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جامعة نورثويسترن  
في قطر

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## **NU-Q Student Volunteers to Work with Refugees**

**Doha, Qatar – April 9, 2017** – It was a very different Spring Break for Shakeeb Asrar, who spent his holidays working with displaced refugees in Greece. For 15 days, Asrar, a senior at Northwestern University in Qatar, volunteered to work with Syrian, Afghani, Pakistani, and Iraqi refugees seeking asylum from their war-torn countries. Working with them, Asrar was immersed in a social cause he has long been passionate about.

Selected to participate in the Learners' Voice Program, which is organized by the World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE), Asrar was challenged to rethink education through a series of workshops and on-the-ground activities.

As a participant, he volunteered with Khora Community Center, an NGO in Athens, where he worked as an interpreter for Pakistani refugees, translating conversations at appointments, and text in legal documents. He was also involved in editing promotional and awareness videos about Khora's charitable initiatives and refugee programs.

"Connecting with the refugees enabled me to understand the crisis from a different perspective – one of the most complicated humanitarian disasters of our time," said Asrar. "Being there has encouraged me to find ways to contribute to resolving this problem using my skills. I hope to be able to combine my media skills and devotion towards social causes to tell the stories of those suffering from displacement and political turmoil."

In addition to exploring the challenges facing refugees, from their exodus to reception and integration in transit and host countries, Asrar also took part in a series of courses that were delivered by Yale World Fellows, and other experts to address key personal development, leadership, and communication skills.

“The overall experience was overwhelming. There was so much to learn and absorb about the international refugee crisis on a large scale, but it was also very difficult to leave behind the personal relationships I built with some of the refugees I worked with, who really opened up and shared their life journey with me,” said Asrar.

In addition to his NU-Q journalism degree, Asrar is also pursuing a certificate in civic engagement from the School of Education and Social Policy at Northwestern (Evanston, USA campus). He found the WISE Learners’ Voice Program a great opportunity to combine his passion for social change, education, and media.

Candidates, such as Asrar, were selected from a diverse pool of over 1,000 international applicants who demonstrated a personal, professional, and academic commitment in the field of education. The program encourages the development of innovative reforms in education.

“I’ve been involved in several community service programs at NU-Q and WISE is a great addition to them because it gives you the opportunity to not just experience the issues, but it also enables you to come up with solutions to address them,” said Asrar. “So, with other members in my group, we were brainstorming different ideas about our project, which we will work on during our second session in Madrid over the summer, and then hopefully pitch it for funding at the WISE Summit in Doha this November.”

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***About Northwestern University in Qatar***

*Northwestern University in Qatar draws from its parent organization, [Northwestern University](#) (Evanston, Illinois), a distinguished history, famous programs and an exceptional faculty. Founded in partnership with Qatar Foundation, NU-Q provides a framework through which students explore the world and, ultimately, shape its future through its distinguished schools of [communication](#), [journalism and strategic communication](#), and [liberal arts](#).*