even after the launch, you may have to keep putting a lot of effort to face competition in the market.

EXPECT EVERY OUTCOME

You have to be ready to deal with all possible circumstances, good or bad, and know that great ideas should not necessarily get off the ground. Choosing entrepreneurship as your future profession means that you are autonomous and should undertake the responsibilities of managing your project and team, no matter what the outcome is. Face up to your commitment.

BE FLEXIBLE

One of the biggest mistakes of new entrepreneurs is confining themselves to the project's basic idea and being reluctant to change. You have to deal flexibly with the project's idea, goals, and outcomes. Update your expectations and assumptions to cope with the market and requirements of the competition. Rewrite and reevaluate expectations on a weekly, monthly, or quarterly basis. Stay alert, and do not ignore other ideas that can fine-tune your project, even if it requires pursuing a different path away from the original one.

INNOVATE

The most common issue for entrepreneurs is to produce new ideas that offer innovative solutions to existing challenges and, at the same time, appeals to investors. The suggested ideas are often mere repetitions because the global market has become more interconnected and expanded than ever before. Therefore, you have to spare no effort to come up with new and creative ideas from time to time, in order to push your way through the realm of entrepreneurship.

WORK WITH PARTNERS

You have to tap into all available options to ease the burdens of managing your project, even if it had not been planned before starting up. For example, look for partners with whom you can cooperate on your idea. There are always newcomers who would like to enter into the fray. You can also consider depending on freelancers.

USE YOUR INEXPERIENCE

Do not regard your lack of experience as a weakness. Rather, consider it an advantage over your competitors. It gives you more flexibility in learning and gaining knowledge. Many entrepreneurs have already used this to their advantage. They got their companies up and running with the knowledge acquired from trying and failing, trying and failing again and again, until they found the right equation for success, viability, and sustainability.

LEARN FROM OTHERS

Starting a business requires hard work, but do not let this discourage you, even if the competition is fierce and the probabilities of success are not high enough. Regardless of your project's nature, you can learn a lot from the stories of entrepreneurs who have achieved success in similar fields. Draw on their experiences and avoid their mistakes as you embark on the journey toward building your own business.

Exclusive Interview with Dr. Brian Hutchison

THE FUTURE OF CAREER COUNSELING



The roots of career counseling in the United States date back to the late 19th century when American professor Frank Parsons (aka the father of the vocational guidance movement) laid the foundations of this field. His successors, an interminable line of American scholars, experts, and intellectuals, further refined the field's founding principles and developed it to the benefit of the global community.

One of those experts is Dr. Brian Hutchison, Core Faculty of Mental Health Counseling at Walden University, Past-Treasurer of the National Career Development Association (NCDA), and Past-President of the Asia Pacific Career Development Association (APCDA).

In an exclusive interview, the global career expert talks to us about career guidance in the United States, and how the industry should cope with the COVID-19 crisis, and his advice to career guidance practitioners at all levels.

Would you please provide us with a brief overview of the career guidance framework in the United States?

The United States does not have a centralized government system or a national framework for career guidance or career development; instead, there are several overlapping systems that provide career counseling services. In addition to the school and university systems, there are government-sponsored career centers that support the unemployed blue-collar or wage-earning workers, while salaried

workers can benefit from a proliferation of career coaches and career counselors. On top of that, there is a vocational rehabilitation government system at the state level to support people with disabilities in joining the workforce.

But how these systems link or coordinate with each other?

Despite this long and rich history of career guidance in the United States, the country still lacks a professional consortium that represents all the above-mentioned systems, so there is no or little coordination, and this needs to change because it weakens their power when it comes to lobbying state or federal governments for policy change.

COVID-19 had a massive impact on the employment and labor market. What can career practitioners learn from this crisis?

The situation had a significant impact on the mental health of most people, some lost their jobs, others fear losing them, and most of them had to work from home and stay by themselves for long times or reengage with their families in a different way. We have seen cases of anxiety, depression, and even trauma. This was a great reminder to the career counseling practitioners that their work has always been about wellbeing as much as it was about career counseling. Living a good life should be the primary objective of work. I think many counselors have skipped that step for a while, and were starting with a resume review or career coaching.

What kind of change do career counselors need to undergo to support workers at this stage?

Like everyone else, career counselors cannot know how the situation will develop or when things will go back to normal. The current available data on the disease and its economic impact is not sufficient, so it is difficult to forecast future directions of careers. Still, counselors have

to use every session to ensure that their clients are doing well enough on a mental health level to do good career work. They need to help their clients stay positive, embrace uncertainty, and understand career at a deeper and more personal level. They need to help them realize that their career-related decisions impact every aspect of their lives.

What is your advice to career counselors and advisors at schools?

