

Museums in Qatar: Educational and Social Role in Twenty-First Century

In this article I address the focus of museum sectors in Doha, Qatar, in their educational role. The role can be linked to the opening of the Education Centre (EC) at the Museum of Islamic Art in 10 October 2009 and the opening of Msheireb Museums in 20 October 2015 six years after the EC. This focus aims to enhance the relationship between museums and communities in Doha, in which museums endeavour to make of themselves educational institutions. The MIA and Msheireb museums both belong to different organisations in Qatar. While the MIA runs by Qatar Museums, Msheireb museums run by Msheireb Properties. However, their visions following similar direction, which is inspiring people's imaginations and minds of Qatar's past, present and future.

Introduction

A common topic that scholars and institutions may be drawn into is an examination of the nature of education system that museums in the current century are offering. Visitors and audience have experienced how current museums staff, environment and exhibitions are influencing the aspects of current education such as innovation, communication, critical thinking and creativity, within or outside the museum environment. This paper discusses the role that Qatari museums play in education in the current generation, the trend of the museum education system, their effectiveness to the community and how they can enhance relations with the community. However, to understand the shift in their educational role, we should look first at the previous educational role of the museums in Qatar.

Historical Background of the Museums' Educational Role

The museums' educational role in Qatar began in the 1970s when the first national museum, the Qatar National Museum, was opened by the Emir at that time, Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad Al-Thani. Sheikh Khalifa believed in the powerful role of the museum to move the spirit and mind of his community forward. At that time, the number of Qatari middle-aged persons with an education was limited. In addition, economic and social lives were much simpler than they are now. In consideration of this modest lifestyle, the educational theme at the museum was vividly illustrated. Sheikh Khalifa wished to enhance his community's knowledge through making from QNM an educational institution that facilitated learning and provided information with the use of numerous illustrations and films. Nonetheless, different obstacles stood in the way of making the educational function of the museum effective. One significant obstacle was the museum's ineffective communication with the public and schools. This issue was a result of the absence of a strategy to manage the constructive educational function of the museum. Therefore, in the twentieth century, the educational role of the museums in Qatar went largely unnoticed.

Museums' Educational Role in the Twenty-First Century

In contrast to Sheikh Khalifa's aims, the educational role of Qatar's museums during the twenty-first century has taken on new dimension and focus. When reflecting upon the early museum experience in the country, the museum sectors in Qatar perhaps recognised that a main ingredient was absent in the previous

1 experience – namely, an effective and close communicative role with the
2 community.

3 Museums today can become more effective and increase outreach to the
4 neighbouring communities. Although outreach work in the community has not
5 been fully established, this article reveals the effectiveness of museums in
6 working with their communities, especially the highly vulnerable. Engagement
7 with neighborhood community signifies the important task that museums do.
8 However, this work is subject to a long-term plan, and the issue should be well
9 acknowledged. Research has helped to reveal examples and find a substantial
10 value for museums to the society especially the susceptible societies/communities.
11 Museums serve to connect ancient, familiar societies to new societies through the
12 use of collections to compare the similarities and differences of various cultures.
13 Museums can develop a sense of belonging and increase the potential for the
14 widening of identity. Both the museum environment and its collections are
15 critical in developing a sense of belonging. They become more effective in the
16 community through regular collaboration actions with diverse addresses to
17 ensure that collections match with the ordinary persons who have not yet realized
18 the museum bug in them. In this process, museums through quick response
19 processes act as tools for bridging the gap between the frequently unrelated but
20 familiar fundamental elements of the daily life.

21 A review of the educational activities of both the newly established Msheireb
22 Museums and the Museum of Islamic Art shows that the current museum
23 educational plan in Qatar seeks to address the position of the museums as
24 academic resources among the other academic institutions in the country. The
25 plan also aims to enhance Qatari self-confidence and to promote a global
26 reputation for the state. Therefore, to build an effective educational role for the
27 museums, museum sectors started their programmes with a focus on developing
28 a relationship with the communities. It is likely that this new museum practice

1 seeks to benefit from the failure of the previous practice, which was unsuccessful
2 in developing an educational strategy at the Qatari museums. As such, museum
3 officials hope to entice the public by offering them opportunities for inspiration,
4 available information, enjoyment and knowledge that stem from their educational
5 programmes.

