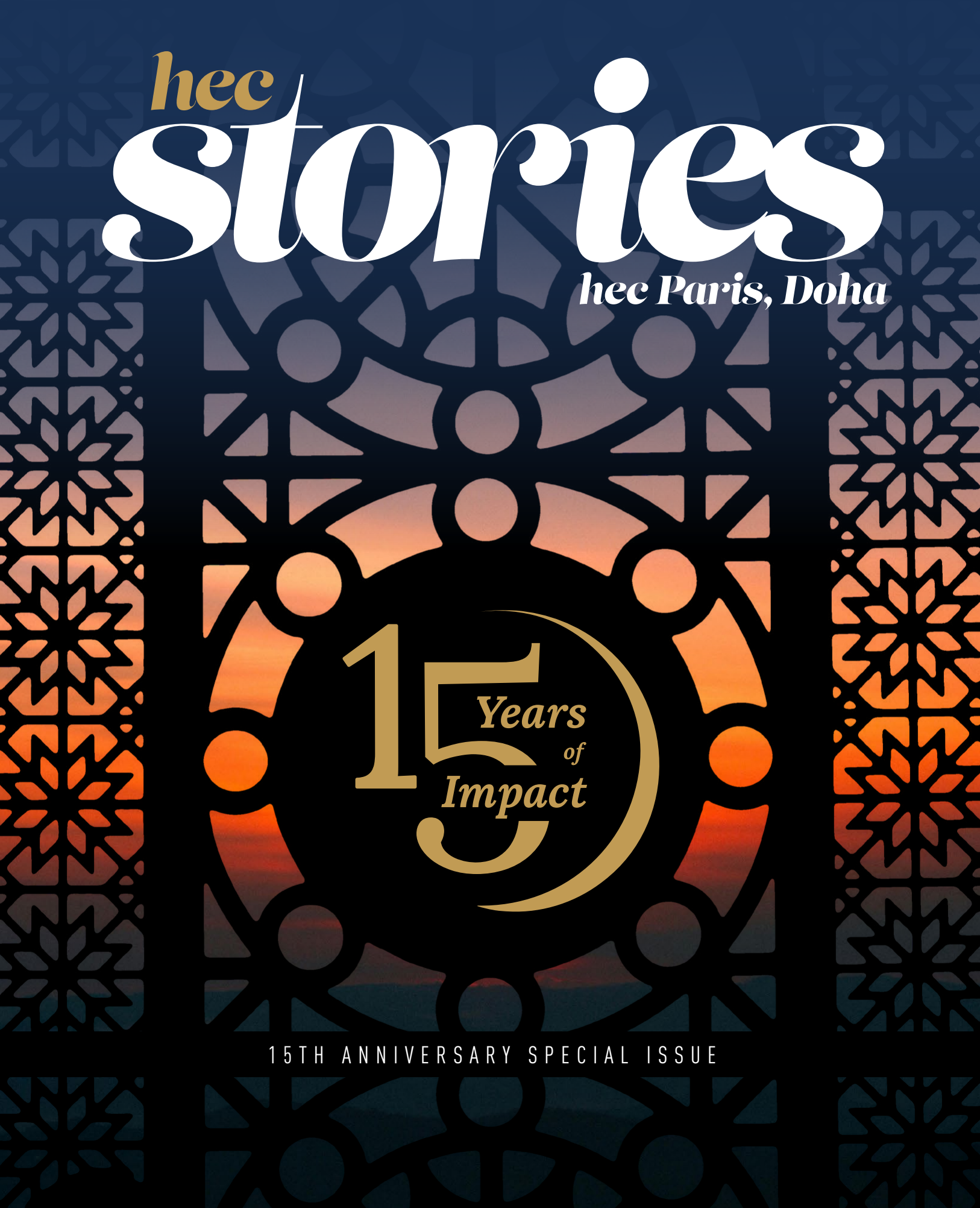




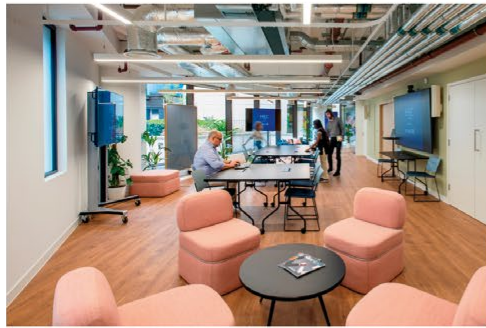
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hec Paris, Doha

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EDITORIAL

by **Éloïc Peyrache**
Dean, HEC Paris

HEC Paris and the growing Gulf: partnering for the future

15 years ago, Qatar Foundation (QF) invited us to establish a campus in Doha. This landmark partnership gave HEC Paris a permanent foothold in the Middle East, from which we have accompanied and contributed to a region undergoing a profound transformation. Our Doha campus, now located in Msheireb Downtown, remains the heart of our GCC presence and the base from which we have expanded to the whole region.

In Doha, our starting point and center of excellence. Since 2010, HEC Paris has been delivering world-class executive education from its Doha campus, helping organizations across the Gulf become more competitive and knowledge-driven. We were the first European university—alongside American universities such as Northwestern, Carnegie Mellon, Georgetown, or Weill Cornell—to partner with QF and launched the country's first International Executive MBA. Our campus offers a large portfolio of programs tailored to the needs of the Gulf's decision-makers. But our mission goes beyond training. Our management research and case studies highlight the transformation of GCC nations into advanced, knowledge-based societies and we leverage our expertise in entrepreneurship to foster innovation in the region.

In Riyadh, expanding leadership development in Saudi Arabia. Building on our success in Qatar, we launched the Executive MBA in Riyadh with the support of the Public Investment Fund (PIF). Delivered in English and awarding the same degree as our Paris and Doha programs, the EMBA extends our expertise to one of the Gulf's most dynamic economies.



In Dubai, connecting with a growing alumni community. To support our more than 1,000 alumni in the United Arab Emirates, we are now present in Dubai—engaging in impactful events for the community, developing new executive programs, and strengthening links between students, alumni, and regional employers.

Across these initiatives, our Middle East cohorts are increasingly diverse. In 2025, 75% of graduates were Gulf nationals and 40% were women, reflecting both the talent of the region and our commitment to inclusive excellence. In total, more than 1,500 participants have graduated from HEC Paris programs in the GCC since 2010.

As our campus in Doha continues to flourish and our impact in Riyadh and Dubai grows, HEC Paris is uniquely positioned to nurture the leaders who will shape the future of the region. For alumni everywhere, our GCC engagement is more than a regional strategy; it is an investment in one of the world's most dynamic regions and a gateway to the opportunities it offers. We invite you to engage with the HEC Paris community in the Middle East by training your local teams on our campus in Doha, participating in our programs, mentoring the next generation of graduates, and leveraging HEC Paris's expanding network in the Gulf. Together we can ensure HEC Paris creates bridges between Europe and the Middle East and contributes to shaping the global economy.

Warm regards,
Éloïc Peyrache, Dean HEC Paris

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EDITORIAL

by Pablo Martín de Holan, Ph.D.

Dean, HEC Paris, Doha



in late 2009, HEC Paris was invited to join the partner universities of Qatar Foundation—an institution like no other in the world—with the ambition of bringing leadership and management education to women and men in Qatar and across the Gulf.

It is fitting we rest now for a moment, 15 years later, to celebrate a partnership rooted in the vision of Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, the leadership of Her Excellency Sheikha Hind bint Hamad Al Thani, and the enduring generosity and friendship of all of QF.

More than 1,500 graduates—almost half of them women—have earned their degrees at HEC Paris, Doha, while thousands more have developed leadership and managerial skills through executive education. We are grateful to our graduates, and to our partner companies in Qatar, the Gulf, and beyond, for the trust they have placed in us. We work to earn it every day.

Lasting friendships are often based on shared values. Beyond the superficial differences, QF and HEC Paris are united by the conviction that education is one of the strongest forces to heal our ailing world, to foster peace and mutual understanding among nations, and to build a better and more just world for all. Along with QF, we believe that education is a fundamental and inalienable human right of every person and every child, wherever they are. In a world that divides, education multiplies.

Educating the world is a never-ending task, yet it is a joyful one. There is joy in learning what we did not know as much as there is joy in teaching whatever little we do know. Teaching and learning with others create bonds that are fundamental elements of the human condition: the deep desire to reach intellectual elevation through study and hard work for those who learn, and the happiness of discovering that learning helps a person become a better version of themselves for those who teach. Teaching is a gift that multiplies.

To our alumni, wherever you may be, our respect and admiration go to you. As a school, we succeed through you, and we feel your successes as if they were ours. Thank you for leading ethically and with values. Thank you for improving your teams, your organizations, your communities, and let's hope, your country and the whole world, if you are given that opportunity.

To our alumni, you have received the gift of education, and now you have the delightful obligation to share what you know. Teach those around you, help them learn. Be the person the next generations aspire to be, inspire others to follow your path and go beyond your achievements, in the eternal wheel of life. As the African proverb reminds us: “We did not inherit the Earth from our ancestors; we borrowed it from our children.” Let's pay our children forward by educating others, one person at a time. Because we can, and because we must: educating the world is our beautiful responsibility. Together, let's look forward to the next 100 years إن شاء الله.

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campus

15 Years of Impact from the Pearl of the Gulf

HEC Paris, Doha

a pioneer in business education in the Middle East, HEC Paris, Doha is celebrating its 15th anniversary—an ideal moment to reflect on a remarkable journey dedicated to delivering impact and excellence in Qatar and across the Gulf region. Our mission is to empower men and women to reach their full potential as managers, leaders and entrepreneurs, while helping to develop sustainable businesses aligned with national priorities in developing diversified, knowledge-based economies.

The early days

The HEC Paris adventure in Doha and the Gulf began in 2010, when the institution made the bold decision to establish its first campus outside France. “QF is a major driver of the country’s long-term development plan, closely supporting the Qatar National Vision 2030. This vision prioritizes building a diversified, knowledge-based economy focused on sustainable development, with innovation, entrepreneurship and human capital development at its core. By partnering with Qatar Foundation, HEC Paris fully serves its mission as a higher education institution, creating knowledge and nurturing business talent,” explains Dean Pablo.

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KEY DATES

- 2010**
Partnership agreement signed with QF
- 2011**
Launch of first Executive MBA cohort in Qatar
- 2013**
Launch of the Specialized Master's in Strategic Business Unit Management (SBUM)
- 2019**
Dean Pablo Martin de Holan's strategy of impact and excellence in Qatar and the Gulf begins
- 2020**
Establishment of the Alumni Chapter in Qatar
- 2021**
Inauguration of Msheireb Campus
- 2022**
Launch of EMBA cohort in Riyadh in partnership with the Public Investment Fund (PIF)
- 2022**
Multiversity: Launch of EMBA specialization in Healthcare Management and Policy, in partnership with Weill Cornell Medicine - Qatar
- 2024**
Renewal of QF partnership for an additional 10 years
- 2024**
Launch of EMBA Emerging Leaders Track (ELT)
- 2025**
Launch of additional EMBA track in Riyadh
- 2025**
Celebrating 15 years of HEC Paris in Qatar

In 2010, the partnership with QF, the cornerstone of HEC Paris’ establishment in Doha was finalised. “At the time, Doha was rapidly emerging as a dynamic regional hub, and HEC Paris was honoured to accept QF’s invitation,” recalls Djelloul Bekka.

HEC Paris set up operations within the dynamic ecosystem of Education City, Doha’s academic hub, home to 7 prestigious foreign partner universities under Qatar Foundation’s umbrella.

HEC Paris is the only non-American, foreign institution, the only business school, and the leading provider of Executive Education programs.

“We launched our first Executive MBA (EMBA) cohort in 2011, and 32 participants, remarkable professionals with deep experience, graduated in 2012. We remain immensely proud of this pioneering cohort,” remarks Joshua Kobb.

March 2013 saw the introduction of the Specialised Master’s in Strategic Business Unit Management (SBUM), designed to meet strong demand from young business professionals eager to sharpen their skills, and women wishing to re-enter the labour market as managers.

“Our mission, from the first day, is to serve the entire Gulf region, building on our strong foundation in Qatar.”

Qatar as a regional hub

In 15 years, HEC Paris, Doha has established itself as a leading hub for Executive Education in Qatar and the wider Gulf region. “Our mission, from the first day, is to serve the entire Gulf region, building on our strong foundation in Qatar,” emphasises Dean Pablo.

The portfolio of programs has now expanded beyond Qatar’s borders to neighbouring countries. Most recently, it extended into Saudi Arabia through a strategic partnership with the Public Investment Fund, which enabled the launch of HEC Paris’ first EMBA cohort in Riyadh in 2022, followed by a second EMBA track in 2025, responding to a growing need for top-tier management programs in Saudi Arabia.

Corporate programs have also seen strong growth—not only in Qatar but also in the UAE, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. “Our client base is extensive and includes many of Qatar’s major corporations the ‘big Q’, such as Qatar National Bank, Qatari Diar, QIA, Qatar Central Bank, alongside numerous organisations in Saudi Arabia,” notes Joshua Kobb.

Given the economic realities of the region, the energy sector features prominently in the client portfolio: “TotalEnergies supported HEC Paris from the very beginning of our engagement with Qatar Foundation, and today our corporate partners include Qatar Energy LNG, North Oil Company, and Saudi Aramco—all investing heavily in people as key drivers of economic development and transformation,” he adds.

Since the arrival of Dean Pablo in late 2019, HEC Paris, Doha has reached major milestones. A telling sign of that rising profile materializes in its relocation in 2021, to brand new premises in the vibrant M’Sheireb district.

