

QATAR FOUNDATION'S EDUCATION CITY: THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF LEARNING

Campus Offers Endless Opportunities For The Advancement Of Knowledge And Research

Doha, Qatar, 29 November 2015: Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF) recently hosted a two-day architecture conference, titled 'Learning from Education City'. The event, which took place Hamad bin Khalifa University's (HBKU's) Student Center, was designed to address the inspiration and creativity behind its flagship development.

Education City is a tangible demonstration of QF's dedication to unlocking human potential. The campus aims to foster an environment conducive to learning and inspiring innovation, and, through it, QF is helping to transform Qatar into a knowledge-based economy, as per the Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV2030).

The event brought together a number of internationally renowned thinkers and architects to examine Education City's architecture and showcase some of its state-of-the-art projects. It also served as a platform to discuss and debate the development.

Ameena Ahmadi is the Technical Director at Qatar Foundation Capital Projects Directorate, and was a moderator for the conference. Ameena explained the overarching concept of the campus, saying: "When designing a building for Education City, architects are not working on a common building; we aim to deliver the highest quality to students. We believe that an educational environment is not your everyday space, it has to be something special that offers imaginative opportunities for learning."

Ameena believes adaptability is an essential element in designing educational spaces, "We like to think of educational spaces as places for informal learning. Learning does not just happen in the classroom. We take into consideration the spaces that surround the classroom."

Fatma Al-Sahlawi, a Qatari Architect who attended the conference, also discussed some of the unique concepts of the campus. "Education City is an architectural model, one that students can learn from," Fatma explained. "The buildings are designed to limit heat and sunshine, which is a climate-friendly and sustainable approach. They depend on courtyards and openings for cross ventilation. This is rare to find in the region."

According to Al-Sahlawi, architecture stimulates learning when the space is specifically designed to encourage contemplation, creative thinking, and concentration through the amount of natural light provided and the visual layout of the structure. “It is important for meeting spaces to motivate cross collaboration between students, it allows for a healthy environment where students are not just obliged to go to class, but will also enjoy spending the day at school, in a well-designed library or outside courtyard for example.”

The conference also brought together some of the architects who worked on the structures within Education City. Ali Mangera, designer of the award-winning Qatar Faculty of Islamic Studies (QFIS), discussed his work and his use of ‘knowledge and light’, while Kelly Hutzell, Associate Teaching Professor in the School of Architecture at Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar (CMUQ), gave a talk titled ‘Setting the Scene’, where she described Education City as a “Mecca of Architecture.”

The conference also featured a comprehensive tour of the Education City facilities. Attendees were given the opportunity to explore a number of the structures, like Northwestern University in Qatar, Qatar National Library, and Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar, as well as speak to some of the architects involved in the projects.

QF partnered with Columbia University’s Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation to organise the conference, which was also offered as learning credits to students of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Middle East Chapter.

Image Caption:

Image 1: A selection of guest speakers during a panel at Qatar Foundation’s inaugural ‘Learning from Education City’ conference.

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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. QF was co-founded in 1995 by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Father Amir, and Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Qatar Foundation’s Chairperson. 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.

For a complete list of QF's initiatives and projects, visit <http://www.qf.org.qa>