6 They recognised that their role can be effective as resources in the cases
7 where agents of social organization such as schools have failed, especially in the
8 vulnerable or marginalized communities, such as immigrations, labours, and so
9 on. Thus, museums could collaborate and partner with community institutions
10 including schools, hospitals, colleges, universities and language learning centres,
11 whereby they offer a positive optional approach to learning. This provides young
12 people and children with a different route to learning, both formal and informal.
13 Although adequate structures have not been put in place to fully exploit this
14 opportunity, it is a great chance to complement the role played by schools,
15 colleges, and other learning centres. Through a proper understanding of
16 exhibitions and collections, museums increase their effectiveness and community
17 outreach by attracting audiences of different varieties which helps to keep ideas
18 and stories fresh, valid and relevant. Msheireb museums for example, tries to
19 create and build bond between its museums and various organizations within
20 Qatar such as schools, universities and locals through being responsive and
21 effective in terms of fulfilling community's requests. In 2015 for instances, Qatar
22 university needed to organize for a group of its student an informal internship
23 program at museums in order to give the group an experience of museum work.
24 The response of the museum staff was so effective, they prepared a whole one
25 week incentive curating program by which the students experienced practically
26 how to curate. This has its impact in linking those students with the museum and
27 becoming more interested in such work and museum role, it also helped the
28 group in understanding the role of museums.

1 The fact that museums today occupy an exceptional position in the society
2 can make them more effective and improve outreach to the neighbourhood. This
3 is because museums provide tangible rewards to the community, although at
4 times they are frequently undervalued, underrated and misunderstood
5 surprisingly by their immediate societies. In spite of everything, cultural customs
6 organizations cannot solve societal problems such as curing diseases, and
7 prevention of wars/attacks. Museums are frequently seen as unique places which
8 cater for only particular segments of the society. However, this is a
9 mischaracterization since museums are part of a stable society.

10 In general, museums act as positive change catalysts in a community and can,
11 therefore, be effective in reflecting the history of particular aspects of culture
12 within a society such as religion. Through this communication, the community
13 can get a better understanding of the historical challenges and issues the society
14 has faced and therefore adopt the appropriate measures which prevent such
15 occurrences in future or change from negative historical/traditional socio-cultural
16 practices to positive ones. The museum administration can show commitment
17 towards maintenance and expansion of relationships and partnerships together
18 with community members to ensure these kinds of measures are put in place.
19 Museum administrators can also increase the efficiency of these program
20 measures. Educators should actively engage in this program by meeting with
21 community leaders and discussing their issues and needs. Museums can also be
22 more effective today through educational outreach to the community. As cultural
23 and educational institutions, museums should be valuable resources for their
24 communities regarding both physical and non-physical outlook to the entire
25 society. Efficiency and awareness can also be achieved through incorporation of
26 technology within the museum facility which can offer the opportunity for people
27 to observe, participate and explore using the technological devices.

1 Museums can increase their effectiveness and community outreach through
 2 exhibiting of spaces for innovation such as communicative escape rooms which
 3 increase ongoing visitors' retention and interests. The museum auditorium,
 4 therefore, becomes a communication forum for the public to reflect the history of
 5 the respective communities. For instance, schools can utilize the vast archives of
 6 the museum to increase students' experience and associate it with the theoretical
 7 history learned in the classrooms. Community members also with physical and
 8 mental challenges can also be enriched in the museum environment. Museums
 9 become a continuation of the outside community. Although museums may not be
 10 effective enough to solve the current diverse 21st Century issues, they can
 11 contribute to decisive solutions by the provision of creative and rational
 12 opportunities.

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15 **Museum of Islamic Art: The Education Centre**

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17 As part of the government plan to emphasise the effectiveness and
 18 educational role of museums, an Education Centre (EC) was opened on 10
 19 October 2009, approximately a year after the opening date of the MIA. On that
 20 occasion, Al-Mayassa made the following announcement:

21

22 Our goal for the Museum of Islamic Art and its Education Centre is to become a
 23 'knowledge hub' of the nation's arts learning – pivotal in providing high quality,
 24 consistent and accessible teaching and learning opportunities for the museum's key
 25 audiences – schools, students, scholars, families, adults and other community
 26 groups...Programmes are designed to encourage and inspire visitors to discover
 27 Islamic art, its context, its meaning, regardless of ability or prior knowledge. This is a
 28 new and exciting place of the museum's history and one which will enliven, inform

