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QA's MYP Students Showcase Over 100 Personal Projects in Exhibition

Every year, Qatar Academy's Grade 10 students begin the academic year with this goal in mind: to complete personal project with their own stamp of creativity, hardwork and individuality on it. And each year, as the school's student body continues to grow so does the variety and extent of the projects. With over a hundred students now on their final year in the Middle Years Programme (MYP), the projects have covered "fashion to fitness, writing to woodwork, drawing to songwriting," shares Grade 10 student Aaser Sadek. "We have a wide variety of unique and innovative projects, intended to demonstrate the skills we have acquired throughout our MYP years'.

According to MYP Coordinator Angelika Kuster the personal project exhibition always happen in the final year of the program. "It's really the culmination of the students' learning over the five MYP years. It is a celebration of what they have learned, how can they put in their learning into a project that they have chosen; therefore, it is a combination of the research they need to do to achieve a goal they have set".

In this age of instant information that is accessible from virtually anywhere, emphasis is given on the quality of research and resources. Kuster explains that QA focuses on teaching the students the skill of evaluating sources and information. "We try to encourage the students to not just go to Google and put in a search term and go to the first website that comes up. Instead we work with them in really critically looking at a particular piece of information and then taking that research and looking at how to apply that first to their projects and second how to express that process in their report".

Majed Al Naimi and Saleh Al Khulaifi both understand the importance of looking for authentic sources specifically because the their projects involve preserving oral and literary traditions of Qatar.

"My project is *Preserving Family Literature*," Al Khulaifi relates. Coming from a long line of poets he grew up listening to stories about his ancestors' literary works. "I've always loved poetry, specifically my family's poetry. I would sit in the *majlis* and hear about it or go to sword dances and they would often sing poetry. So I wanted to know what this poetry is about and who among my family members wrote it".

Embarking on this project is a personal journey of sorts for Saleh, his family's literary works inevitably tied with Qatar's own history. Proudly claiming that many members of his family's earliest tribes are poets, he shares how his research took him from the family library to one of his uncle who was initially reluctant to share his collection with him because they are the original prints of books

published in the 1960s. In the end, he was able to trace eight poets from his family, beginning with Majed bin Saleh Al Khulaifi 'who lived to see some of the battles that Qatar fought as a young nation back then'.

Similarly, Majed Ai Naimi had a simple goal for his project: to remind the Qatari children that traditional short stories still exist. "Qatari traditional short stories are taught by our elders and are passed down from generation to the next," he wrote in the opening of his collection of short stories. He reveals that the idea actually came from his mother but he liked it immediately because some of the stories are familiar to him while the rest are classical tales shared for the first time by his grandmother.

"The research which included gathering stories written or spoken in traditional Arabic was challenging but it was also fun because I ultimately did the project that I wanted to do, something that I and hopefully the future students of Qatar's history can relate to".