The 3,000 sqm campus spans three floors, built to the highest environmental standards and with state-of-the art classroom technologies.

The inauguration was honored by the presence of Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation, and Her Excellency Sheikha Hind bint Hamad Al Thani, Vice Chairperson of Qatar Foundation.

HEC PARIS, DOHA LEADERSHIP TEAM



Pablo Martin de Holan

Dean of HEC Paris, Doha, Pablo also teaches Strategy and Entrepreneurship. He earned two master’s degrees from Sorbonne University in Paris and a PhD from McGill University. He has taught in over 30 countries in 3 languages, and has advised international organizations such as the World Bank (IFC), NGOs and multinational corporations. He previously served as Founding Dean of the MBS College of Business and Entrepreneurship in KAEC (Saudi Arabia) and as Dean of MBAs at Emlyon Business School (France). He joined HEC Paris, Doha in late 2019 and since then, the Doha campus has doubled its impact in both degree programs and Executive Education and relocated to a state-of-the-art facility in Msheireb, Doha.



Djelloul Bekka (SBUM 2013)

Holder of a Master’s in Economics and International Finance Modeling from Sorbonne Paris North University and a Specialized Master’s in Strategic Business Unit Management from HEC Paris, Djelloul was among the first employees of HEC Paris, Doha, joining the early team in 2010. He served as Senior Executive Director of Finance, Operations and Administration, before being appointed Chief Operating Officer in 2021. Djelloul is a permanent member of the HEC Paris Alumni Advisory Board in Qatar, overseeing one of the largest HEC Paris alumni communities worldwide.



Joshua Kobb

Joshua joined HEC Paris in 1998, and has made a significant contribution to HEC Paris’ global footprint—from leading international MBA recruitment, to business development for Executive Education, to building partnerships in China. He led the project to establish the partnership with Qatar Foundation, and moved to Doha in 2010 to lead the start-up phase of HEC Paris, Doha. Since that time, he has focused on expanding HEC’s impact in Qatar and across the region.

“HEC Paris, Doha broadens HEC Paris’ global knowledge.”

Transforming individuals and organizations

Today, HEC Paris, Doha boasts a thriving community of more than 1,500 alumni in Qatar and more than 2,000 across the Gulf. “The rigorous standards for candidate selection and the academic content of our programs are identical to those of the main campus, making for an impressive network of leaders across sectors and industries in Qatar and the region,” says Djelloul Bekka. All major Qatari companies have HEC Paris alumni among their top management—including ministers, undersecretaries, and C-suite executives. “Among our alumni, we are honored to have witnessed the appointment of several Ministers of State in Qatar, including two distinguished Qatari women appointed as Minister of Education and Higher Education, and as Minister of Social Development and Family” he adds. Women’s leadership programs, delivered in Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain, are flourishing, and women now account for more than one-third of EMBA participants.

“In the Gulf, women are encouraged, even gently nudged I would say, to engage in higher education and get their degrees and be active in the workforce, if that is what they wish to do. We are proud to have helped hundreds of women make significant contributions to their organizations: their success is ours. As it is often the case nowadays all over the world, women are also among our top students,



MAJOR PROGRAMS

• Executive MBA

HEC Paris's flagship program launched in 2011 in Doha. Four Executive MBA tracks are offered in the region: two in Qatar, including the Emerging Leaders Track for high-potential managers, and two in Saudi Arabia.

• Specialized Master's in Strategic Business Unit Management:

A program that equips professionals with strategic and leadership skills to manage business units and drive organizational growth.

• Corporate Programs

Bespoke, in-house corporate training, notably in women's leadership, innovation, and transformation.

and of course their views and ideas enrich our programs,” explains Dean Pablo.

HEC Paris, Doha's academic offer constantly evolves as our environment evolves. In 2024, it launched the EMBA Emerging Leader Track, designed to support the growing influx of young, emerging managers into the Executive Education market across the region.

Innovation and entrepreneurship are central to its mission of making a positive contribution in the countries where it operates. The Observatory of Entrepreneurship and Innovation, a joint initiative between HEC Paris, Doha and Qatar Foundation, seeks to close gaps in the entrepreneurial ecosystem, foster collaboration and discussion, and share insights that will shape new models and frameworks, further contributing to Qatar's economic development in line with the Qatar National Vision 2030.

Knowledge creation is equally vital. The HEC Paris, Doha Business Research Lab, launched in 2022 to develop local and regional teaching material, now produces around fifteen local business cases a year, published internationally. “HEC Paris, Doha broadens HEC Paris' global knowledge, offering the institution a unique international perspective that did not exist before. Faculty from the main campus who teach here learn a great deal about regional business practices through classroom discussions,” Dean Pablo explains. He further comments,

“to further expand its impact, HEC Paris, Doha plans to double its Qatar-based faculty within 2 years, from 5 permanent professors to 10.”

A future of ever-growing promise

The original efforts have paid off: since 2010, HEC Paris, Doha has multiplied its impact in Qatar and across the Gulf. Thanks to the labor of love of many persons, the constant support of QF, and the assistance of our colleagues in Paris, HEC Paris, Doha has become one of the central players in Executive and Leadership Education in the Gulf.

From our campus in wonderful Msheireb, HEC Paris, Doha, provides world-class leadership and management education, helping professionals become better at their work, and better persons as well.

The future is bright, as HEC Paris, Doha leverages HEC Paris' three major centres—Innovation & Entrepreneurship, Society & Organisations (SnO) and Hi! Paris—in Doha. “The Gulf will be one of the world's fastest-growing regions in the next 25 years, and their importance in the world scene will increase. The opportunities are immense for our participants, whose careers our programs accelerate, and for our corporate partners, with whom we shape what comes next,” concludes Dean Pablo Martin de Holan. More impact than ever, in service of a sustainable vision for the future.



A fifteen-year partnership of knowledge & opportunity

For the past 30 years, **Qatar Foundation (QF)** has been at the forefront of creating a knowledge-based society in Qatar, in alignment with the nation's vision for sustainable development, economic prosperity, and social advancement.

At the core of Qatar Foundation's mission is its unique, diverse ecosystem that fosters education, innovation, and the nurturing of human capacity across a broad spectrum of fields that mirror Qatar's national priorities and aspirations. This ecosystem hosts multiple world-class universities, research hubs, schools, and innovation centers—all collectively designed to enable people to realize their potential and achieve excellence. Within this, Qatar Foundation shapes leaders equipped to tackle global challenges while contributing to Qatar's ongoing development.

QF's Education City is a vibrant and integrated environment of knowledge and opportunity within Doha. It is home to leading international universities that have longstanding partnerships with QF, as well as its own Hamad Bin Khalifa University; cutting-edge research and innovation facilities; and programs and initiatives that promote and perpetuate cultural preservation and traditional knowledge. Education City is both a local and global hub of cross-disciplinary collaboration, stimulating a culture of lifelong learning.

Since 2010, the strategic partnership between QF and HEC Paris has been instrumental in advancing management education and leadership development in Qatar and the wider region. Over the past 15 years, HEC Paris, Doha has delivered world-class executive education, helping develop leadership skills and drive innovation across multiple sectors.

Thousands of individuals have benefited from its programs, in Doha and across the region, through degree offerings and corporate talent development initiatives. Beyond sharing knowledge, the partnership also fosters the creation of relevant, impactful knowledge through the Business Research

Lab, which has produced business case studies, publications in international journals, white papers, and national reports.

In 2024, the 'Reyada' leadership initiative launched. A collaboration between QF, HEC Paris, and Duke Corporate Education, it aims to cultivate a sustainable pipeline of high-caliber talent within QF to support the organization's long-term growth and impact across key sectors. It reflects QF's strategic commitment to developing responsible, forward-thinking leaders equipped to drive innovation and positive change.

In November 2024, HEC Paris and QF renewed their partnership for a further decade, reaffirming a shared commitment to unlocking human potential and creating sustainable growth across the region. This renewal symbolizes not only continuity, but a deepened focus on advancing educational excellence, integrating emerging technologies, and embedding sustainability into curriculum design.

Moving forward, this renewed and strengthened collaboration envisions integrated innovations, such as AI-enabled simulations and holographic links, between the university's Paris and Doha campuses, illustrating a commitment to preparing forward-thinking leaders for tomorrow's world.

As Qatar Foundation celebrates its 30th anniversary and HEC Paris its 15th year in Doha, the two institutions stand united at a pivotal moment. Their shared efforts continue to shape leaders who are not simply ready to advance their professional skills but are also agents of change—driven by purpose, diversity and excellence. Partners in knowledge and possibility, QF and HEC Paris together are contributing to an inclusive, sustainable future for the people of Qatar—and beyond.

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“Building a connected nation: Qatar’s path toward a people-first digital economy”

Qatar’s Digital Agenda 2030 aims to accelerate the country’s transition toward a knowledge-based economy by equipping its workforce and society with advanced digital skills.

As the Assistant Undersecretary for Digital Industry Affairs at the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), and the driving force behind the TASMU Smart Qatar program, **Her Excellency Reem Mohammed Al Mansoori (EMBA 2016)**

plays a pivotal role in championing innovative solutions that foster sustainable development and elevate the quality of life across Qatar. She is also a passionate advocate for the empowerment of Qatari women.

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You play a key role in shaping Qatar’s Digital Agenda 2030. What are the priorities driving the next phase of digital development?

H.E. Reem Mohammed Al Mansoori: At MCIT, and as part of our Digital Agenda 2030, our mandate under the Digital Agenda 2030 is clear: we align national priorities, identify new opportunities, and guide both the public and private sectors toward practical digital solutions. We aim to continuously inform stakeholders of what’s possible and inspire them to embrace digital excellence. This is about raising service standards and improving daily life for people in Qatar.

When I think about Qatar’s digital future, my starting point is never technology alone, it is people and the economy. For me, the Digital Agenda 2030 is ultimately about how digital transformation can make life simpler, more responsive, and more meaningful for everyone living and working in Qatar.

We’re building a connected society where everyday tasks, like paying a bill, moving from point A to B, or accessing public services, is effortless. Yet our vision extends beyond convenience: we’re focused on helping people feel supported, communities feel more connected, and the systems around them feel like they were built with care. Our aim is to make life in Qatar feel seamless, thoughtful, and deeply human, from the digital layer up.

What achievements are you most proud of?

What I value most is the shift in mindset across Qatar. Technology is no longer perceived as distant or abstract; it has become something that people

are shaping, building, and using with confidence. Whether it’s a student coding her first app, a startup streamlining logistics, or a ministry rethinking how it serves the public, people now see themselves as creators of the digital future.

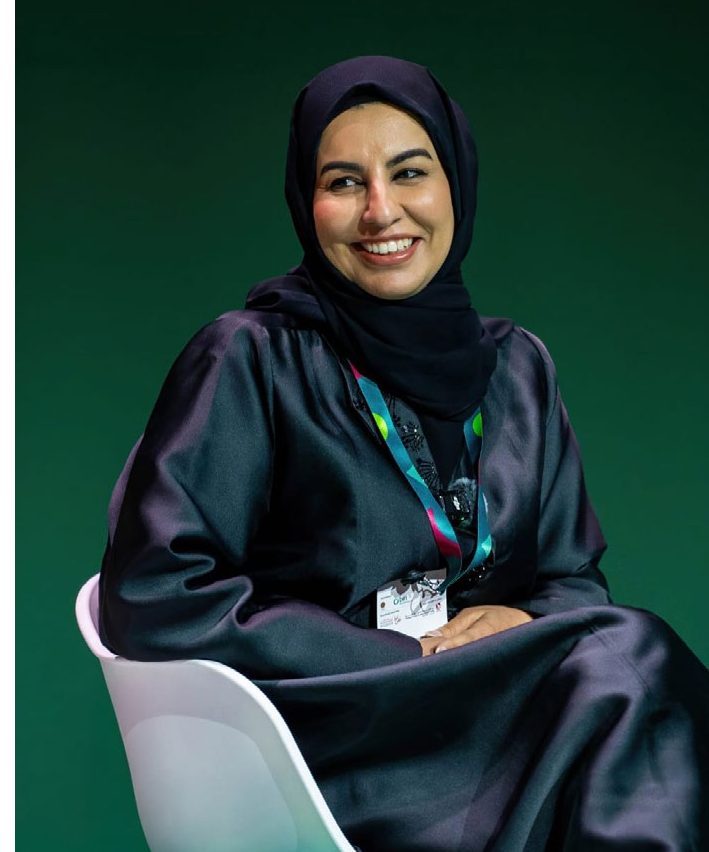
One of the moments that stays with me is from the years of preparation leading up to the FIFA World Cup 2022. As part of our Digital Agenda, we oversaw the Real-Time Crowd and Transport Management solution on the TASMU (Smart Qatar) Program. But more than the technology, what truly mattered was the outcome: delivering a world-class fan experience.

Most people didn’t even notice it, and that was the goal. They simply boarded a metro, found a bus, and moved seamlessly from airport to hotel to stadium. Behind the scenes, we quietly coordinated more than 15 transport partners, leveraging real-time data in a secure and ethical way to ensure safe, smooth, and reliable journeys. For me, it was a reminder that digital transformation is about how people feel on the ground: calm, connected, and cared for. It was one of those moments where I could feel our vision coming to life.

The MCIT TASMU (Smart Qatar) empowers industries in their transformation journeys by developing shared modular digital assets in alignment with the Digital Agenda 2030. What can you share about it?

