

## SESRI: The shining light of Qatar University on research

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THE PENINSULA

In a rapidly changing world, the importance of research and data collation cannot be overemphasized. The primary purpose of research is to inform action, prove a theory, and contribute to developing knowledge in a field of study.

On the other hand, data will help you improve the quality of life for people. It also helps make informed decisions, find solutions to problems, strategy, adequate use and access to resources, and keep track of the process.

Research and data collation play a significant role in the government's implementation of productive initiatives for developing countries, especially as the world gears towards a more global and digital approach with sustainability at its core.

One such agency in Qatar that carries out valuable research programmes in several disciplines is the Social & Economic Survey Research Institute (SESRI). The Qatar University scientific research institute was established in October 2008 with a mission to provide sound and reliable data to guide policy formulation, priority-setting, and evidence-based planning in the social and economic sectors.

"SESRI is very significant to both Qatar University and Qatar as a whole. The Institute has been an important tool for research and capacity building for Qatari nationals in survey research methodology. Additionally, SESRI is a platform for Qatar University faculty and students to conduct their research. Along these lines, the Institute also offers training in survey research specializing on topics of interest to the academic community and Qatari society. It provides a weekly free consultancy in survey research known as the Survey Clinic," Prof. Abdoulaye Diop, Manager, Research Department at SESRI, told The Peninsula.

"SESRI also makes a significant contribution to Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV2030) with a dedicated professional staff of researchers and faculty with an extensive background in survey research and knowledge of Qatari culture and society," he added.

For Qatar, achieving a knowledge-based society is one of the core components of the Qatar National Vision. With the recent strides and Qatar's development over the past decade, it's safe to say it is on track to achieve such a feat.

The Institute's research is guided by Qatar's national needs, aligned with Qatar National Development Strategy 2 (QND-2; 2018-2022) and QNV 2030. These needs translate to four research



pillars at the university level under Qatar University Research priorities, including Information and Communication Technology, Energy and Environment, Health and Biomedical Sciences, and Social Sciences and Humanities.

Since its establishment, SESRI has conducted several significant studies and surveys to provide baseline information and subsequent trends analysis on Qatar's social, economic, and cultural attitudes, values, and beliefs. These studies have been funded either by Qatar University, through institutional grants (Qatar Foundation/QNRF, Qatar University Internal Grants), or commissioned projects by some governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Prof. Diop noted that as a university-based research Institute, SESRI draws resources from all schools and departments at Qatar University. Besides, under the commissioned projects, the Institute collaborates with various governmental and non-governmental organisations.

At the international level, he added that SESRI collaborates with various universities and organizations like the University of Michigan (USA), the University of Denver (USA), the University of Florida (USA), the University of Manchester (UK), the European University Institute (Italy), and Utrecht University (Netherlands).

"At this very moment, we are collaborating with Harvard University (USA), the University of Cambridge (UK), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the University of Michigan in one of our current projects funded by Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) – the World Mental Health (WMH)



Prof. Abdoulaye Diop

project," Prof. Diop said. In turn, these results are then implemented in critical areas of society.

"Decision and policymakers are using results from the Institute's studies," Prof Diop said to a question about how SESRI's research is being used.

"From previous research, I can mention the Ministry of Health, National Human Rights Committee (NHRC), Qatar Tourism Authority (QTA), and other organizations that have commissioned studies and implemented the research results/outcomes. Lately, relevant authorities who determined Qatar's minimum wage have used results from the Institute's Guest Workers' Welfare Index. Because of its studies in the areas of labor and labor migration, SESRI has been a member of the minimum wage committee set by the government along with other organizations such as the Ministry of

Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs (MADLSA) and the International Labor Organization (ILO) Qatar Office."

According to Prof. Diop, SESRI is currently working on several projects. Some of these projects are long-term projects, spanning multiple years, while others are executed over a much shorter period. These projects include the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 Project, the World Mental Health Project (WMH), Qatar Education Studies (QES), and "Qatar's Labour Law Changes and Workers' Welfare: Attitudes & Perceptions for a Sustainable Future (QLL)."

While research and studies influence public and private sectors' policies, this process still faces a host of challenges ranging from response rate, geography, interest, ignorance, and illiteracy.