1 and educate – not only the people and communities of Qatar but far
2 beyond.(Education Centre, Introduction: 2009)

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4 A series of free admission activities, organised to follow the opening date
5 until the 15th of October, were hosted under a programme named ‘The Art of
6 Learning’. This programme offered workshops for families and schools on
7 architecture, artefacts, calligraphy, storytelling and drawing. This initiative
8 sought to highlight the important role museums in Qatar can have in educating
9 the community – a role similar to that of schools and universities. To illustrate the
10 importance of encouraging the local community to become involved in museum
11 educational programmes, Sheikh Hassan Bin Mohammed, the deputy
12 chairperson of Qatar Museums, articulated the crucial part that the EC is going to
13 play in shaping the museum’s role in the communities:

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15 We wish that centre to become a centre of an Islamic art research. As our vision of
16 the role of the museum do not stand on viewing it as a centre for preserving and
17 displaying antiquities. Rather, our ambition is to create from that museum an
18 interacted atmosphere, a source of knowledge and culture, which everybody can
19 utilize...From its different activities, the centre is going to encourage its members
20 to discover the genius and tolerance of the Islamic civilization. From where they
21 can inspire and borrow a sense of artistic values and meanings. That would also
22 help in developing within them the artistic and creation skills and sensibilities.
23 (Shaan: 2009)

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25 On their webpage, the education staff present their motto of ‘dazzle the
26 experts, inspire the child’, which could potentially draw the audience’s attention
27 to what facilities this department could provide far beyond its educational
28 services. Moreover, the education staff announced their objectives, which are
29 directly linked to the government plans that are aimed at educating Qatari

1 children and the global community about Islamic art and heritage. Hence, they
2 have applied a diverse range of educational materials, learning programmes and
3 community events. The museum personnel clearly seek to create a platform in
4 which the public can understand the present, explore the past and utilise the
5 knowledge gained to play a role in shaping the future.

6 In addition, the EC established a programme titled 'The Community
7 Outreach Team'. Its purpose is to organise and deliver a variety of presentations
8 and activities at universities, professional institutions, schools and creation
9 centres in Qatar. This programme is intended to draw attention to the essential
10 role the 'museum plays in preserving art and cultural heritage' (Schools &
11 Community: 2009). According to the education officers at the MIA, such outreach
12 activities also aim to 'raise awareness in the community about the [important]
13 role of Islamic art and cultural heritage as part of their identity' (Schools &
14 Community: 2009). For the education staff, the establishment of the education
15 centre is a vital accomplishment for the MIA as its main objective is to educate the
16 community through involving them in interesting subjects and activities related
17 to Islamic art.

18 However, these educational programmes implement only a limited amount
19 of advanced technology. Rather, they involve the use of creative programmes and
20 activities, where children are actively involved in a close inspection of artwork.
21 Within these programmes, it is apparent that the education officers are presenting
22 the museum to young visitors, as it is invaluable educational centre and extension
23 of the classroom. These officers play a fundamental role in bringing the museum's
24 experience to the community. Thus, through its centre, the MIA endeavours to
25 create a link between art and education. Qatari museums currently find their
26 position as social change agents under social impact, which is described as the
27 "new hotness". Museums in the current trend play a range of roles in the
28 communities in which they occur which not only make them bystanders and

1 witnesses to history but is also making them a strength and a voice in the shaping
 2 of social future. These roles include energizing the community and serving as a
 3 medium for dialogue to discuss emerging issues in the current generation. In the
 4 modern trend, Qatari museums target at producing emotional experiences which
 5 motivate visitors to take appropriate action. For instance, methodologies which
 6 are inspired by narrative storytelling have influenced visitors to develop
 7 empathy, compassion and then action. Museum experiences which are emotional
 8 do not purely present the proofs but can provide opportunities and inspire
 9 visitors to proactively participate in the community.

10 In museum education today, experience procedure and design of users are
 11 inspiring designers to consider exhibitions as a flexible basis for social interaction
 12 and exchange of information. The lithe style of least feasible product is being used
 13 to produce a quick prototyping on the exhibit base, and the design trials are
 14 developing the influence for the overall design. The current trend of museums is
 15 asking for variability in which they mean updateable and flexible that can cope
 16 with the visitors' quick paced social media understanding and knowledge. This
 17 aims at not only saving for the future exhibit expenses but is also a technique to
 18 involve visitors in the social objective of the museums through the formation of
 19 exhibitions.