High-performance computing is a critical enabler of our digital economy goals. But equally important is the creation of a unified digital platform that helps ministries, businesses, and communities solve real-world problems using real-time data. This infrastructure is cloud-based and equipped with advanced capabilities. By enabling organizations to connect, collaborate, and deliver services more efficiently, we are fostering a culture of innovation and impact.

“Technology is no longer perceived as distant or abstract; it has become something that people are shaping, building, and using with confidence.”



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Some of the most inspiring moments have come when government entities start sharing data, aligning their goals and solving problems together. Watching that collaborative shift happen in real-time has been incredibly rewarding. Looking ahead, I envision the TASMU program becoming a global model for people-first digital ecosystems worldwide, positioning Qatar as a global leader in human-centered digital transformation.

You completed your EMBA at HEC Paris, Doha in 2016. How has it shaped your leadership in Qatar’s digital transformation efforts?

When I began the HEC EMBA, I brought high levels of technical and government experience. What I gained was the ability to see the bigger picture with fresh perspective. I learned how to lead from the inside out, asking myself not only “What do we need to deliver?” but also “What will this mean for people in five or ten years?” I also became more intentional about building teams that reflect diverse strengths and perspectives.

A defining moment came during the initial leadership module, when I found myself in dialogue with professionals from entirely different industries and cultures. Those conversations pushed me to reflect, not just on what I was saying, but on how I was being understood. I started asking myself: “Am I communicating clearly? Is my message getting across?”. That kind of honest self-reflection was transformative.

“I draw on what I gained at HEC.”

What makes HEC so powerful is the way it brings together a highly curated group of professionals who challenge and complement each other. The classroom work is important, but much of the growth happens outside of it. It happens when you travel and in the various discussions with classmates who inspire you to think differently.

Today, whether I’m collaborating with organizations or mentoring future leaders, I still draw on what I gained at HEC: strategic thinking, empathy, and a deep sense of purpose.

As we mark 15 years of HEC Paris, Doha, what message would you give to the next generation of leaders, especially women, entering the fields of technology, policy and innovation?

Your presence, your voice, and your ideas matter—they shape the future of our country. That journey starts with believing you belong in every room where decisions are made. I learned that impact doesn’t come from waiting, it comes from showing up, participating, and helping to shape the culture around you. The more you engage, the more you open doors for others.

At MCIT, over 60% of our digital industry affairs team are women. And what I’ve found is that when women support each other and hold each other to high standards, it leads to powerful results. There’s a different kind of honesty and ambition that emerges, and it creates space for excellence to thrive.

Any advice for future leaders?

Stay curious. Keep learning. Don’t wait for perfect conditions to lead. Focus on work that makes a difference in your community. Seek out people who lift you up—and be that person for others. Most importantly, lead with values. Innovation will keep evolving. Technologies will come and go. What remains is how you make people feel, the standards you uphold, and the trust you earn.

“HEC Paris has shaped a generation of great Qatari leaders”

From banking to international development, **His Excellency Mr. Fahad bin Hamad Al Sulaiti’s (EMBA 2014)** career has spanned both finance and development. The Director General of Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD) tells us about some lessons he learned during his EMBA at HEC Paris and shares his vision on international development.

You began your career in banking before education and development. Looking back, what were the turning points that shaped your journey to leading QFFD?

H.E. Mr. Fahad bin Hamad Al Sulaiti: I started in banking, often working and studying until 2 or 3 am—an experience that tested my endurance but instilled discipline and resilience. Moving to the Education Above All Foundation (EAA) was a major shift. I transitioned from interest rates to human development, from balance sheets to empowering communities across the globe. At first, it was a challenge. I was surrounded by education experts, while I came from finance. But that financial background proved valuable: it allowed me to think about how to scale our commitments, how to structure financing step by step. During my time at EAA, we mobilized millions, helping children access schools in more than 70 countries. That experience gave me

“I was surrounded by education experts, while I came from from finance.”

the confidence to engage on equal terms with development banks and large donors. My Executive MBA at HEC Paris, Doha was another defining moment. Balancing studies with running a foundation was not easy but it pushed me to lead more effectively under pressure and to embrace innovation and teamwork as central to leadership.

What was it like to juggle an EMBA at HEC Paris with running a foundation?

It was rigorous but transformative. I would sit in a marketing class on branding one day and take the ideas back to my team at the Foundation the next. We were literally building the institution while I was studying how to do it. HEC Paris gave me a great overview of how to manage a large organization through models in marketing, supply chain, procurement, finance, HR, and more.

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Biography

H.E. Mr. Fahad bin Hamad Al Sulaiti first worked at Qatar Foundation, where he was responsible for the finance and administration of a QF-sponsored mega project focused on the aviation and aerospace industry and involving the construction of a ‘city’ on nearly 2,000 hectares of land. He then spent approximately 10 years at Qatar National Bank (QNB) where he implemented OPEX and CAPEX control of some of QNB’s largest overseas operations. After a decade at Qatar National Bank and Qatar Foundation, he became CEO of the Education Above All Foundation (EAA) in 2016. He set up the foundation’s management system and was involved in developing its first strategy plan and three-to-five-year business plan. In 2024, H.E. Mr. Fahad bin Hamad Al Sulaiti became Director General of the Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD), which manages the State of Qatar’s foreign aid and international development activities. He is a former professional tennis player for Qatar, and is still an active sportsman.

How did you like your time at HEC Paris?

The program itself was very flexible. It was less about textbooks and more about exchanging knowledge with peers. I was in the second HEC cohort in Qatar, with classmates from oil and gas, health, education, and the private sector. That diversity enriched the experience and broadened my perspective.

I remember one exercise that had us switch roles: the engineer had to think like a financier, and I had to think like an engineer. That taught me never to box myself in. Today, I push my team to be innovative, to test ideas, even to disagree with me. You cannot lead by focusing solely on the day-to-day. You must keep learning and creating. A company like Apple cannot keep selling iPhone 16s. It must keep reinventing itself.

In this respect, one of the highlights of my EMBA was a cohort visit to innovative factories near Paris, where new lines of products are installed every year. It was very inspiring.

I believe HEC Paris has shaped a generation of great Qatari leaders. The business school has been instrumental in shaping talent in our country.

At QFFD, you are at the center of Qatar’s global development strategy. How do you define the Fund’s mission?

At QFFD, we place people at the heart of Qatar’s global development strategy. Our mission today is guided by Qatar’s National Vision 2030 and aligns closely with the State of Qatar’s international cooperation strategy, which emphasizes sustainable, equitable, and inclusive development worldwide. We recognize that global development challenges are immense, and our role is to help low- and middle-income countries build robust

economic and social systems that enable them to leverage their own resources effectively. Qatar’s own journey informs our approach. Just over half a century ago, Qatar was itself a low-income country, and our rapid development following the discovery of natural gas gives us a unique perspective on what transformative investment can achieve. This experience reinforces our commitment to supporting countries in ways that are sustainable, contextually appropriate, and locally driven. Our focus is on areas where we can make a meaningful and lasting impact: education, healthcare, economic development. These sectors are fundamental to creating resilient communities, unlocking human potential, and ensuring long-term prosperity. Partnership and collaboration are central to everything we do. Guided by the State of Qatar’s international cooperation strategy, we work closely with UN agencies, multilateral development institutions, and banks, among others. But partnership is not just about funding, it is about co-creating solutions, sharing expertise, and ensuring that projects are scalable, replicable, and sustainable. Ultimately, our goal is to enable emerging economies to reach a point where they can rely on their own capacities and thrive independently, leaving a lasting legacy of development that empowers generations to come.

What are QFFD’s top priorities in responding to global challenges such as climate change and the increasing number of regional conflicts?

At QFFD, our priorities in responding to global challenges focus on delivering both immediate relief and long-term sustainable solutions. Conflict remains one of the most pressing challenges. Our region continues to face crises in Yemen, Palestine, and Syria, as well as in neighboring countries such as Sudan, while our work also extends to contexts like Bangladesh and Kenya. Roughly 8% of QFFD’s commitments directly support refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), providing critical access to healthcare, food, and education. In addition, we prioritize climate adaptation and mitigation. Our programs help communities anticipate, prepare for, and respond to climate-related risks by integrating resilient infrastructure and sustainable practices. By combining these approaches, we empower communities to reduce vulnerability, enhance their capacity to adapt to changing environmental conditions, and build long-term resilience, fostering sustainable development for the future.



Energy access is also critically important, as reliable electricity underpins economic growth and overall community well-being. By investing in renewable energy and sustainable infrastructure, we help create the conditions for inclusive growth, enhanced quality of life, and long-term sustainable development.

Can you share a leadership lesson that stayed with you?

When I first set ambitious fundraising targets at EAA, many people said it was impossible: “No one in your country has done that before. You should be cautious.” But we did it. The lesson is clear: bold ambitions attract the resources needed to achieve them. Playing safe achieves very little. Leaders must think beyond the traditional way of doing things.

“When I first set ambitious fundraising targets at EAA, many people said it was impossible... But we did it.”

Looking ahead, what excites you most about leading QFFD?

I’m proud to see our strategies in action, they’re helping shift global perspectives on development, moving the focus from charity to empowerment, resilience, and innovation. That shift is crucial if we want solutions that last. Development faces enormous challenges, especially today. Some countries have reduced their commitments while global needs continue to grow. This pushes us to innovate, rethink traditional approaches, and ensure that every resource we deploy is both highly effective and scalable. For me, the real excitement lies in the opportunity to make a meaningful, positive impact on the world. Change is never easy, but my experience at HEC Paris taught me that it is possible. With focus and determination, anything can be achieved.

“We built our startup in the HEC Paris classroom, not in a garage!”

The Deputy Undersecretary for Economic Affairs at the Ministry of Finance in Qatar, **Dr. Saud Al Attiyah (EMBA 2017)** is also a successful entrepreneur. He embodies a new generation of leaders able to bridge the gap between private innovation and public strategy. He talks about his career, the country’s economic transformation, and its superapp startup Snoonu.

You completed your Executive MBA in Qatar at HEC Paris in 2017. What drew you to the program—and how did it shape your leadership?

Dr. Saud Al Attiyah: I spent eight years in the military, working on issues like economic crime. It was a highly structured environment where orders are followed without much room for debate or independent thinking. That experience taught me discipline and accountability, but over time I felt a growing need to expand my perspective. In 2011, I joined the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy to work on the preparations for the 2022 World Cup. It was a completely different environment—fast-paced, collaborative, and business-oriented. I struggled at first, especially with the new language of business and the shift in culture, having worked mostly in Arabic and in rigid hierarchies. In 2015, I transitioned to the Ministry of Economy and

Commerce (now the Ministry of Industry and Commerce), and the need to build my business knowledge became even more apparent. What truly motivated me to apply to HEC Paris was my wife—she had joined the program and kept encouraging me to take that step as well. It turned out to be a turning point in my life and career. At HEC Paris, I went from a comfortable environment to one that pushed me beyond my limits—surrounded by people from different cultures, speaking a new business language, and engaging with global case studies. I realized that leadership isn’t just based on experience; it’s something you can learn, refine, and apply across sectors. The program gave me not just the academic foundation in strategy, leadership, and finance, but also the confidence to act—whether in government or in business. It fundamentally transformed how I think, communicate, and lead.

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That confidence led to Snoonu, now one of Qatar’s most successful startups. How did the idea take shape?

It started as a capstone project at HEC Paris with my co-founder Hamad Al-Hajri (EMBA 2017). I had seen the rise of delivery apps like Jinn in London (went bankrupt later on) and wanted to create something tailored to Qatar. It was the beginning of the delivery boom with Deliveroo, UberEats, etc. HEC Paris encouraged us to go beyond theory. We developed a real business model, used Red Ocean vs Blue Ocean strategy, did feasibility studies... and got the top grade in our cohort, A+. Google started in a garage, we started in a classroom! I recently met the deans of HEC Paris in Jouy-en-Josas and Doha. I told them how important it is that capstone projects address real market needs.

What does Snoonu mean?

It is a small, fast bird moving from one tree to the other—a perfect symbol of our activity: rapid, point-to-point delivery. Today, Snoonu has evolved into a leading super-app in Qatar, offering services including delivery, ticketing, laundry, and more. It has become one of the country’s most successful startups, with three fundraising rounds and a valuation of \$300 million from both Qatari and international investors, including Qatar Development Bank. Most recently, Saudi Arabia’s Jahez Group—a publicly listed company—acquired a 75% stake in Snoonu, alongside closing our Series C round with a new \$75 million investment. This milestone marks a new era of regional expansion and innovation. Foreign investors continue to show strong interest, and we are attracting top global talent, including former professionals from Grab, Rappi, and leading institutions such as Carnegie Mellon University.

“It gave me a private-sector mindset: how to build, deliver, and focus on outcomes.”

How has your entrepreneurial journey shaped your work in government?

It gave me a private-sector mindset: how to build, how to deliver, how to stay focused on outcomes. In 2018–2019, I spearheaded the development of Qatar’s Public-Private Partnership (PPP) framework. We benchmarked models like the one in Sydney, Australia, then built our own law approved by His Highness the Emir, which gives companies confidence to invest long-term. Our first PPP schools were a success: the private sector builds and maintains, and we lease for 25 years. It’s better fiscal planning for the state, and more predictability for investors. We’re now applying this to healthcare and other sectors as well.

Qatar’s economic model has undergone major transitions over the past two decades. How would you describe the trajectory?

