



## **DOHA INTERNATIONAL FAMILY INSTITUTE HOLDS ITS INAUGURAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON FAMILY RESEARCH AND POLICY**

### ***The Arab Family in an Age of Transition: Challenges and Resilience***

**Doha, Qatar, 2 May 2015:** The Doha International Family Institute (DIFI), a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF), in collaboration with the Social and Economic Survey Research Institute (SESRI) – a social scientific survey research initiative of Qatar University – will host their inaugural Annual Conference on Family Research and Policy on 3 and 4 May 2015 at the National Convention Centre (QNCC).

The conference will focus on ‘The Arab Family in an Age of Transition: Challenges and Resilience’, seeking to promote research on the family in the Arab world and also strives to generate evidence to inform family policies that promote the wellbeing of families.

As a member of QF, DIFI’s hosting of the conference is closely aligned with Qatar Foundation’s mission to enhance human, social and cultural development in Qatar and the Arab region.

The two-day conference will feature panel discussions and parallel sessions along with presentations highlighting the themes of the conference through selected papers.

The conference will commence with a welcome address by Noor Al Malki Al Jehani, Executive Director of DIFI and Dr Darwish Al-Emadi, Director of The Social & Economic Survey Research Institute (SESRI), Qatar University, followed by an opening session entitled “Production of knowledge on the Family in the Arab Countries: challenges, opportunities and the way forward.”

The opening Panel Discussion session will explore the broad challenges impeding family research in the Arab region; the lack of impetus and constraints, both governmental and societal facing academics who attempt to carry out research on the Arab family. It will also highlight the disparity between the vital role of the family in Arab society juxtaposed against the lack of incentive to spearhead research that could provide a foundation to guide family policy. This should address the challenges facing families in the modern day.

The panel session will be moderated by Dr Mohammed M. Mohieddin, Director of Family Research, DIFI and participants will include Dr Mokhtar El Harras, Professor, Sociology Department, Université Mohammed V-Agdal, Dr Kaltham Al-Ghanim, Director, Center for Humanities and Social Sciences , Qatar University, Dr Islah Jad, Associate Professor, Women's Studies Institute, Bir Zeit University, and Dr Paul Tabar, Associate Professor of Sociology/Anthropology at the Lebanese American University.

The second day of the conference will focus on the role of state policies on family formation and stability. Dr David Finkelhor, Director of Crimes against Children Research Center and Professor of Sociology at the University of New Hampshire in the United States, will present the keynote address. His plenary session on “Family Factors in Preventing Childhood Exposure to Family, Peer and Community Violence,” will explore the characteristics of domestic and family violence in the home. By conceptualising child abuse, Dr David will emphasise the family’s role in preventing child victimisation by highlighting influencing factors and consequences that maltreatment can cause to children.

Following the keynote speech, a panel discussion will explore the conventions of existing family policy in Qatar, moderated by Dr. Abdul Aziz Al-Horr, Executive Director of Qatar Financial Business Academy. The panellists, from various fields of expertise, will present an overview of the practices and tangible structures that currently dictate Family Strategy in Qatar and define the contribution their organisations are making to shape it. The panellists include Dr Jamal Alyafei, Expert – Social Policies and Development Planning, Ministry of Planning – The family strategy in Qatar: The Vision and Challenges of implementation, Ms Amal Al-Mannai, Chief Executive Officer – Qatar Foundation for Social Work - Challenges facing the implementation of the Family Strategy in Qatar, and Ms Lolwah Al-Khater, Researcher and PhD candidate- Family Policies in Qatar: Between the Comprehensive Initiative and the Partial Adaptation.

The two-day event will culminate with presentations by invited researchers encompassing the themes of the conference as presentations scheduled for the first day will focus on the theme of Political, economic and cultural challenges facing the Arab family and the theme of Marriage and Divorce in the Arab world. The presentations will investigate the changing attitudes of Qatari women towards marriage and divorce, which represent a growing trend in the Arab world. The sessions on the first day of the conference will conclude with presentations exploring; the effects of migration on the family unit, the consequences of Misyar marriage in Morocco and the societal challenges facing couples experiencing divorce and separation.

The selected papers by DIFI researchers will conclude the conference with one of their final presentations on ‘Internally displaced families in Khartoum, Sudan: Challenges and Coping Strategies.’

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## **About DIFI**

Acknowledging the importance of the family in society, The Doha International Family Institute (DIFI), formerly known as Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development (DIIFSD), was established in 2006 by Her Highness Sheikha Moza Bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation. The mandate of the Institute is based upon the affirmations set forth in the Doha Declaration on the Family, which was the outcome of the Doha International Conference on the Family, organised in 2004 to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the International Year of the Family. The Institute has a special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UNECOSOC).

### **Qatar Foundation – Unlocking Human Potential**

Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development (QF) is a private, non-profit organisation that is supporting Qatar on its journey from carbon economy to knowledge economy by unlocking human potential, for the benefit of not only Qatar, but the world. Qatar Foundation was co-founded in 1995 by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Father Amir, and Chairperson Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser. QF's work encompasses education, research and community development. World-class universities are brought to Qatar to help create an education sector in which young people can develop the attitudes and skills required for a knowledge economy. At the same time, QF builds Qatar's innovation and technology capacity by developing and commercialising solutions through key sciences. The Foundation also works to foster a progressive society while enhancing cultural life, protecting Qatar's heritage and addressing immediate social needs in the community.