They need to realize that fears are natural and already happening in the students' lives, depending on their age and life experiences. The types of fears, pressures, and anxieties facing a primary school student are different from those experienced by a high schooler. The situation created by COVID-19 then becomes just another set of fears that differs in experience from one student to another. Counselors need to relate these fears to future development and help the student understand that these problems are normal, and that we can work together to deal with them. Counselors also need to equip students with life skills related to their wellbeing in terms of areas like nutrition and physical exercise. The curriculum and the framework of career development skills/knowledge need to incorporate those aspects.

How can career counselors deal with family interference in the career decisions of their kids?

I am not aware of any culture where a career counselor or a teacher has a right to tell the parents how to raise their children. The best tactic would be to do some social education programs to inform parents on how career decisions in childhood impact wellbeing and happiness over the lifespan. They will know that by forcing a child into a particular career, he or she might have a lucrative life, but not a happy one. If this kind of programs can be applied at a country, city, or school level, it would be even better.

The COVID-19 crisis highlighted the need for certain professions, like doctors and other health care professionals. Should countries plan their career guidance policies accordingly and concentrate on promoting particular careers?

I think we should neither concentrate on eliminating, creating, and promoting career options based on the needs resulting from the current situation, nor coerce or pressure students to make a choice that they do not want to make. A better strategy would be to clear the pathways into those careers by taking out obstacles for the people who are well oriented toward them.

What would be your advice to university students who are studying for a career or industry currently affected by the crisis, and therefore feeling uncertain about their future?

In such case, students will have to make one of three choices: commit to the path they have chosen (bearing in mind that it may take longer than expected to find a job), pause for a year or two, or pivot and select a new path which they think will be more fruitful in the future. Counselors should empower them with whatever choice they make, after helping them clearly lay out and understand the information and the parameters of each of the three alternatives to the point where they feel some sense of confidence in making a choice and moving forward. Counselors cannot know how the situation will develop; still, after conducting some research and performing reality testing, they should be capable of laying out those options to a student through 3 or 4 sessions.

Would it not be risky or wasteful for students to choose to pause?

Not if they have a good development plan to benefit from their time, by studying, acquiring new skills, or working. The key is to make sure that they are constantly developing during that pause to later pick up on the career path that they always intended to be on.

Can online career counseling be as effective as in-person or group career counseling?

I think we do not have enough data, science, or research yet to answer that question definitively. It is a situation that has been forced upon the world so abruptly. We are still in an early stage, and there is going to be adaptations to this online environment of providing career services as we learn more about it. I would predict with a fair amount of certainty that we will have much more provision of services online than we used to.

The application of emerging technologies like artificial intelligence in career counseling is increasing. Do you think that their impact will increase in the future?

These technologies are going to improve and be more effective over time. There are already some artificially intelligent online coaching technologies where users find it difficult to tell whether the answers are being given to them by a human or a machine, but I believe that the human aspect of counseling and advising is what really matters eventually when it comes to career services. We need to be aware that technology will improve, and as it offers more efficient and cost-effective solutions, governments and corporations would opt for them. So, we need to be quite diligent in researching and promoting the aspects where humans provide assets which cannot be provided by machine intelligence.

Dr. Brian Hutchison offers career consultation and education work within the brand of "Global Career Guy", where he specializes in developing career education products and programs, online career coaching and mentorship, and web-based education and networking tools for global career professionals. For more information, please visit www.globalcareerguy.com

DR. NASSER SAQR
AL-MOHANNADI

ADVICE FROM AN IRONMAN

The Ironman race is the toughest test in the realm of sports. The participants have to go in for a 4-km swim, a 180-km bicycle ride, and a 42.2-km run which in itself equals an Olympic marathon. All of this has to be completed in nonstop succession within a time constraint of up to 17 hours! It is an enormous challenge that can be taken up only by a small number of athletes around the world.

In 2016, months after turning 40, Dr. Nasser Saqr Al-Mohannadi became the first Qatari to finish an Ironman race when he crossed the finish line of the Ironman African Championship, held in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. One year later, he made history again, being a member of Qatar's first swimming team to cross the English Channel between England and France — one of the world's toughest swimming challenges.

The track record of Dr. Al-Mohannadi goes well beyond sports. He is a professor at the Department of Petroleum Engineering, Texas A&M University at Qatar (TAMUQ). On secondment from Qatar Petroleum (QP), he is Deputy Head of Development and Planning at North Oil Company's Al-Shaheen Oil Field.

The outstanding success of Dr. Al-Mohannadi was a result of many years of planning and hard work. In his biography *How to be an Ironman*, published in 2018 by Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU) Press, he talks about his inspiring journey and the lessons he learned throughout his life.