Qatar is an oil and gas nation at its core, and naturally, we’ve faced the volatility that comes with commodity-based economies. That’s why in 2008, under the leadership of H.H. The Emir Father, Qatar launched the National Vision for 2030, one priority being economic diversification.

We’ve followed a National Development Strategy (NDS) in 3 phases.

- From 2011 to 2016 (NDS1), the focus was on building national champions who could anchor the economy, like Qatar Airways, QIA, and Qatar Energy.
- 2017 to 2022 (NDS2) was about infrastructure. Today, our ports, airports, and metro systems are among the best globally.
- Now, from 2023 to 2030 (NDS3), the emphasis is on empowering the private sector, attracting talent, and shifting to a leaner, more regulatory state.

I’m proud to be part of that evolution. It’s not just about managing resources—it’s about building systems, institutions, and confidence long term.

You’ve also deepened Qatar’s partnerships with international institutions like the IMF and World Bank. But as an oil & gas-rich country, you didn’t really need funds...

Exactly. Qatar is a member and governor in most major multilateral institutions—including the World Bank, the IMF, the Islamic Development Bank, and others. Given our strong financial position, our relationship with these organizations has never been driven by financial need. When I joined the Ministry of Finance, I saw an opportunity to better utilize these partnerships to support global development and policy innovation. With the World Bank, for example, we’re supporting energy infrastructure projects in Syria. Through the IMF, Qatar has pledged contributions to both the Poverty Reduction



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and Growth Trust (PRGT) and the Resilience and Sustainability Trust (RST), leveraging our Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) to support vulnerable economies. We’ve also partnered with the Islamic Development Bank on a \$100-million “Education for All” initiative. These strategic engagements reflect our commitment to global solidarity and our determination to make a meaningful impact beyond our borders.

Since becoming Deputy Undersecretary for Economic Affairs, what has been the most complex policy or challenging issue you’ve had to address—and how did you navigate it?

One key challenge is navigating global economic uncertainty. We’ve had to respond to external shocks. During COVID-19, our healthcare system proved resilient, and we managed to maintain economic stability. Then came the aggressive interest rate hikes by the U.S. Federal Reserve, which could have disrupted our economy. In response, we worked closely with Qatar’s Central Bank to ensure that fiscal, economic, and monetary policies were aligned—bringing together all stakeholders to maintain stability. More recently, we’ve faced geopolitical tensions and regional conflicts that further test our ability to remain agile and proactive.

Looking back at your career, what are you most proud of?

I will mention four things. First, Snoonu proved that ideas born in a classroom can scale nationally. Second, the PPP law changed the way the government thinks about public services. Third, my role in the World Cup legacy framework—we built

“If you join HEC Paris, use the experience to build something meaningful. The world doesn’t need more titles, it needs more action.”

assets not just for one month but for lasting utilization. And finally, my team- where I have helped people grow. Some of them now hold higher positions than mine in the government. I have pushed them and I’m happy for them.

What’s next for you and for Snoonu?

After Snoonu’s recent acquisition by Jahez Group, I made a full exit and stepped down as Chairman of the Board. It was the right time—the company is entering a new phase of growth, and I’m proud of what we built. With the experience I’ve gained from founding and scaling Snoonu, I’m now exploring the idea of launching a venture capital fund. I want to support the next generation of founders in the region—not just with capital, but with mentorship, network access, and real operational insight. There’s a growing ecosystem in Qatar and the wider GCC, and I believe there’s huge untapped potential to build the region’s next success stories. Personally, I’m enjoying my role at the Ministry of Finance. Every day is an opportunity to contribute to the country’s economic vision. That keeps me energized.

What advice would you give young professionals in Qatar?

My humble recommendation: don’t work just for a paycheck. Think about legacy: what impact will you leave on your family, your community, your country? If you join HEC Paris, don’t stop at the diploma. It is not just an achievement on your wall or CV. Use the experience to build something meaningful: a startup, a new initiative, a policy breakthrough. The world doesn’t need more titles—it needs more action.

“Investing in people delivers the highest returns”

After shaping HR strategy at Qatar Foundation, **Hamad Faraj Dalmouk (EMBA 2023)** is now working to boost the national job market thanks to digital innovation. He explains how his team is contributing to Qatar National Vision 2030 by attracting innovative, diverse talent from around the world.

You were just named Assistant Undersecretary for Migrant Labor Affairs. How has your HEC Paris education shaped your approach to this complex policy area, and what strategic frameworks from your EMBA program are you applying in your new role?

Hamad Faraj Dalmouk: The EMBA at HEC Paris gave me the tools to think strategically. I often use the strategy-as-practice model, which focuses on practical execution and growing stakeholder collaboration, essential when working across sectors. I also rely on change leadership principles to guide reforms that affect both employers and employees. The program at HEC Paris strengthened my understanding of systems thinking, enhancing my ability to develop policies that are sustainable and aligned with national priorities.

The Ministry of Labour recently launched the Ouqoul platform to facilitate employment for expat graduates. What does it consist of, and what are your expectations for the program?

Ouqoul is a digital matchmaking platform that connects expat university graduates from Qatar or universities in Qatar with suitable job opportunities in our local labor market. The aim is to bridge the gap between talent supply and demand, streamline onboarding processes, and reduce under-employment. I envision Ouqoul becoming a cornerstone of our labor market strategy, ensuring fair, transparent, and skill-based recruitment for all parties. We are starting with a phased rollout, first engaging with universities in Qatar. Soon, the platform will be accessible for everyone, including students and alumni, as well as university student affairs.

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You are passionate about human capital and HR. What personally drew you to this field?

I believe human capital is the engine of any thriving society. I remember one of the leaders I worked with back when I started my career. He highlighted that HR was the heart of the organization. That resonated deeply—investing in people, whether through education, training, or workplace dignity, delivers the highest returns. At that point in my career, I was inspired by the direct impact that sound HR practices can have on institutional success and national development. The passion grew over time and has guided my work across public and nonprofit sectors.

As an HEC Paris alumnus now in senior government service, what advice would you give current HEC participants about leveraging their education for public service impact?

Be bold in applying what you learn. The HEC Paris experience gives you more than just technical skills—it instills a leadership mindset. I’ve learned so much from the HEC Paris network. I remember one colleague, who graduated from HEC Paris, telling me how amazing the network is—and it’s true. Then there are the interdisciplinary tools. HEC Paris offers a unique experience that enables us to contribute meaningfully and impactfully to our communities.

As Executive Director of Human Capital at Qatar Foundation, you launched the Reyada initiative in partnership with HEC Paris to groom future leaders. How did your own HEC experience inspire this collaboration?

Reyada means ‘leadership’ in Arabic. This program was designed for Qatar Foundation employees, offering a tailored leadership program in partnership with HEC Paris. The goal is to help them become confident and purpose-driven leaders capable of making a meaningful impact on their organization and beyond. Before enrolling in my EMBA in Doha, I participated in a similar leadership program with HEC Paris. It was a transformative experience. I experienced the value of group challenges, peer coaching, and real-world projects. My time with HEC Paris changed how I see leadership, not just as a theory but as a practice grounded in self-awareness, experiential learning and cross-sector collaboration.

What long-term impact do you hope Reyada will have on Qatar’s future leadership?

I hope it will strengthen the national pipeline of

“I remember one colleague telling me how amazing the network is...”

value-driven leaders who can navigate complexity, champion collaboration, and contribute to Qatar’s strategic direction.

How do you see the HEC Paris, Doha network contributing to Qatar’s National Vision 2030 in terms of human capital development?

The HEC Paris, Doha network brings together leaders from different sectors, including government, industry, education, and entrepreneurship. This diversity creates a powerful platform for sharing knowledge, mentoring talent, and driving innovation. The network plays a vital role in advancing human capital by supporting leadership development, promoting collaboration, and cultivating a culture of lifelong learning. It benefits not only Qataris but also expatriates who come here to learn and contribute meaningfully.

What kind of impact are you most proud of since completing your EMBA?

I usually ask this question in interviews—so thank you for asking me! I spent 13 years at Qatar Foundation. I remember the many achievements we reached, together with the leadership. Despite challenges, including the 2020 pandemic, we designed progressive HR policies that other organizations later looked to as best practices. I am especially proud of the strong team we have built over the years. We worked as one family in the Human Capital team at Qatar Foundation. Building a resilient, motivated team is one of my greatest achievements.

What is the next step for you?

For now, my focus is on contributing meaningfully to the Ministry of Labor and its objectives, as well as Qatar’s Third National Development Strategy (NDS3), where several of the Ministry’s priorities are aligned within NDS3. I am honored to play a role in advancing these shared goals. On a personal level, I am considering further studies—possibly a PhD. I am interested in exploring new areas, not necessarily tied to human capital, as part of my lifelong learning journey and my commitment to national development.

One last word to the HEC Paris community?

I am proud to be part of the HEC Paris community. It is great to be a part of a community, both here in Doha and worldwide. This global community offers incredible opportunities for connection, knowledge exchange and growth.

“It is great to be a part of a community both here in Doha and worldwide.”



Biography

- Executive MBA 2023
- Currently serves as the Assistant Undersecretary for Migrant Labor Affairs at the Ministry of Labour in the State of Qatar
- 15+ years of professional experience, including his previous role as Executive Director of Human Resources at Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development, where he led several strategic functions including Recruitment, Workforce and Compensation and Benefits
- Began his career in the energy industry, first with Qatar Petroleum, then with Oryx GTL, where he held various roles in Human Resources

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REAL ESTATE

Eng. Ali Al Kuwari (EMBA 2015)

In Doha, where temperatures in summer regularly climb above 45°C, building for comfort—and the future—is no small feat. But for Eng. Ali Al Kuwari, CEO of Msheireb Properties, it's more than a necessity, it's a mission.

“Back in 2008, nobody in the region was talking about sustainability,” he says. “We were probably the first company to integrate these elements across all our developments.”

A subsidiary of Qatar Foundation, Msheireb Properties launched in 2008 with a bold ambition to regenerate the city's historic core as a liveable, walkable, smart downtown. “It was challenging to educate the market,” says Al Kuwari, who recently marked 17 years with the company, “but now we see how it's adding value and attracting tenants.”

Their designs respond to Qatar's unique geography and climate. “We take advantage of the sunrise and sunset, capture the north wind, and install over 1,400 panels across the development.” These features cut power consumption by 25 to 30 percent.

In the heart of Doha, Msheireb Downtown blends tradition with innovation. “We asked ourselves: ‘What if we continued designing in our own way, improving on traditional features?’ The result looks like an old building with modern touches.”

For inspiration, the leadership team embarked on a global research mission, visiting dynamic mixed-use districts from Solidere in Beirut to Times Square in New York, San Marco in Venice, and—somewhat presciently—Paris. Though not initially built for HEC Paris, one of Msheireb's buildings now houses the business school's Doha campus. “It's a great location, close to all the amenities and features. It was an excellent decision made three years ago. We're planning to expand because of demand.”

“It shifted the way I manage day to day.”

Al Kuwari earned his HEC Paris Executive MBA in 2014-15. “It was a very good class. The networking was the most important part. I'm still in touch with most of the students.” He chose HEC Paris for its “reputation and outcome,” adding, “it shifted the way I manage on a day-to-day basis.”

Courses on leadership and branding proved especially valuable in repositioning Msheireb Downtown, locally and internationally. The site served as the FIFA media center for the 2022 World Cup, showcasing the development to a global audience, aligned with its brand identity.

Asked whether an MBA is still relevant today, he answered unequivocally: “Yes. Things are changing, but the benefit is exposure and interaction with professionals. The key is to stick to the vision and have the right team to take it from concept to reality.”

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PUBLIC HEALTH

Sheikh Dr. Mohammed bin Hamad Al-Thani (EMBA 2014)



Sheikh Dr. Mohammed bin Hamad Al-Thani, as Qatar's Director of Non-Communicable Diseases Prevention Programs, was at the forefront of the nation's public health strategy during the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. His leadership in uncertain times, aligning key decision-makers and maintaining economic stability, was shaped by his medical background and by the strategic insight developed at HEC Paris.

He often recalls the impactful HEC Paris motto: “The more you know, the more you dare.” This mindset allowed him to align resources with leadership insight to weigh options throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.” He credits negotiation and decision-making strategies acquired through his studies with enabling him to manage these complex issues effectively. “You have to evaluate opinions carefully and then make the right decision. It's science,” he notes.

Dr. Al-Thani's career is deeply rooted in his passion for community medicine, where “Protecting health, saving lives, millions at a time,” is a core belief. This drew him to public health, especially interventions that address problems at their source. By focusing on upstream solutions, he believes it's possible to resolve multiple issues at once.

This systems-thinking perspective led him to further his education at HEC Paris, Doha. Having first studied medicine, then public health, Dr. Al-Thani saw HEC Paris as a new stage of personal and professional growth providing him with a greater understanding of how the world operates. “Without strong business models, health systems risk being

controlled by limitations rather than guided by vision. Business models matter. I remember the phrase ‘cash is king’. If you have cash, you can solve many problems. Promotion, marketing, leadership, these are all connected to saving lives,” he explains.

The HEC Paris program strengthened his strategic skills and self-assurance. Courses in leadership, finance, accounting, and marketing proved invaluable, especially during the pandemic. Dr. Al-Thani emphasizes the importance of investing in marketing, noting that it helps reach more people and should be seen as an investment in public health, rather than simply an expense.

Sports are also central to his approach to disease prevention. As one of the key figures behind Qatar's sport and health diplomacy initiatives, Dr. Al-Thani sees major events like the FIFA World Cup as powerful tools to encourage healthy habits. “We were promoting health during the World Cup. Sport is about enjoyment. It reminds people to stay healthy. Now people are practising sports they never played before, just to keep themselves in shape,” he observes.