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21 **Msheireb Museums and Their Educational Approach**

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23 On 20 October 2015, the Msheireb Museums were opened as part of the
 24 project Msheireb Downtown Doha, which consisted of four restored historical
 25 buildings. The Chairperson of Msheireb Properties, Her Highness Sheikha Moza
 26 bint Nasser, requested these museums, personally supervised their development
 27 and appeared at the opening ceremony. These museums are the first phase of a
 28 larger project in Qatar, which is the Heritage Quarter. The plan is for Heritage

1 Quarter to become a cultural destination landmark in Qatar. It consists of four
2 Heritage Houses, which 'have been restored and converted into four culturally
3 significant museums using carefully sourced materials that retain the spirit and
4 building techniques of the original structures'(Qatar Tribune newspaper: 2015).
5 One of these museums is the Bin Jalmoud house, which primarily offers a visual
6 account of the country's history. However, it also includes a significant
7 background element of Qatar. Bin Jalmoud presents the history of slavery in
8 Islamic civilisation. In one of the rooms, slaves' history in Qatar is dramatized in
9 an animated film, in which the interpretation of a painful history has two effects.
10 The first effect is the demonstration of a known but untold history. Second effect
11 concerns people's reception to difficult stories, which was eased by the
12 introduction of slaves' history in previous rooms that showed that not all slaves
13 were ill-treated. The next room presents the history of Qatari slaves using films
14 that show different activities slaves used to participate in Qatari houses and as
15 part of the community. The digitalisation of activities from Qatari heritage and
16 tradition fill the room with a nostalgic atmosphere, and visitors are able to have
17 valuable experience. Thus, the presentation of the untold history of Qatar had
18 become increasingly visible. Further, it provided the community and researchers
19 access to exceptional stories.

20 The current trend in museum education is characterized by the Phygital
21 methodology, which is a combination of the physical and the digital world. The
22 internet of things has led to the internet of space whereby digital technology has
23 rapidly been integrated into the museum environment, both within and outside
24 to the relevant operational areas. The key term, in this case, is integration which
25 does not mean that museums have lost their value role for providing an analog
26 understanding of straight access to physical collections. However, the petition of
27 the analog era in a digital era has continued to develop whereby museums hold
28 their analog roots are hence providing special physical non-digital social

1 understanding that is informed and amplified by digital methodology and
2 applications.

3 In general, the current trends in museum education can be placed in three
4 main categories, which include short, medium and long term impact trends. Short
5 term impact trends are the ones which currently drive museum technology
6 adoption, but their importance is only likely to last for about one or two years.
7 The mid-term impact trends are the ones who will be relevant regarding decision
8 making for longer duration and are likely going to be key decision-making factors
9 for about three or five years. The long-term impact is trended which will impact
10 on decision making for a longer duration. Many of these have been important for
11 long and will only continue being so.

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14 **New Educational and Communication Methods: Expectations of the Community**

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16 Different concepts were also developed that articulate the educational and
17 communication approaches of the museums. The museum sectors seemingly
18 became aware of the necessity to consider how the museums' exhibitions could be
19 used for educational and other purposes. Eilean Hooper-Greenhill argues that the
20 current museum practice is to place emphasis on the active use of the museums'
21 collection. That use also should be carried out with a variety of effective methods
22 for learning that incorporate the available resources for audiences. Specifically, a
23 key aim is for the museums to be more accessible and enjoyable compared to
24 previous museum experiences.

25 Museums and the community work in hand and relate in such a way that
26 they depend and look upon one another. There are therefore certain expectations
27 by the community from museums and the vice versa. The community expects a
28 lot of transparency, validity, and participation of museums. Museums have used

1 up the bigger part of a generation on an individuality predicament enquiring
 2 about their value and social role or maybe their underlying importance to the
 3 community. The community constantly expects public trust from museums more
 4 than from any other institution, be it public or private. The community expects
 5 museums to work transparently and to move beyond just basic representations of
 6 proof explicitly show how knowledge has been established, shared, or rentered.