"The rate of response is a concern facing all survey research organizations worldwide. Though we enjoy better response rates than other research bodies, especially in the West, we are also facing declining response rates both with our face-to-face and telephone surveys. When we started data collection in 2010, our response rates were in the 70% range, but now they are down to 50-55% for

the face-to-face and 45-50% for the telephone surveys. These rates are still higher than those seen in the US and Europe. To address this, we do our best to inform the public, researchers, and decision-makers about our studies' utility by disseminating and sharing our study results. When the public is informed about the utility of these surveys, we have better chances of boosting cooperation and participation, which will allow us to increase or maintain our response rates," Prof. Diop said.

The coronavirus pandemic has also hindered the progress of researches, but it has also created another means of conducting interviews.

"We recently faced the restrictions associated with the Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic. These restrictions affected our data collection capabilities, especially with face-to-face interviews. The Institute has initiated and has already implemented direct dialing from home for a distributed Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) remote workspace. With this capability, interviewers can safely call respondents from home while being remotely monitored by a supervisor. This allowed the Institute to conduct data collection via phone while still respecting the social distancing measures. Accordingly, we adapted some of our face-to-face surveys to telephone interviewing," he noted.



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## DMIS student secures Rank 1 in SOF science olympiad exams

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A grade 2 student of Doha Modern Indian School (DMIS), Ayesha Shakeel Shaikh, has secured International Rank 1 in SOF National Science Olympiad exams conducted during 2019-20.

She has been awarded with International Gold Medal and Certificate of Outstanding Performance for topping in National Science Olympiad exam.

This is indeed a very commendable performance considering that over 56,000 schools from 1,400 cities spread across 32 countries registered for the world's biggest Olympiad exam and millions of students appeared in the six exams.

The other achievements of Ayesha include International Rank 7 in International English Olympiad.

She has been awarded International Bronze medal and certificate of zonal excellence for her exceptional performance.

She also obtained School Gold medal of excellence for International Maths Olympiad.

Speaking about her future career plan, seven-year-old Ayesha said that she wanted to be a doctor to serve the community.

The hobbies of the little girl are drawing and painting.

She is also memorising Holy Quran.

The Science Olympiad



Ayesha Shakeel Shaikh posing with her certificate.

Foundation (SOF) is an educational organization popularizing academic competition and assisting the development of competitive spirit among school children, according to the website of SOF.

SOF was established by leading academicians, scientists and media personalities with the aim of promoting Science, Mathematics, Computer Education, English, General Knowledge and professional courses.

SOF has been striving for close to 25 years to promote scientific attitude and temperament through innovative activities and use of IT in learning process that involve school students across the globe.

## SIS hosts 'Makeover 21' training

THE PENINSULA - DOHA

Teachers of Shantiniketan Indian School (SIS) reaped rich from Makeover 21 – The Professional Development Programme of SIS.

The two-day session on the topic: 'Understanding Self Appraisal Rubrics' was aimed at helping teachers to strengthen their resourcefulness in order to place themselves better in classroom and in their professional achievements.

Vice Principal of SIS, Dudley O'Connor and his team enlightened the teachers with his session on Teacher Resourcefulness, Lesson Planning, Classroom and Remote Teaching.

Head Teacher (Secondary Section), Syed Meraj Ali and team took up the remedial practices at SIS by helping the teachers with understanding the objectives and best practices that can be adopted for achieving better outcome in their Academic Support Programme (ASP); Academic Achievement and Enhancement Programme (AAEP); and Personalised Guidance Programme (PGP).

Head teacher (Middle Section), Matthew and team shared the objectives and importance of Value and Art Integration in classroom to make learning more joyful and valuable. Senior Head Teacher, Mehjabeen with her team, threw valuable light on the importance of Correction of Students' Work and Feedback for creating a positive environment of learning in school.

Head Teacher (Secondary Section), Bushara and her team, shared the importance and effective use of the innovatively designed E-Learning, E-Training and SIS Learn Platform and help teachers guide students to make effective use of the digital content made available to them through the teamwork of SIS.

Principal of SIS, Dr. Subhash in his closing address urged to teachers to be happy in order to make so many children happier. He expressed happiness at the enthusiasm and spirit shown by the teachers in this two-day highly interactive and mind-sharing session.



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