Qatar's progress is tangible: morbid obesity has declined from 9% to 5%, a 4-point drop, nearly a 45% reduction, and the nation is targeting a life expectancy of 82.6 years by 2030, placing it alongside global leaders such as Korea and Japan. Ultimately, Dr. Al-Thani believes that learning is a lifelong journey. “Once you are HEC Paris, you are always HEC Paris,” he says. For him, the true goal extends beyond building successful enterprises. It's about changing the world through business.

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Creating cities to live, connect, and thrive

An alumnus of 2013, **Yasser Al Jaidah (EMBA 2013)** had decades of experience in Qatar’s energy, infrastructure, and utilities sectors before taking the helm at United Development Company—synonymous with The Pearl Island, Qatar’s iconic waterfront—earlier this year.



You completed your EMBA with HEC Paris in 2013. How has it shaped your leadership and strategic thinking?
In 2013, while managing large-scale energy operations, I pursued the HEC Paris EMBA (Shanghai track) to elevate my strategic thinking beyond technical and operational depth. Based in South Korea at the time, I leveraged HEC Paris’s mobility program to take modules across continents, Paris and Doha among them, gaining on-the-ground perspective across Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. The program’s global lens and academic rigor sharpened my ability to think critically, lead with empathy and accountability, and make decisions amid complexity and ambiguity.

What were some of the pivotal moments in your career toward becoming President and CEO of UDC?
Two inflection points stand out. First, leading Qatar Cool through a decade-long transformation from a technically driven operator to a strategy-led, sustainability-aligned enterprise. The leadership challenge was to sequence deep organizational restructuring, reset decision rights, and integrate acquisitions without compromising reliability or capital discipline. Second, steering South Hook LNG (which provided the UK with 25% of its natural gas needs) across complex, cross-border operating and regulatory environments. In both cases, my EMBA proved decisive.

UDC’s developments, like The Pearl Island, are about more than real estate; they shape lifestyle, culture, and identity. How do you ensure these projects align with Qatar’s broader development goals?
At UDC, we start from a simple premise: city-making is about people—how they live, connect, and thrive, and our role is to translate that into places that are inclusive, future-ready, and firmly aligned with Qatar National Vision 2030. On The Pearl Island and Gewan Island, this means mobility choices that privilege pedestrians and low-emission transport, public spaces that welcome families and all ages, and a curated retail and cultural mix that gives local entrepreneurs room to grow while preserving Qatari identity.

How is UDC positioning itself to stay ahead of trends, and what future opportunities excite you most?
UDC is focused on leading Qatar’s shift toward smarter, more sustainable living. We are investing in smart technologies, green infrastructure, and data-driven planning to ensure our developments are future-ready. From AI and IoT integration for efficient energy and mobility to enhancing quality of life through smarter services, we are building communities designed for both sustainability and human well-being. What excites me most is shaping a future where innovation truly serves people. As Qatar evolves, UDC will continue to lead with purpose and vision.

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DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Eng. Fawaz Alrabeh (EMBA 2023)



As CEO of Saudi Arabia’s National Transformation Program (NTP), Fawaz Alrabeh holds a pivotal role in implementing Vision 2030—Saudi Arabia’s ambitious reform blueprint. “Vision 2030 is built around three pillars: an ambitious nation, a thriving economy, and a vibrant society,” he explains. “To achieve these, the plan was broken down into 96 strategic objectives—NTP owns 34 of them.”

These objectives span everything from digital transformation and government efficiency to labor market reform and enabling the nonprofit sector. Under his leadership, the NTP has delivered striking progress, particularly in digital economy development, where infrastructure, human capital, and entrepreneurship are key. “Today, 100% of Saudi Arabia has internet access, 99% is covered with 4G, and most cities are served by 5G. Average Internet speeds have increased from 9 Mbps in 2017 to over 200 today,” he says.

This infrastructure underpins fully digitized public services. “More than 97% of government services can now be accessed on a mobile phone,” he adds, noting that this shift has saved over 88 million in-person trips annually in the justice sector alone. Meanwhile, platforms for freelance and remote work issued more than half a million contracts in 2024. Empowering women has been another major success. “When we began, women’s workforce participation was 17%. Our Vision 2030 target was 30%. Today, we’re at 35%,” he says proudly. Programs like Wusool (transportation subsidies) and Qurrah (daycare

support) have reached more than 180,000 women in 2024. “We’re trying to do the right thing, even if we don’t market it as well as we should.”

An HEC Paris Executive MBA alumnus, Alrabeh credits his time at the business school as “one of the best decisions I ever made”. He opted for HEC Paris for its ranking, alumni network, and value. “I am the exact same person,” he says with a smile, “but if you ask my wife, my colleagues, my former boss, they all say I’m different. That tells you something.”

He cites three enduring takeaways from the EMBA: knowledge, confidence, and network. “It distilled the essence of every business field,” he explains. “In marketing, for example, I learned to spot when the customer isn’t at the center of a communication plan. That insight directly impacted how we revised a campaign at the NTP.”

Confidence came from realizing that he was already applying many best practices. “That gives you a strong sense of assurance,” he says. “And the alumni—lifelong friends—are a huge part of the experience.”

Looking ahead, Alrabeh believes HEC Paris has a vital role in shaping leadership across the Gulf. “When I joined, there were maybe 20 alumni in Saudi Arabia. Today, there are more than 300—working across government, private sector, and nonprofits. As for NTP’s ambitious program? “2030 is only the beginning, and our ambitions extend well beyond.”

“More than 97% of government services can now be accessed on a mobile phone.”

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Dr. Abdulla Al Mehshadi (EMBA 2014)

Great leaders are remembered not only for the projects they deliver, but for the people they inspire. Over his career, Dr. Abdulla Al Mehshadi has been privileged to lead transformative developments—from the revitalization of Souq Waqif and the construction of the largest melamine plant in the Middle East to Msheireb Downtown Doha, one of the world's most ambitious urban regeneration projects. He has also managed the maintenance of QAFCO's Ammonia, Urea, and Melamine production facilities, served as Managing Director of the Private Engineering Office, and led Al Wa'ab City as CEO. His journey took him from Qatar to Germany, Italy, Switzerland, France, Japan, India, Spain, and the UK—each experience shaping his perspective on leadership.

But he was also keenly aware many young professionals in Qatar had only limited access to such international exposure. "That's why mentoring has become a personal mission," he explains. "Over the years, I've mentored around 50 individuals, often seeing myself as an older brother to students and young professionals." Qatar today is evolving rapidly, with tourism, hospitality, technology, and sustainability reshaping our economy. Dr. Al Mehshadi sees a need for leaders who can take responsibility early, adapt quickly, and think globally while acting locally.

For the past 12 years, he has been an active member of the Qatar Society of Engineers, engaging with peers from around the world. And he has seen firsthand how Qatar's unique climate, culture, and pace of development demand localized solutions: "What works in Paris or Berlin may not succeed in Doha."

His return to the classroom came at 43, finding himself the oldest among his EMBA cohort at HEC Paris, Doha. "It was humbling to sit next to classmates in their thirties and be tested in new ways. That experience rekindled my love for learning and taught me the value of creating safe spaces for open dialogue. In many traditional cultures, the belief that 'the boss is always right' can stifle innovation; I learned that real growth often comes from the unexpected, challenging question."

These days as CEO he puts those lessons into practice. Every two months, his company hosts open forums where team members can raise concerns, share ideas, or challenge assumptions in a respectful environment—knowing they will be heard and taken seriously. "I've also learned to moderate my strong presence to foster more inclusive discussions, ensuring all voices are heard."

"Mentoring has become a personal mission."

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Sheikha Dr. Athba bint Thamer Al Thani (EMBA 2014)



As a consultant to the Minister's office at Qatar's Ministry of Labour, Sheikha Dr. Athba bint Thamer Al Thani works at the intersection of policy, strategy, and public service. A former construction executive, she led major projects with French and international firms and was among the first national women appointed to senior positions in the private sector. Today, her work contributes to shaping workforce development as Qatar advances toward a diversified, knowledge-based economy.

"At the end of 2012, I was in the construction industry and had just been promoted from Director of Sustainable Development to Chief Support Services Officer. I needed to strengthen my knowledge in finance and strategy—so I joined the Executive MBA," she recalls. "It was also about the network: learning alongside highly qualified peers and being exposed to world-class professors."

Her doctoral research later became the basis of her book, *Qatarization: Factors, Challenges, and Recommendations*. "Nationalization in the private sector was my area of expertise. Back in 2010, it was rare to see nationals—especially females—working in this space, but I was tasked with appointing them in a French-led company. That experience encouraged me to study the issue in depth and find ways to motivate nationals to consider private-sector opportunities."

"Once I completed my doctorate, I felt it was important to share the work with the state rather than keep it to myself. At the time, finding comprehensive and relevant studies on private-

sector nationalization was challenging, so I hoped my research could provide a useful addition for those wishing to explore the topic further."

In her current role, Dr. Athba focuses on translating insights into practice. "We must equip nationals with the skills and training needed to thrive in the private sector. As privatization accelerates, we need approaches where appointing nationals is not only socially important but also beneficial for companies."

"Qatar cannot be compared to any other country."

She believes education and open-mindedness are reshaping cultural dynamics. "Qatar cannot be compared to any other country—we have unique characteristics. Nearly 80 percent of the population is expatriates, yet we have advanced tremendously, thanks to the universities and initiatives of Qatar Foundation. Clearly, HEC Paris, Doha has been at the forefront of developing the human capabilities that fuel Qatar's development."

That commitment to people also earned her the National Human Rights Authority Award in 2013 for her work with migrant communities. "I would meet laborers on construction sites, speak to them in Hindi, check on their well-being, even their meals. Receiving the award was meaningful—and encouraged others to value these efforts."

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“Evolution, endurance, and learning the oud”

When **Faisal Mansour Sarkhou (EMBA 2013)** planned to pursue an Executive MBA at HEC Paris, Doha, it was challenging to convince his CEO. “Unlike today, many leaders didn’t fully recognize the benefits an Executive MBA could bring to a company. For me, it was an opportunity to deepen my knowledge and further shape my career path, and I was committed to pursuing it with my own time, effort, and resources,” Faisal said. Within one year, he was acting CEO of Kamco Invest and has since led the firm through transformation, expansion, and a dynamic regional investment landscape.

You were promoted to CEO while studying your Executive MBA. How did you manage both?

Mr. Faisal Mansour Sarkhou: One reason I chose this EMBA was that I measured the time commitment compared to other reputable programs. I looked at LBS, Insead, and HEC Paris. At the time, it was six days a month—plus assignments and projects. I was able to cut down on my leisure and social life to a certain extent, but I kept the same amount of time dedicated to work. I just spent all my remaining time studying and working on assignments. I made a conscious decision to use case studies from the company whenever I had projects to complete. For example, although I didn’t oversee HR, if there was an HR module I’d structure something related to the company—such as looking at incentive schemes and exploring how they could change.

“One reason I chose this EMBA was that I measured the time commitment compared to other reputable programs.”

Was that immediately useful at work?

Yes. One thing I took away was how to transform a business culture into a more collaborative one—a culture of ‘We’re all in it together’. As a CEO, you have access to HR, coaching, and other tools—town hall meetings, things that were not done before—that I introduced to the company. I was able to bring people together, enhance reporting, and improve coordination.

Was there a module that reshaped your perspective?

The EMBA acts like a consultant—it changes how you think. You may want to be equitable, but then you see examples of both failure and success. And then you say, okay, I genuinely want to be equitable, but now I have more tools, more ideas, and more suggestions.

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“The EMBA acts like a consultant... it changes how you think.”

There’s a saying about consultants—“They borrow your watch to help you read the time more clearly.” No one knows your business more than you do, supposedly. But the EMBA helped me apply that knowledge in a more structured way.

You mentioned entrepreneurship was a key takeaway—why?

I learned how to create something new while still being busy with day-to-day work. If you go to a manager and say, ‘We need a new product,’ but you don’t approach the situation in the right way, it will prolong the process because they’re already busy with other work. So how do you create something new—not with the same people, but as an offshoot of what you’re doing?

You were one of the early EMBA graduates in the region. What was that like?

It was probably a learning curve for all, even the university. At the time, we were in a more multinational, multiverse world. I could choose to go to Russia, France, or China.

And you did your entrepreneurship module in China?

Yes, it was between France and China. It was one of the biggest modules in the program.

What kind of network did HEC Paris give you access to?

I met people from across the GCC, expats working in the region, and encountered international ideas. You combine what you learn with what you know—and with who you know.

Let’s talk about AI. Has your executive education helped you adopt AI more effectively at Kamco Invest?

I believe so. Education gives you a way of thinking. When you get educated, you start to think within the framework of the module. Having completed the EMBA gave me more tools and a new way of thinking. Part of that is thinking about innovation. When AI came out, you had to ask—even if you’re not an expert in technology—how could it impact your business and what is the adoption rate? You can’t force people to use ChatGPT. You have to influence them. So, I’ll give you an example: whenever people come to hire, the first question I ask them is, ‘Have you explored using AI for such tasks? And how are you integrating that into teams?’