7 The MIA commissioned its educational centre with numerous programmes
 8 that include activities for local and overseas scholars. It is apparent that these
 9 programmes correspond to the change that is currently underway in the national
 10 curriculum. In this curriculum, the MIA and the Msheireb presumably found an
 11 available foundation to apply to their educational philosophy. Doing so, in turn,
 12 will ease the application of that philosophy. The new national curriculum and the
 13 educational philosophy of the museum are targeting the same points, which are
 14 developing the self-confidence of the community and promoting the country's
 15 international profile. Qatar, through the Supreme Education Council, has adopted
 16 new, ambitious educational programme, which 'is designed to give Qatari
 17 students the necessary skills and knowledge that are required for pursuing
 18 advance studies'(Education for new era; 2009) either locally or overseas in order
 19 to provide the country with qualified human resources. Museum sectors in Qatar
 20 became aware of the changes that the world is witnessing today. While locals are
 21 practising and living their customs daily, they are also facing an increase in the
 22 challenges associated with traditions during their integration into the global
 23 society and their relationships with the larger community.

24 The community expects museums to be effective in evidently describing the
 25 omissions and gaps of in the knowledge, identification of marginalized voices,
 26 which promotes engagement of all community members through diversity,
 27 perception, and distinction. The community also expects assistance towards a
 28 better understanding of how the past relates to the present, observation of

1 similarity and difference patterns of history and therefore generating a common
 2 thought of humanity as one word. This implies that the community expects
 3 museums to be a focal point of unity in the society by presenting evidence of past
 4 human and society existence. In this perspective, it is right to the point that the
 5 community expects museums to act as education forums and social institutions
 6 just like schools, colleges, universities and hospitals; which they do. The
 7 community expects museums to work towards community cohesion and social
 8 inclusion. Through the various programs incorporated in museums, they have the
 9 opportunity to create a sense of belonging to the entire society based on collective
 10 societal goals and objectives.

11 Regarding the museums' role in society, Phil Nowlen of the Museum
 12 Management Institution asked a key question: 'What difference did it make that
 13 museums were ever here? [W]hat difference would it have made if they hadn't
 14 been?' (Well, 2002:55). Apparently, Qatar is attempting to consider the most
 15 fundamental role of museums and wants to make them relevant. However,
 16 curators also direct consideration towards the persons who would value and
 17 benefit from the museum. They are trying to make museums have a positive
 18 impact and discernible outcomes and that can be effective and bring about change
 19 within the community. The challenges Qatari museums are facing today concern
 20 the extent of the changes that can be applied, as well as what the alterations
 21 themselves should be over a certain time period. Once these challenges are
 22 overcome, then we could assess that Qatari museums succeeded with their
 23 educational missions and that their programmes deserve the community's
 24 support. The opening of the EC in particular reflects the stakeholders' recognition
 25 of the problems that most museums tend to have, such as a concentration on day-
 26 to-day business rather than outreach programming. We could assume that
 27 stakeholders reached some consensus of what constitutes a good museum and
 28 have prepared themselves to achieve greater outcomes that could include a full

1 range of museum services that go far beyond the educational role. Notably, there
2 is no standardised system that corresponds with all of the museums. Rather, each
3 museum has to find what fits well in its programme and thus make its decisions.
4 Curator Stephen E. Well in Making Museums Matter comments that a good
5 museum depends on the following:

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7 The immense amount of work that your organisation proposes to undertake – what do
8 you ideally hope to accomplish? And, realistically, what do you expect to accomplish?
9 Those questions are not answerable in programmatic terms, but rather by describing
10 how a proposed programme is intended to make a ‘positive difference’ in the quality
11 of people’s lives. (Well, 2002: 60)

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13 That can be seen clearly in the services that the EC offers beyond its
14 educational role, which consider the new era Qatar is approaching today,
15 especially in regard to globalisation. Globalisation requires young people to
16 develop skills that are far beyond what educational systems could deliver alone.
17 Therefore, cooperation among different organisations in the same country is
18 needed to promote broader and new universal visions in order to prepare the
19 new generation to be critical citizens, engaged and informed in the coming
20 millennium. In order to effectively prepare the new generation for their
21 involvement in the new challenges and opportunities of globalisation and to
22 simultaneously complete the educational vision of the country, museum sectors
23 have considered taking part in the new educational challenge that Qatar is
24 currently witnessing. The educational function of museums has an important role
25 to play in the current cycle of the country’s global change. Therefore, the
26 educational officers at the museums are aware that they must create a certain
27 agenda to develop pedagogical programmes that the country needs for its new
28 demography. To facilitate the imparting of cross-cultural skills, the new

1 generation will need to thrive in an equal social environment while combating the
2 worldwide growth of inequalities. 'Globalization without social justice hurt and
3 threatens us all', states Orozco and Hilliard (Orozco and Hilliard, 2004: 16).