Dr. Al-Mohannadi spoke to "Career Guide" about his career, achievements in the field of sports, and what can be learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Learning from Challenges

Regarding the reason for selecting this challenging sport, Dr. Al-Mohannadi said, "I was 12 years old when I first watched this sport on TV. Back then, I loved sports. It was amazing to see people going through this unusual challenge, which many deem impossible. Ever since, I set my sights on becoming an Ironman. To do that, it took me some 28 years."

Dr. Al-Mohannadi believes that each person's character is



shaped according to the magnitude of the challenges he or she faces. "I learned that dreams could come true," he stated. "Nothing is impossible. The two major factors in achieving your life goals are 1) to have a clear plan for what you want — in other words, a task-centric road map to your goal — and 2) to implement it, and that is the most important part. You must have passion and commitment to your plan, or else your goals will remain mere dreams. Without a plan, you might be caught up in a vicious cycle or may reach a different goal from the one you had been pursuing."

"It is important to set big goals for yourself and be willing to confront challenges, rather than avoiding them and taking the easy way out. Challenges will make a difference in your life and give you a sense of fulfillment and a strong personality."

As the Vice-President of Qatar Cycling and Triathlon Federation, Dr. Al-Mohannadi is responsible for managing the sport of triathlon, an Olympic sport that can be considered a miniature version of the Ironman contest. He also founded QTRI team to encourage Qatari youth to engage in this sport. "In triathlon, you depend on yourself," said Dr. Al-Mohannadi. "It teaches you endurance, planning, and balancing your efforts to

ultimately reach your goal: crossing the finish line. When you complete the three stages, you become more confident about your ability to achieve any other goal."

Dr. Al-Mohannadi recommends to derive positive things out of, and learn from, the challenges faced in life - even the coronavirus pandemic. From his perspective, it should be looked at as an adversity that will sooner or later come to an end, or even as an eye-opener. "This crisis is like a breathing space amid the hectic world we live in," he commented. "It allowed us to spend more time with our families. It taught us the importance of commitment, patience, self-dependence, and flexible planning. Take this period as a chance to reevaluate all aspects of your life, and to invest your free time in learning new skills."

'La Manche' Challenge

In 2017, Dr. Al-Mohannadi took up a challenge of another kind. He was part of the first team from Qatar to swim across the English Channel, a rare achievement in the history of Qatari swimming. Over a 50-km distance between England and France, the team managed to make a shore-to-shore 16-hour relay swim in extremely cold water and against powerful tidal currents in a





waterway known for its heavy maritime traffic. Remarkably, the team consisted of amateur athletes who love sports and want to promote physical exercise in society and write their country's name in the history of this famous challenge.

He describes this experience as a perfect example of teamwork: "It was impossible to make this historic achievement without full cooperation among the team members. The best swimmers were selected, managed according to their respective capabilities, and prepared well to carry out their tasks. Another prerequisite for success is that all the teammates have an equally genuine belief in their ability to make it together."

Schooldays

Dr. Al-Mohannadi holds that practicing sports is an excellent way for school students to acquire social skills. He explained, "Certainly, students must focus more on their academic study than anything else, but they have to pay attention to their own social development as well. Participating in extracurricular activities at school is a perfect way to acquire essential social skills. In my case, playing football with my colleagues benefited me considerably in this respect. When you attend college and then start your career, such skills would help you a lot when dealing with other people."

When he was a kid, Dr. Al-Mohannadi wished to become a pilot and travel the world, but he studied petroleum engineering, as advised by his family. Asked about the parental intervention in children's career choices, he replied with a message to both

students and parents: "Students should listen to and ponder on the advice of their family. On the other hand, parents should do their best before giving advice if they want it to work. First, they should be fully aware of the government's economic strategies and future job market trends. They should keep in mind that future professions may be totally different as human lifestyles change — and COVID-19 is the best proof of this. Above all, they should know the potential of their children and how the suggested career tracks are suitable for them."

The triathlon expert urges the youth never to give up and do whatever possible to realize their dreams. He has never let go of his dream of traveling the world, and has so far visited around 150 countries, discovering different cultures and getting more in touch with nature. He started to research the phenomenon of climate change in relation to his specialization. It has recently become his number one cause.

One last question may arise here: How could Dr. Al-Mohannadi balance work and personal life while making all these achievements? To this he answered: "Think of your life as a triangle. You have to take care of three sides and give each one of them an equal share of your time: work, social life, and physical health. Many people may be inattentive to the third side, and they pay a heavy price for that. Your physical health is so important. Make exercising a fundamental part of your daily routine, and make sure to eat healthy food. This will give you the energy and positive thinking you need, and it will pay off in every aspect of your life."