We’re the only company in Kuwait with a dedicated sell-side research team. While some competitors see it as a cost, I see it as a platform for thought leadership, a driver of market transparency, and a core pillar of our Corporate Social Responsibility. Now, with technology, someone may come and say, ‘You don’t need these people,’ so now you have to come back to your team and figure out how to do more with what you have. With AI, instead of producing five reports, you can produce 20. It won’t give you everything, but it can give you 70 percent, and you add the remaining 30 percent. You review it, you change it, you put your identity into it. I’m not losing the people, I’m not firing them. I’m motivating them to expand their capabilities with the modern tools they have access to today.

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What advice would you give to future MBA candidates?

My first piece of advice is, if you’re in doubt, go for it. Do it for yourself. Because at the end of the day, it’s going to help you grow. Make sure you have your support network in place—your partner, your family, your friends—because you will need their support, it requires a significant amount of effort and time. And be ready to make some sacrifices.

And 15 years later, what keeps you connected to HEC Paris?

The Qatar Foundation and the individuals behind it... I’ve been a part of that HEC Paris family for years now—interacting with them in different ways. I’ve been part of some of the sessions as an attendee, and sometimes as a part-lecturer. I’ve brought in new students to the program—maybe at least four or five people joined the program following my recommendation.

“ My first piece of advice is, if you’re in doubt, go for it. Do it for yourself. Because at the end of the day it’s going to help you grow.”

I’ve contributed to sessions. I’ve also been a part of reunions in Qatar and Saudi Arabia. I’m part of several WhatsApp groups and the chapter in Kuwait. When alumni travel to different countries, connecting with members from other chapters can be a rewarding way to expand their network and exchange experiences.

Do you have time for any hobbies?

Well, recently I tried learning the oud, which is a Middle Eastern instrument similar to a guitar. Another of my hobbies is cars—it’s an expensive one. I was hoping to learn how to fix cars, but these days, with the changes in technology, it’s no longer mechanical; it’s more electrical. As a human, you need to use your hands. You need to use your brain. Technology is part of life now, but we still need manual hobbies.

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ENG. ABDULAZIZ ALI AL MAWLAWI (SBUM 2014)

“Creating tourism full of surprises”

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What motivated you to pursue the SBUM program at HEC?

As I began working on Qatar’s FIFA World Cup 2022™ project in 2012, I found myself increasingly encountering complex challenges that demanded more than just technical expertise—they required strategic foresight and leadership agility. That was a pivotal moment for me as I realized I needed to expand my professional capabilities to prepare myself for the next decade on Qatar’s biggest ever national project, the World Cup, and for the future roles I hoped to obtain. HEC Paris, an institution that was already globally renowned for excellence in business and public sector leadership, was the clear and obvious choice to help me grow as a professional.

And how did it impact your journey toward becoming CEO of Visit Qatar?

The HEC program equipped me with essential tools through courses such as Global and Competition Dynamics, Performance Management, Leadership and Execution, and Strategic Planning. These have been invaluable in scenario planning, global benchmarking, and shaping Qatar’s competitive positioning as a leading tourism hub both regionally and internationally. It came at the right time as I prepared to take on transformative roles, and ultimately helped pave the way to my current position as Chief Executive Officer of Visit Qatar, where I lead efforts to shape the nation’s tourism strategy on the local, regional, and global stage.

What does success look like for you, in the kind of change or legacy you hope to leave in Visit Qatar’s story?

For me, success goes beyond visitor numbers—it is about creating a lasting impact, a feeling of national pride, and increasing the country’s global reputation around the world as a vibrant destination for every type of visitor. I envision Visit Qatar as a catalyst for accessible, inclusive, and people-centred tourism that reflects that pride and helps further elevate our reputation. It is about shifting perceptions and positioning Qatar as a destination that delivers both excellence and authentic experience.

How has your ‘Surprise Yourself’ campaign helped reposition Qatar globally as an authentic, family-friendly destination?

The Surprise Yourself campaign played a pivotal role in repositioning Qatar as a destination where tradition meets discovery. The campaign reached over 414 million people in 10 markets across the world. The campaign highlighted the unexpected side of Qatar, from family-friendly adventures and

cultural landmarks to modern hospitality and year-round sunshine. Market-specific activations, such as collaborations with UEFA and cultural events across Europe and Asia have also allowed us to localize our message while remaining authentic to who we are.

Qatar is now a hub for sports and MICE tourism. How do you ensure these headline events drive long-term, sustainable gains for the tourism sector?

Sports and MICE are central pillars of Visit Qatar’s tourism strategy, second only to leisure in driving long-term sector growth. Hosting global events themselves isn’t the end goal—it is part of our long-term strategic approach to boost tourism, attract visitors year-round and raise Qatar’s international profile. Infrastructure investments, including sustainable public transportation networks, world-class venues, an award-winning airport and national carrier, and a huge variety of unique hotels and cultural assets, ensure that benefits from headline events extend to the wider tourism and service economy.

You’ve turned layovers into tourism opportunities. How do you see these evolving?

The stopover segment has become an important gateway for destination discovery, offering visitors a curated introduction to Qatar, even during short stays. The initiative is supported by Qatar’s strategic location and exceptional connectivity, with over 177 destinations, travelers also benefit from visa-free entry for citizens from 101 countries. One key lesson is that ease and curation are essential ingredients for a satisfied and potential repeat visitor. Travelers value simplicity that includes clear itineraries, time-efficient experiences, and immediate access to key attractions. Looking ahead, we are evolving the offer towards interest-based stopovers such as cultural immersion, wellness retreats, and family-focused experiences to better align with segmented traveler preferences.

You have spearheaded Qatar’s digital transformation in tourism. How is technology reshaping the traveler experience?

Our digital transformation strategy is anchored in three pillars: intelligent personalisation, data-led optimisation, and the seamless integration of physical and digital experiences. Through our AI Concierge and Trip Planner, visitors plan cultural itineraries, discover live events, and unlock exclusive offers tailored to their preferences. These systems are continuously learning, ensuring relevancy at every touchpoint.



AMY JOHNSON

“Building where others say it’s impossible”

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A member of the HEC Qatar Alumni Advisory Board, **Amy Johnson (EMBA 2016)** is the CEO of A&B Johnson Group. The Canadian-born entrepreneur reflects on her EMBA experience, building homes in remote regions, and why recognition matters most on the hard days.

Why did you pursue an Executive MBA in Qatar at HEC Paris, and how has it shaped your leadership?

In my 30s, I hit a professional plateau. I’d started working at 17, learned everything on the job, and was running a company—but I felt the need for new tools and new ways of thinking. The EMBA gave me space to zoom out, think strategically, and anticipate what’s coming before it hits me. A defining moment was the Entrepreneurship and Innovation module in China. I remember one professor telling me, “Amy, in China, there’s something called ‘good enough.’” That moment shifted how I approached risk and perfectionism. I came back thinking: how can I create something that matters, even if it’s not perfect?

Tell us about a challenge you overcame thanks to your EMBA mindset.

After my EMBA, I had two remote plots of land in the British Virgin Islands and couldn’t find anyone to build affordably. I approached entrepreneurs in the Middle East, Turkey, China, North America, Britain, and Portugal. No one could solve the problem. So, I went back to first principles. What does the world need? Why doesn’t this exist? I ended up designing an Ikea-style house that anyone can assemble without skilled labor. We built a 2-bedroom, 2-bathroom home in 8 weeks using easy-to-assemble steel, with the help of my husband, and three untrained helpers. We included everything: from screws to septic systems. We’re now building smart, sustainable community-ready kits. In a male-dominated industry, that is quite an achievement!

You’ve launched a factory and a housing system—what are you most proud of?

I’m proud that I built something from scratch, with my own money (I invested nearly \$1M). I must tell you, I’m scared every single day, to be honest! Entrepreneurs face many unknowns; they make mistakes before doing things well. I wanted to do something big while making enough money to raise my four kids. I’m also happy that we designed it in Qatar. People think manufacturing has to only happen in China, but Qatar built a country from desert to something spectacular—why not a new

“Empathy and clarity are everything. You quickly learn that assuming is the fastest way to fail.”

way of building? And of course, I’m proud to have created a solution for a global housing issue. I like to say that I have two degrees: one from HEC Paris and one from the Qatar Foundation, where I worked for four years before creating my company. QF helped me think about community and people. Entrepreneurs tend to think about products rather than people who use them.

You’ve worked across Europe, the Middle East, China, Canada, and Africa. What has intercultural leadership taught you?

Empathy and clarity are everything. I’ve spent 21 years in the Middle East, sourcing across continents, and you quickly learn that assuming is the fastest way to fail.

What’s your advice to women in Qatar thinking about an EMBA?

Don’t wait. There’s never a perfect time. I had two children during my EMBA. The program didn’t just grow my career, it reshaped my mindset. I learned to lead with confidence, pivot fast, and sit at any table. And my kids got to be part of it—they came with me on my trips to Paris or China. They were super supportive. They’ve got pieces of my degree!

You’ve been honored as one of Canada’s Top 100 Most Powerful Women and received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Award. What do those recognitions mean to you?

They’re reminders that leadership is about who you empower, not just what you build. On tough days (and there are plenty), I look at that medal and framed articles in my office. Better than leaving them on LinkedIn or in a drawer!

You’ve built teams and products across very different industries. How do you stay innovative?

I start with my own frustration. I couldn’t find a housing solution, so I built one. I noticed gaps in Qatar’s window and door manufacturing market, so I launched a window factory and partnered with a German firm to meet global standards. We’re now one of the only certified Rehau partners in Qatar manufacturing 300 windows on average a month. That venture funds our housing prototype work.



“The program reshaped my mindset.”

FAISAL AL-MUDAHKA

“Adapting your mindset for changing times”

Editor-in-Chief of Qatar’s English-language daily, Gulf Times, **Faisal Al-Mudahka (EMBA 2012)** is steering legacy media through the storms of disruption. A graduate of HEC Paris’s first EMBA cohort in Doha (class of 2012), he reflects on the importance of adaptable intelligence, the impact of HEC Paris’s mindset, and how AI and mobile-first strategies are reshaping journalism in the Gulf.

What motivated you to pursue an Executive MBA with HEC Paris, Doha?

The availability, but also the quality. You invest once in your lifetime in the university, especially for a master’s degree, so you want to be selective. We were also lucky that Qatar Foundation gave us this opportunity as locals.

How did the EMBA experience change your thinking?

My specialty is logistics and supply chain management. For me, the Executive MBA connects the dots. Finance makes sense, then HR makes sense, then sales make sense. They are all connected in an ecosystem that shapes you for the future.

How has the HEC mindset helped you adapt to change in the media industry?

The HEC Paris program gives you analytical thinking—how to solve a problem. When you graduate, you connect the dots. You cannot say, ‘I work alone.’ In modern-day business, everything is connected. If you create good content, you will have many viewers. You need to understand the data, you can analyze that data, and then leverage it.

You’re pioneering a ‘mobile-first’ newsroom. What does that look like?

We have a movement now that we call ‘mobile first’. You produce news that caters to mobile users, not even the website. For example, if you follow the newspaper today, we have a story—Hamas and Israel meeting in Doha. That’s a two-page story. Someone over 40 or 50 will read that because it’s in the newspaper. But on the mobile, it first pulls you in with a picture, then pushes you to the website.

How do you view the role of AI in the newsroom?

AI will not replace people because people understand culture. But AI speeds up the summarizing of articles and reports. With news, there are two things: who produces it, and the speed. Instead of producing 10 or 20 news stories an hour, with AI, you can produce five or six a minute.

What leadership lessons stayed with you from the program?

Leadership is not about looks and a charismatic persona. Leaders in the business world have certain skills, and one of the most important is managing emotion. You can have a lot of emotion, but you still need to make those important, difficult decisions. ‘Emotional intelligence’ (responding to people) is old-fashioned now. The new thinking is ‘adaptable intelligence’ (responding to change), a very important skill for leadership.

Where are the opportunities in Qatar’s media?

There is a huge gap in business reporting and entrepreneurship. If you ask me where I want to take the Gulf Times, I would focus on that area because it’s a playground that has not been touched. Nobody can replicate Al Jazeera, right? Nobody can replicate CNN. So niche media is really the way to go, for example, sports, politics, or business.

What’s your message to the HEC Paris community?

You cannot change your revenue or your income unless you change your mentality. And I think this is what HEC Paris is all about—changing you and making you think outside the box.

COSMETICS

Haneen Alsaify (EMBA 2025)

When Haneen Alsaify first launched her beauty brand, she wasn't coming from fashion school or luxury retail. She was a chemical engineer with published research in petroleum engineering.

After nearly a decade of building her business in Doha, she felt something was missing. "I had experience, but not the education. I didn't know how to manage a team or manage the company."

With the business growing fast, she wanted the confidence to make decisions. "That's why I chose the Executive MBA."

She enrolled at HEC Paris, Doha and used her capstone project to chart a path for regional expansion. "It was about expanding my business across the GCC," she explains. "The project focused on international standards—vegan, sustainable—aligned with our brand ethics and vision."

International electives in Milan and New York offered contrasting but complementary insights. "At Bocconi, it was about heritage, storytelling, craftsmanship. At NYU, it was about customer experience and mass markets. Qataris are influenced by American consumer trends, so that was relevant."

"People share the brand, they love it."

One of her biggest lessons came from a DEI marketing class in New York. While Haneen had always instinctively featured women with different looks in her campaigns—with or without hijabs, some with lip fillers—she now understood the strategic reasoning for diversity, and how this could broaden her market.

Her company, By Haneen Alsaify, has grown far beyond its modest beginnings. "We're in multiple locations in Doha and also operating in Dubai and Saudi. We're stocked in Watsons, which is the second-largest beauty retailer globally. We have over 50 beauty SKUs and 15-20 hijab SKUs. I don't consider us a startup anymore."