6 **How Museums Enhance Their Relationships with Communities**

8 Museums focus on their aims to improve their relationship with
9 neighbouring communities in various ways. The first form of improving
10 relationships between museums and communities is through collaborations and
11 partnerships with various social institutions including schools and learning
12 centers. Most of the learning institutions find it worth visiting the museum for
13 academic purposes, whereby they relate their classroom experience to the
14 physical evidence presented in the museums. Museums can also sign agreements
15 with neighbouring schools, colleges and universities to use the facility regularly
16 for learning which improves the relationships between museums and their
17 neighbourhood community. Secondly, the relationships between museums and
18 the community can be enhanced through proliferation and inflation of the
19 qualification people who are willing to be part of the museum workforce,
20 especially from the neighbourhood community. The museum can start a project-
21 financed workforce shift for employees from the community, and this will link
22 the museum and the community well because it provides employment
23 opportunities for the neighbourhood. Museums understand that a combination of
24 skills, ideas, collection, and people are important.

25 Museums can also enhance the relationship with their communities through
26 engaging the contemporary issues together with community members through
27 their leaders and discussing proactive issues and questions. Collections and
28 stories from museums can be used to understand the present issues in the society

1 as well as form an inspiration for the future of the community. Museums can
 2 enhance relationships with their communities by forming hubs of participation
 3 and engagement, whereby they encourage diverse voices in a bid to bring in fresh
 4 perspectives and create new associations.

5 Community relationships can be enhanced in museums through a cultural
 6 representation of the community. Museums should appreciate the cultural
 7 aspects of the community in their surroundings, such as traditions, religion,
 8 literature, and artwork of the community. Including the cultural riches of the
 9 community in the exhibition is a way of appreciation to the community and it is a
 10 form of pride to the members. It also serves as a medium of cultural transfer from
 11 one generation to the other. Hence it fosters a healthy relationship between
 12 museums and their communities.

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15 **Museums and Galleries' Combating of Social Inequality**

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17 There is a potential role for both museums and galleries in combating social
 18 inequality. The ability of museums to influence society is not new. However, the
 19 recent emphasis on tackling new confidence and form has manifested their social
 20 pattern. In contrast to the role of other social agencies such as health and welfare,
 21 the role of museums in terms of leisure and education has become more
 22 acknowledged. In comparison with other social organisation, cultural
 23 organisations appear to be inclusive and have a unique capacity to open dialogue
 24 and engage with their audiences. Moreover, the social capacity of culture extends
 25 to play a fundamental part 'in helping to develop the capacity of local
 26 communities to address their own needs' (Sandell: 100). Richard Sandell argues
 27 that alongside an emphasis on making presentations more sophisticated and
 28 conceptual, there are new explicit claims which aim to further explore the impact

1 and influence of the museums on individuals' lives and on communities.
2 Furthermore, museums, due to their existence as cultural organisations, are
3 'taking specific manifestations of inequality – such as racism and other forms of
4 discrimination, poor health, crime and unemployment' and placing emphasis on
5 them. Therefore, a question presents itself here: What methodology can museums
6 use to influence their communities? Sandell suggests that museums could have a
7 positive impact and influence on individuals' lives with a considerable
8 representation of diversity and difference that all museums operate. This would
9 undoubtedly have a potential contribution towards greater social equity.

10 Objects' selection, interpretation, construction and presentation have effects.
11 However, it is not necessarily the objects' effects; rather, it is the effect of how
12 these objects are used and their different social, cultural and political possibilities,
13 wherein a museum's pedagogical function can be a critical one. Furthermore,
14 Sandell proposes that a museum's outreach and education programmes can
15 produce a fruitful result with their 'combating of social inequality' (Sandell, 2003:
16 96), especially if these purposeful programmes concentrated on specific groups
17 and communities. In such a case, 'the impact on individuals' lives may only
18 emerge informally through anecdote or remain undisclosed or unevaluated'
19 (Sandell, 2003: 97). The social role that museums can offer to communities
20 depends on the belief of the notion that the culture is generative and constitutive.
21 Through these later functions, the power of the culture can form cultural
22 identities for the communities, can affect their way of thinking and feeling and
23 can influence their ideas, values, emotions and perceptions.

