

## Qatar Foundation and *The Economist* tackle the big data revolution

**San Francisco, USA, 12 June 2013** – Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development recently participated in The Economist Group’s *Ideas Economy: Information* event alongside leading global technology experts from organisations such as Intel and Google.

The forum took place in San Francisco, California, and was the 4<sup>th</sup> event stemming from the successful relationship between Qatar Foundation and The Economist Group. Discussion at the event covered the growth in the use of data to address challenges facing the business community. It was co-chaired by Kenneth Cukier, *The Economist’s* data editor, and US technology correspondent Martin Giles.

Featuring presentations from globally renowned pioneers including Eric Schmidt, Executive Chairman of Google, and Kim Stevenson, Chief Information Officer at Intel, the event reinforced Qatar Foundation’s position among the world’s leading advocates of knowledge advancement.

Rashid Al-Qureshi, Qatar Foundation’s Deputy Director of Communication, commented on the value of the relationship with The Economist Group, and underlined the importance of providing opportunities for delegates from Qatar to interact with other global leaders.

“The thought-provoking *Ideas Economy* series has allowed us to accomplish several of our goals within Qatar’s National Vision 2030, which include driving forth innovative practices, creating fresh and exemplary business models, and training our youth to support the nation in its journey towards a knowledge economy,” he said. “At Qatar Foundation we constantly endeavour to foster dialogue and meaningful collaborations, since this approach serves as a catalyst for further learning and allows us to nurture a culture of knowledge.”

In keeping with Qatar Foundation’s determination to open new doors of opportunity for talented scholars, several Qatari students were invited to attend and benefit from the wealth of expertise and knowledge shared during the *Ideas Economy: Information* sessions.

Khalifa Al-Maadeed, a Business Administration Management student at Irvine Valley College in California, who attended the event said, “It means a lot for me to represent my country in any event globally or locally, since it is an honour for any Qatari citizen to be there for his country. Developing a knowledge economy and innovating is something we must do to improve, so that Qatar will hopefully have one of the strongest economies in the world and share its knowledge with other experts.”

The lively sessions offered attendees the opportunity to examine how organisations can effectively harness the “world’s avalanche of information to unlock new forms of economic value.”

Over the past decade, technologies that leverage data to solve business problems and identify new avenues for growth have increased remarkably. Participants explored major themes within the ‘big data’ revolution and discussed its effects on businesses, governments, individuals and society.

The *Ideas Economy: Information* event provided a further illustration of the close alignment between Qatar Foundation and The Economist Group’s goals. While the latter keeps readers across the world informed of groundbreaking social and economic developments, Qatar Foundation continues to pursue its mission of “unlocking human potential” through innovative scientific and educational endeavours.

The forum featured analysis, commentary and working groups, and shed light on a number of pertinent topics, including how big data can drive creativity and enhance new business models. And, with Qatar Foundation playing a key role in training the innovators of tomorrow, the sessions offered Qatari scholars and students many practical solutions to help facilitate the organisation’s mission.

Qatar Foundation invited its employees to qualify for a place at the forum by entering a competition, in which they were asked to provide an insightful explanation about the potential benefits of the data revolution for the organisation. The successful applicants were Haya Al Ghanim, Innovation Director at Qatar Science & Technology Park, and Karim Chaqchaq, Senior Strategic Specialist at Qatar Foundation’s Information Technology Directorate, who excelled by demonstrating their in-depth understanding of the subject matter.

Prior to the main event, Qatar Foundation and The Economist Group hosted an informative breakfast discussion for technology executives and senior-level personnel. The session was moderated by Mr Cukier and featured a compelling discussion about the role that big data plays in driving human potential.

### **A rewarding partnership**

The first event in the *Ideas Economy* series took place in September 2012. The forum, entitled *Ideas Economy: Human Potential*, was held in New York City and brought together a community of active participants and leading experts to debate ideas and explore solutions. Since then, attendees have shared their experiences and advocated ways to advance economic growth through human capital.

Next was the second New York-based event, *The World in 2013* festival, which was held in December 2012 and saw the participation of a number of key personnel and student interns from universities across Qatar Foundation. The experience provided delegates with a global perspective and analysis of the upcoming year.

During their week in the US, the 12 interns took part in an intensive TV production training course where they were tutored in filming, lighting, interviewing and editing techniques. The training offered a

valuable opportunity for the students to develop their film-making expertise and apply many of the skills they had acquired during their time at university.

The course was conducted by Daniel Franklin, Executive Editor of *The Economist*; Sam McManus, *The Economist* Events Programme Director; and Chantal Fleischfresser, *The Economist* Events Producer. The students produced a five-minute documentary about *The World in 2013* festival, which was screened at the event before an appreciative audience.

Last March, representatives from Qatar Foundation met with influential business leaders at the *Ideas Economy: Innovations Forum 2013* in Berkeley, California, to discuss ways of harnessing technological change over the coming years. Chaired by *The Economist's* China Business and Finance Editor, Vijay Vaitheeswaran, the forum allowed practitioners to examine how large-scale technological change will impact organisations and how fundamental technological shifts will redefine business in the 21st century.

In keeping with its objective to foster a knowledge economy and promote its mission globally, Qatar Foundation set up an exhibition booth at each of the events, while keeping its international audience informed through regular updates via the dedicated Twitter event handle *@TheIdeasEconomy*.

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