From magnetic eyelashes to makeup brushes with travel covers, at the heart of her brand is a deep understanding of what it means to be a woman on the go. "Makeup takes time to apply and is high maintenance. My brand solves this problem."

Despite being a digital native, she has built her brand without paid influencers, focusing instead on community engagement at private events and user-generated content. "It's all organic. We don't pay for marketing or advertisements. People share and promote the brand because they love it."

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FINANCE

Lory Joy Alvarez (EMBA 2024)

In the boardrooms of Doha, Joy Alvarez's rise from accountant to CEO is nothing short of remarkable. Born and educated in the Philippines, she arrived in Qatar in November 2015 with no local contacts, no Arabic language knowledge, but prepared to grow. She took a step down, accepting a role as an accountant after years in managerial positions in Manila, Philippines. Within three months she was promoted to Finance Manager, and two years later became CFO, then Group CEO of Shift Group, a diversified company, and more recently, CEO of Qatar Living, one of Shift's subsidiaries.

In the Gulf's traditionally male-dominated corporate landscape with more than 93% men holding board seats, women remain vastly under-represented in senior leadership. Asian women at the C-level are rarer. "People weren't used to seeing someone like me in these meetings," she shares. "I first needed to break stereotypes, to be seen beyond my gender and nationality."

She graduated in Accountancy in the Philippines and became a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) in 2009 and Certified Management Accountant (CMA) in 2019. She worked across multinational firms, including Henkel, a German multinational chemical and consumer goods company. By the time she relocated to Qatar, she had the educational credentials, though, lacked the local credibility. "I was 28. I knowingly accepted a downgrade from a managerial role in the Philippines because I understood this was a new market, and I was willing to start from square one to recalibrate my skills for a different business environment."

Her role expanded when Shift Group took over a different portfolio of companies, tripling its size in

"Women remain vastly under-represented."

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both business and staff. Promoted to Group CFO in 2018, she changed dimension. "As a CFO, I thought in terms of return on investment, negotiation, risk. But as CEO, I became responsible for people, culture, and public perception. It's a broader responsibility."

That pivotal shift came in 2020 when the then-CEO stepped down abruptly. Joy was asked to take the reins, initially as acting CEO, and the following year, became a full-fledged CEO of the group. She enrolled at the HEC Paris EMBA in Qatar to develop new skills. "The majority of the classes are based on real business cases. It is eye-opening. I also met amazing, inspiring people with strong entrepreneurial spirit," she says. The academic imprimatur of HEC Paris helped in corporate diplomacy. "No need to explain my education, HEC Paris speaks for itself," she smiles. "It is a top school, an Ivy League associate!"

In 2024, Joy took on a second CEO role, this time at Qatar Living, a digital classifieds and community portal founded two decades ago. "Eventually, I am becoming an entrepreneur with ideas guiding many projects simultaneously," she adds. Asked what she is most proud of since completing the EMBA, Joy Alvarez doesn't hesitate: "My resiliency. Skills can be taught. But hunger? That you need to have. Filipinos in this region and market can also take executive roles!"

LOGISTICS

Ali Al Muttawa (EMBA 2021)

When I started out, I wanted to be a millionaire, to be honest,” says Ali Al Muttawa, Chief Executive Officer of Arkan Logistics. “But I think with the studies that I have done, your values flourish and change. Whatever I want to do right now is completely different—driven by different values.”

That shift in mindset defines Al Muttawa’s career trajectory. After launching Oman’s first 100-percent locally owned oilfield services firm, he founded Arkan in 2014, in response to a national shift in port operations from Muscat to Sohar. “We thought, okay, this is a great idea, so let’s start a business,” he says. “We have been expanding ever since.”

Today Arkan operates across Oman, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. “We are only at the beginning,” he says. “I tell the team: we were always thinking of \$1 million, \$5 million. Now we need to think of \$100 million.”

This vision is paired with deep national pride. “I want to be a good example for Omanis,” he says. “Giving back to my country and to my economy, creating jobs and attracting FDI. Since Oman has a great location, we could be the hub that connects all the GCC and the world.”

Al Muttawa has already seen tangible growth since completing the HEC Paris Executive MBA. “We have doubled our size in terms of revenue and tripled the number of staff,” he says. “Before the EMBA, I had that entrepreneurial mindset, but I didn’t have that application... the strategic modules made a big difference for me.”

He credits the program’s financial and performance management modules with elevating his capabilities. “Now I can read financial statements easily... and I liked the business performance model—how to set KPIs and what system we need to implement. You discover that each company is like an independent human. You need to deal with them completely differently.”

Al Muttawa also serves on Oman’s Chamber of Commerce AI and Digital Economy Committee. “I am a computer science graduate. I’m adapting a lot of technology in our business,” he says, noting how Arkan is developing an AI-powered tendering agent to automate opportunity sourcing. “We believe it will save a lot of time and effort. We plan to continue adapting technology and grow.”

International expansion is already underway, with Saudi operations launched following insights from fellow HEC Paris alumni. “The alumni network is amazing. Whatever you want... people will come to you in private and help you out.”

Legacy, though, is what drives him now. “I want to build one of the biggest logistics companies here,” he says.

“I want to create as many jobs as I can because this is part of our Vision 2040, and it is part of giving back to this country.”

“I want to create as many jobs as I can.”

LUXURY RETAIL

Geoffroy Bunetel (HEC 2002)

Dubai used to be a place for expats in their 40s with families, working for international companies. Now we have more young entrepreneurs,” says Geoffroy Bunetel, Chief of Staff at Chalhoub Group and first Vice President of CCI France UAE.

Since the pandemic, the French population in Dubai has grown more than 30 percent, with an estimated 1,500 French companies now registered in the UAE, many of them founded locally.

“It’s a place where you create your business, grow it easily, and travel easily,” Bunetel explains.

He arrived in Dubai over a decade ago, following his wife, who had an opportunity here. With a background in consulting at EY, he joined Chalhoub Group in 2013 as an internal consultant.

Today he oversees communication, governance, and project management as Chief of Staff, helping steer the group’s broader strategic vision.

Bunetel also plays a central role in the French business community. Vice President of CCI France International and First Vice President of CCI France UAE, he advocates for greater engagement in sectors aligned with Gulf national priorities.

“We’re seeing huge opportunities in tech, creative industries, and sustainability,” he says. “The Gulf is shifting toward a knowledge-based economy. There’s a lot of government support to attract new business. The UAE is striving to develop what they call Industry 4.0.”

“Decisions here are based on trust, and that takes time to build.”



The region’s cultural transformation is opening unexpected doors, with countries like Saudi Arabia and the UAE investing in everything from gaming to cinema to fashion—fields where France has natural strengths. It’s no surprise that CCI France UAE recently launched a dedicated committee focused on cultural and creative industries.

In this fast-evolving landscape, French entrepreneurs have a distinct edge, especially those with an HEC Paris pedigree: “We have this good balance—structured, yet with the leeway and creativity for innovation.”

Still, Bunetel offers a cautious note to newcomers: “Patience is important. Decisions here are based on trust, and that takes time to build. Don’t assume that because life moves fast in Dubai, everything happens quickly.”

From strategy to advocacy, Bunetel’s career reflects that same balance: methodical yet agile, ambitious yet grounded. It’s a model many French founders now aspire to follow in the Gulf.

Rajendra Kumar Sharma (EMBA 2022)

Rajendra Kumar Sharma's journey from rural hardship to leading a multi-million-dollar engineering and construction firm is powered by resilience, community values, an unrelenting drive to learn, and a healthy dose of ice-cream. "I come from a village in Nepal, near the foothills of Mt. Annapurna," says the Founder and CEO of Pigeon Engineering Projects in Qatar.

His father was a farmer and instilled in Rajendra, one of eight siblings, a desire to become an entrepreneur. "I had to walk daily for one hour to reach the school. That's how we studied. He would say, 'Salary is never enough.'" Arriving in Qatar in 2003, Rajendra worked as an accountant by day and ran a Nepalese restaurant in the evenings. Opportunity knocked when he was asked to take over a struggling maintenance firm unable to pay salaries and on the verge of shutting down. "It's not that I had a big dream to open a company, but amid the challenges I saw my long-awaited opportunity, and decided not to let it slip," he says. Today, that company—renamed Pigeon

Engineering—employs over 2,500 people and holds a prominent and respectable name in the Qatar market. "A pigeon is a symbol of peace," Rajendra explains. "My company advocates for a peaceful and happy work culture with sustainable growth."

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Rajendra faced one of his biggest tests. "There was a complete lockdown. I was focused on, 'How can I protect my people and my company?'" That crisis made him realize the need for enhanced management skills, leading him to the HEC Paris Executive MBA program in Doha. "I was looking for academic tools. I had inadequate KPI procedures and crisis management systems. At HEC Paris, I upskilled on how to develop and implement KPIs and manage business better."

HEC Paris's influence went far beyond business tools. His capstone project proposed a remittance-backed social security system for Nepal's migrant workers. "We have over 8 million Nepalese working abroad. Seventy percent of their income goes to unproductive spending," he explains. "So I proposed to create a social security fund from remittance, for investing in rewarding sectors like hydropower, agriculture, and real-estate development."

After his EMBA, Rajendra returned to Nepal to lobby the government. "I met the prime minister," he recalls. With support from the government of Nepal, a contribution-based social security fund has been established for the migrant diaspora. "Now we have more than NPR 125 billion in the fund, with 2 million registered members." Rajendra's impact doesn't stop there. He recently launched a dairy and ice-cream factory in Nepal, with 120 staff in the capital and plans to expand throughout Nepal (his favorite flavor is butterscotch). Meanwhile, he is also lobbying to launch schemes to uplift the livelihood of more than 1,000 farmers, while providing low-interest loans to the diaspora. Through these accomplishments, there is one constant that drives him forward: "Education keeps our minds open and receptive. Even my mother at 82 told me: 'Rajendra, there is always more to learn.'"

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"Leadership is about influence without visibility"

What does it take to shape a personal philosophy on talent and leadership in today's evolving landscape? A conversation with **Farah Ababtain (EMBA 2025)**, sharing her experiences and insights as Head of Talent Acquisition Unit at Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF).



that endures, rather than simply reacting to immediate needs. At PIF, that means looking beyond the hire: seeing talent as a driver for resilience, not just a function.

You describe your leadership as 'behind the scenes, with a calm hand and long view'. What does that look like in practice?

It's about influence without visibility. True leadership often happens away from the spotlight—aligning succession plans, reshaping governance quietly, and preparing the ground for sustainable transitions. I don't try to be visible. I focus on making things work so well that no one notices the fix was ever needed. For example, during a recent leadership transition, the goal wasn't simply to fill a role—it was to ensure continuity, clarify structure, and align for the long-term. That kind of work takes patience and trust.

PIF is recruiting globally in a fast-changing region. What does your talent strategy look like?

It rests on three pillars: alignment, governance, and intentionality. Every hiring decision must reinforce the Fund's strategic direction. Strong governance brings accountability. Being intentional means we're not just hiring quickly, but wisely.

What is the secret to attracting top-tier global talent to Saudi Arabia?

It starts with reframing the opportunity. People are drawn not just to roles, but to purpose. When we position a role as part of a national transformation, something bigger than the job, it resonates. I personally curate onboarding journeys, from cultural briefings to immersive visits, to help talent feel part of the mission even before day one.

What advice would you offer future leaders?

Don't perform leadership. Build things that work. Leadership is about making things better, whether anyone notices or not.

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Su'ad Yousif (EMBA 2021)

M“My career arc is a very squiggly line,” says Su'ad Yousif, a strategy executive at a leading UAE sovereign wealth fund. “If there’s a challenge and I think it’s interesting, I’ll go for it. And once the challenge is gone, I jump to the next—with no safety net.”

Su'ad’s journey has spanned private and public sectors, across multinationals and multilateral organizations. From finance at a global oilfield services company to gender mainstreaming projects with the UNDP, she has always pursued work that sparks curiosity and demands personal growth. “No two years have been the same,” she says. “Every day brings a different issue, a different composition, a different challenge.”

The decision to pursue an Executive MBA at HEC Paris came after the intense pace of the COVID years. “Work never slowed down—if anything, it intensified. I needed a personal challenge to continue my growth trajectory. The EMBA fit that perfectly.”

Drawn by the rankings, Su'ad also appreciated HEC Paris’s boutique feel. “I wanted something different that complemented my leadership goals.”

Among a cohort that proudly dubbed themselves ‘The Disruptors’, it was the leadership courses that left the deepest impression. “We learned how to be an impactful leader, how to be a thoughtful leader. You gain a better understanding of yourself.”

She now pays those lessons forward through her company’s mentorship program, helping younger colleagues navigate stress and conflict.

“Sometimes just talking to someone outside the situation can help them reframe it. You can see that shift—that moment they realize there’s opportunity inside the challenge. That’s incredibly rewarding.”

Her advice for alumni navigating careers in strategy or public service? “Choose roles for more than just the money. Keep moving. Never stop learning. And be kind to yourself. You won’t be 100 percent all the time—what matters is how you recover and what you learn from it.”

And if your path doesn’t look like a straight line? That’s perfectly fine, too. “I encourage people to embrace the squiggle.”

“Keep moving... and be kind to yourself.”