24 One might wonder why developing countries in particular need to focus on
25 education in the current century. Harvard economist David Bloom claims that the
26 increase in inequality occurred as a result of a rising gap between well-being and
27 income. Bloom suggests that improving the education would help to narrow the
28 income gaps between developed and developing countries. Globalisation today

1 requires developing countries to tackle different issues, including those
2 concerning health and the fighting of diseases such as HIV and AIDS, promoting
3 local industry and protecting the environment. Thus, education becomes the key
4 solution to confronting these issues.

5 In his study, Bloom proposes that weaknesses in human capacities are the
6 reason behind many problems, including those that governments face. However,
7 such weaknesses can be improved through the education, which has a powerful
8 effect on humans' development. Moreover, Bloom suggests that the use of
9 education to develop communities corresponds with the recognition that the
10 inequality in global income is in fact a result of the global inequality in education.
11 He explains that 'educational different exacerbate the economic differences
12 between countries' (Bloom, 2004: 62). Further, he recognised that in order to
13 succeed, nations need to first develop their means of education, as it has become
14 evident that basic educational services vary worldwide. Even though progress
15 endeavours have been adopted in some parts of the world, especially in regard to
16 primary education, the differences between the rich and poor continue to expand
17 as a result of having poor educational services in certain places, such as South
18 Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Bloom refers to certain countries whose primary
19 commitment to education enabled them to improve their economy. Examples
20 include the last 150 years of success of the economy in Japan, the spectacular
21 success of China's economy since 1979 and the last two decades of economic
22 success for Ireland.

23 In contrast to these examples, when India began to develop its economy
24 before developing its educational system, that development was considered to be
25 ill prepared. However, to position education as a necessary element in the
26 development, a well-balanced plan that takes into consideration social, human
27 and economic growth is needed. Thereafter, education can increase the income
28 growth, which will eventually be invested in further education opportunities. In

1 the current century, where in globalisation imposes threats, education is more
2 important than ever. To confront the rapid changes that globalisation causes,
3 people need to gain new skills and advance their knowledge.

4 Therefore, the answer to the previous question is that the current emphasis
5 on education is meant to promote well-planned economic growth for Qatar. In
6 fact, a focus on education is present worldwide as a result of policymakers'
7 realisation that the success in the economy today largely depends on people's
8 education.

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Conclusion

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13 This article has highlighted and evaluated the contemporary role of museum
14 sectors in Qatar. The changes that have been applied are designed to allow
15 potential engagement and interaction between museums and different sections
16 and levels in the communities. Museums in the current generation have
17 expanded their scope in terms of education to the society. Although many people
18 may think that museums most significantly offer cultural education, their role has
19 expanded with the changing diverse society in the 21st century. This has enabled
20 museums for instance to become more democratic, inclusive and relevant to all
21 groups of the society such as the young and vulnerable groups, who are
22 responsive to the societal needs today. Museums and their relevance in the
23 society have therefore evolved significantly with the increased issues in the
24 contemporary society. They have an educative role to play in almost every issue
25 which affects the current society hence are more educative.

26 Museum sectors follow a focused agenda that has been developed to provide
27 educational services in Qatar. Thus, the foremost priority of these sectors is to

1 build a bridge between themselves and the community through creating and
2 organising various workshops and activities.

3 The educational activities of the Msheireb Museums and the Museum of
4 Islamic Art show that current museums' educational plan in Qatar is to serve as
5 academic resources alongside the country's other academic institutions. The
6 objectives are to enhance Qatari self-confidence and to promote a global
7 reputation for the state. Within these two organisations, their educational role
8 was enhanced. However, they have applied different strategies. The MIA focused
9 on designing workshops, while the Bin Jalmoud house at the Msheireb Museums
10 digitalised its narrative in films and animations, in which Qatari history is
11 presented as tangible. Thus, these museums inspire people and enhance their
12 knowledge of Qatar's past, present and future.

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