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CMU-Q students celebrate social responsibility, power of education

Student-led program, Language Bridges, empowers both teachers and learners

DOHA, QATAR: Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar (CMU-Q) celebrated eight years of learning and teaching as the latest Language Bridges session came to a close. Language Bridges is a student-led organization where CMU-Q students teach English to Qatar Foundation service workers, many of whom work in janitorial, landscaping and facility maintenance.

Silvia Pessoa, associate teaching professor of English at CMU-Q, developed the Language Bridges curriculum almost a decade ago. She noted that while the service workers improve their English language skills, CMU-Q students also learn and grow as they teach the eight-week course.

"I'm extremely proud of our volunteer students, who demonstrate a great deal of social responsibility and commitment to education. These students provide a tremendous service to our community," Pessoa said.

The president of Language Bridges, Alanood Al-Thani, says that being involved with the program has shaped her career plans. "Being a teacher was rewarding because you see first-hand the change and excitement among learners," she explained. "I joined the Business Administration Program because I wanted to do something entrepreneurial, and which also involves social responsibility. I have looked into other things, but I keep going back to a career that will have meaning."

For Basma Mohamed, Language Bridges marked her first teaching experience. "I became dedicated to the program and went on to do extra work because I loved seeing the progress that was being made. This has been a spectacular experience and I am grateful for this opportunity," she added.

Sara Hussein said her teaching experience enriched her academic journey by pulling her out of her comfort zone. "Teaching twice a week helped me learn a lot as an individual, particularly in the two-way exchange between teacher to learner. I hope to continue and to encourage others to be a part of this program and process," Hussein noted.

The Language Bridges program equips workers with basic English language skills. Over the past eight years, about 500 CMU-Q students have taught in Language Bridges to more than 1000 service workers.

Carnegie Mellon University Qatar

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About Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar

For more than a century, Carnegie Mellon University has challenged the curious and passionate to imagine and deliver work that matters. A private, top-ranked and global university, Carnegie Mellon sets its own course with programs that inspire creativity and collaboration.

In 2004, Carnegie Mellon and Qatar Foundation began a partnership to deliver select programs that will contribute to the long-term development of Qatar. Today, Carnegie Mellon Qatar offers undergraduate programs in biological sciences, business administration, computational biology, computer science, and information systems. Nearly 400 students from 38 countries call Carnegie Mellon Qatar home.

Graduates from CMU-Q are making a deep impact in Qatar and around the world. Most choose careers in top organizations, and many have completed graduate studies. A growing number are pursuing entrepreneurial projects. With 11 graduating classes, the total number of alumni is nearly 800.

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