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Remy Gaspard (EMBA 2017)



After a successful corporate career, Rémy Gaspard decided to take a different path. “I was bringing value internally and thought—why not generate value for many organisations?” That question led him to launch Alta Magna Consulting, a boutique firm focused on procurement optimization and cost reduction. “We jump in, we look at what a company spends on a yearly basis... and generate savings while maintaining or enhancing the level of service.” His model is clear and performance-based: “They were buying for 100, we awarded for 80—then 20 is the saving. The client sees those real tangible savings... and we agree on a split of those savings. The more we perform, the more they get.” Rémy credits the HEC Paris Executive MBA with giving him the mindset to make this leap. “It gave me a wider spectrum of understanding the intricacies of businesses, and helped me see how to step back, rethink what an organisation needs, and how we can contribute.” He specialized in entrepreneurship, and the program helped him clarify his goals. “I had an idea of the business model I wanted to implement—it was a way for me to confirm I wanted to do this, and my first client engagements proved me right.” He’s also passionate about supplier relationships and sustainable growth. “I always have a long-term vision of both my clients and the panel of suppliers. I can operate in the long run by having a holistic management of the suppliers.” And his motto? “You are not what you claim to be. You are what you do.”

Sahar Al Ansari (SBUM 2021)

Sahar Al Ansari didn’t set out to launch a business—she set out to find relief. Her newborn son had “every issue you could imagine”, and homeopathic remedies she sought were unavailable in Doha. That challenge became the spark for Everything Baby, the pioneering retail platform she co-founded with her sister to fill a long-overlooked gap in the local maternity market. What began as a solution to colic and sleepless nights evolved into a trusted brand supporting thousands of new parents. Sahar’s companion platform, Everything Mama, grew organically from customer demand: “They wanted a positive platform, where they could learn about the new products we were introducing.” Armed with a design background and a specialized master’s from HEC Paris, Doha, Sahar blends intuition with strategy. “When you’re so attached to your business, it’s difficult to step back and even see where you can grow. That’s why I went to HEC Paris.” She’s currently working to launch a new concept—details of which she’s keeping close to her chest—and has some timely advice for aspiring entrepreneurs: “Start. Don’t fear failure. Every time you fail, you learn something.” With a vision rooted in care, credibility, and community, Sahar has turned a personal pain point into lasting purpose.



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AREEJ NAQSHBANDI

“Project management for positive change”

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Head of the Project Management Office at the Public Investment Fund (PIF), **Areej Naqshbandi (EMBA 2023)** outlines the responsibilities of her role and her driving desire: to exert a positive impact on Saudi society and the nation’s economy.

Could you describe your key responsibilities as Head of the Project Management Office at PIF?
My aim is to focus on ensuring that we achieve the highest standards of excellence in project management. This includes enabling PIF in various dimensions, such as leading the establishment of our portfolio companies and implementing best-in-class project management governance. A crucial aspect of my role is investing in people, as I believe enhancing their growth and productivity is the key to success across PIF. I also view challenges as opportunities for achievements, especially in project management, where collaboration with various stakeholders is essential. I am deeply committed to contributing effectively to Vision 2030 by working toward lasting impact and value through PIF projects.

In what ways is PIF actively contributing to the realization of Saudi Vision 2030?
PIF plays a pivotal role in realizing Saudi Vision 2030 by investing in strategic sectors that drive economic diversification, such as technology, renewable energy, and tourism. As we work to realize Vision 2030, PIF has four key objectives: maximizing PIF’s assets for the benefit of the local economy, unlocking key strategic sectors in Saudi Arabia, localizing modern technologies and knowledge, developing local talent, and building strategic economic partnerships.

What path was your career on prior to PIF?
My career trajectory has been characterized by a commitment to continuous learning and a willingness to embrace challenges. This included work in the charity sector with Alnahda Society. I have consistently sought opportunities that align with my passion for empowerment and innovation. I am grateful for the chances and hurdles that have shaped my career journey. I have found this journey to be both rewarding and transformative, shaping my leadership style and vision.

My motivation to join the Alnahda Society stemmed from a deep-seated passion for charity work. I recognized the transformative power of helping others in times of need, and I wanted to contribute

“Over the past decade, women have significantly advanced across the professional landscape.”

to initiatives that create opportunities and give support to people who need it. This drive and desire to make a positive impact led me to join PIF and contribute to its vision of driving economic transformation that impacts the lives of people

In your view, how have women advanced in the professional landscape in recent years?
Over the past decades, women have significantly advanced across the professional landscape, breaking barriers, and assuming leadership roles across various sectors. This progress is being propelled by changing societal norms, enhanced educational opportunities and supportive policies that encourage women’s participation in the workforce. This all reflects a more inclusive and diverse professional environment.

You completed your EMBA at HEC Paris in 2023, here in Saudi Arabia. What motivated you to pursue executive education?
Getting my EMBA was always a dream for me. I always wanted to achieve it and make it a reality in my professional and academic life. However, for a long time, I was unable to pursue it as it was very difficult for me to balance my overall roles and responsibilities, and the requirement of such a program.

When PIF announced the launch and their sponsorship of this program, and that they were providing the opportunity for PIF staff to join, I was very excited to join. But I was quite hesitant to take on such an endeavor taking into consideration the workload of my current position. Nevertheless, the PIF leadership supported me throughout this journey and I believe we are really fortunate and privileged to receive this kind of support.

What advice would you give to professionals in Saudi Arabia considering an EMBA?
An EMBA not only enhances your skill set but also brings you into a network of like-minded professionals. I would encourage them to seek out programs that support leadership and boost their capabilities.

“For a long time I was unable to pursue the EMBA.”

REAL ESTATE

Ali Lari (EMBA 2025)

Ali Lari doesn't just design buildings—he designs systems, relationships, and futures. A registered architect in both Bahrain and New York, he has led large-scale developments across the Gulf, while helping steer his family's real estate group toward ambitious new horizons. Now, as a GCC Excellence Scholar at HEC Paris, he's applying the same thoughtful intensity to business and leadership. "This ability to jump between the detail, the nuance, and the bigger picture... has really shaped the way I analyze the world."

"When I moved to the family business, my role began shifting towards management and strategic decision-making." That shift, he says, is what led him to HEC Paris, Doha: "It became very important for me to say, okay, here's a family business—how can I best serve it? And that meant getting an MBA from a top school."

Ali pursued electives across four continents, from pricing in Chile to systems thinking in Turkey. "It's a brainwashing of sorts—it reorients the way you think."

A key insight came from a leadership seminar run by former special forces instructors. "What I learned about leadership in those two days really framed and precisely oriented my thinking." He recalls lessons on delegation, clarity, and focus: "The importance of having a second-in-command, the ability to brainstorm, then move into action."

Another takeaway was the maxim 'what got you here won't take you there'. "That really stuck," he says.

Ali also draws inspiration from his training in Muay Thai. "In a fight, what's of the essence is strategy—skills will only take you so far." He likens the MBA journey to a match: "Start small, read the world around you, find openings, and engage. Strategize toward your goal."

Classes were held in Msheireb, a district that blends tradition and innovation, an idea that resonated deeply with him. "It has the spirit of the past but is definitely of the present. That question was answered very, very well."

Ali's many contributions outside of business were recognized through the GCC Excellence Award scholarship. "How did you contribute to society? This is part of my DNA."

His modesty only tells part of the story. An advocate for industry governance, his extra-curricular roles include serving as Secretary of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning's Building Facades Committee on behalf of the Bahrain Society of Engineers and board level positions with both the Saudi Umran Society's Eastern Chapter and the BSE Architecture Chapter.

From master plans to mentorship, Muay Thai to market strategy, Ali Lari is building more than structures. He's shaping a vision for leadership that's regional, relational, and remarkably human.

"Strategize towards your goal."



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Ziyad Alsulais (EMBA 2023)

Ziyad Saleh Alsulais graduated from HEC Paris in 2024 with an Executive MBA, following an 18-month program that began in 2022 in Riyadh. His capstone project focused on human capital transformation. Today Ziyad is the co-founder of Lahint, a Saudi company providing a unified digital platform for all government services related to business operations. The platform allows entrepreneurs to complete services such as company incorporation and license issuance through a single gateway, eliminating the need to navigate multiple systems. Central to Lahint's technology is its Eligibility Engine—an AI-powered system integrated directly with official government platforms. It instantly evaluates a company's eligibility for services by applying regulatory rules to real-time data. This engine is certified for AI governance from SDAIA, ensuring compliance with high standards for transparency and responsible AI use. Combining artificial intelligence, automation, and robotic process technology, Lahint saves companies significant time and effort. The company has earned four international ISO certifications and formed strategic partnerships with multiple government entities, reflecting its commitment to quality, security, and innovation. Ziyad credits HEC Paris for strengthening his leadership skills, expanding his innovation mindset, and connecting him with a powerful professional network. For those looking to move from the public to the private sector, his advice is unequivocal: "Embrace the speed of change—because one year in the private sector can equal ten in the public sector."

NUTRITION

Layla Al-Dorani (EMBA 2017)

"I didn't want to pursue my master's until I had real experience," says Layla Al-Dorani, founder & CEO of Raw Middle East. "I started the HEC Paris program right after I delivered my first child." That same drive has fueled her growing portfolio of wellness brands. During her EMBA, Layla developed Fruity Friends—100% fruit-based snacks for children—as her final project. "We launched it to improve lunchbox options. It's very close to my heart, as I started in this space by volunteering in school nutrition programs." Her first venture, 15 years ago, Raw, filled a glaring gap in the Qatari market. "No one was making green juice locally... the cold-press technology wasn't understood, and there were no products available." Today, Raw is Qatar's largest cold-pressed juice producer, supplying retail, hotels, restaurants, and Qatar Airways. "We quickly moved into a factory model. Our bread and butter is our HoReCa business." Throughout, Layla has stayed true to her values. "Quality is everything. We were ISO- and HACCP-certified, even before it was required." And when it came to shifting public perceptions around health and plant-based living? "People would ask, 'Why do I need to eat like a rabbit?'" she laughs. "But we've seen huge positive change."



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Training women in STEM to shape Qatar's digital future

For fifteen years, HEC Paris, Doha has been training future leaders in the public and private sectors. Interview with **Eman Al Kuwari (SBUM 2020)**, Director of Digital Innovation at Qatar's Ministry of Communications and Information Technology.



What is your role at the Ministry, and how are you advancing Qatar's digital transformation?

Qatar's digital future is guided by the Digital Agenda 2030, a strategy designed to establish Qatar as a leading smart country and digital economy. One of my core responsibilities is overseeing the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology's flagship program, TASMU Smart Qatar, which spearheads the development of smart solutions that digitally advance the country and improve everyday experiences for people in Qatar.

TASMU Smart Qatar works closely with key national stakeholders, including government entities, healthcare institutions, educational organizations, and private companies,

to co-create and implement innovative digital solutions. A great example of this includes our work with the Ministry of Municipality to develop the Livestock Monitoring platform, enhancing the health and traceability of livestock and supporting Qatar's National Food Security Strategy. Another key initiative is the smart EV charging platform that was developed. This solution simplifies the use and management of EV charging stations nationwide.

What do you see as Qatar's most promising areas for technological innovation?

Over the next decade, transformative technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, 5G, IoT, quantum computing, and autonomous mobility are poised to significantly shape Qatar's future, driving innovation across key sectors like healthcare, education, transport, and public administration. These advancements promise to deliver profound societal benefits, including enhanced access to services, improved quality of life, and the creation of new employment opportunities as digital skills become indispensable across most industries. AI and other advanced technologies will require a workforce skilled for the digital age, and Qatar is already taking proactive steps to address this need.

In technology fields, gender parity remains a challenge.

What is the current representation of women?

We have witnessed a significant increase in young women pursuing STEM degrees, with women now representing up to 70% of graduates in disciplines such as information systems, computer engineering, general engineering, medicine, pharmacy, and sciences. This progress is reflected in the workforce. At MCIT, we are fortunate to have a dynamic team of ambitious young women—many with advanced STEM degrees—leading the charge in shaping Qatar's digital future. These accomplishments highlight the country's commitment to encouraging gender diversity in tech.

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ENGINEERING

Rania Assaf Martin (EMBA 2022)



What does luxury have to do with mechanical, electrical, and plumbing (MEP) works? According to Rania Martin, quite a lot. "Luxury gives us deep knowledge about exceptional experiences," she says. "And I believe this can be reflected in what we are doing at AlBawani Group and in Meras. We are transforming from a family business into a corporate structure, and luxury does not come without excellence."

As President of Meras, a subsidiary of AlBawani Holding, Rania is helping lead one of Saudi Arabia's most dynamic MEP firms during a period of unprecedented growth. "We are focused on innovation, high quality, and delivering the best service to our clients."

Originally from Lebanon, Rania's career has spanned continents and cultures. "I have spent over 20 years working for international companies like Bouygues and Vinci. This gave me strong leadership experience in Europe as well as in Arabic contexts." Her early engineering roles took her from Paris to Ashgabat, delivering infrastructure in complex environments. Later, she led the systems design and construction for the Quai Branly Museum in Paris, managed engineering departments, and afterwards, in Qatar, led vital public projects including the Doha Metro.

After the COVID-19 pandemic hit, she took stock. "I said, okay, I want to take a break. What's next in my career? And this is how I decided to pursue my Executive MBA at HEC Paris, Doha." Her dual specialization—Entrepreneurship and Innovation, and Luxury—may seem unusual for an engineer, but for Rania, it made perfect sense. "I'm passionate about luxury fashion. I really

enjoyed this during my 10 years in Paris. During the weeks at HEC in Paris, Bocconi Milano, and Stern School of Business, NYU (New York University), I saw the history of building strong brands."

That immersion in luxury thinking sharpened her leadership approach. "We are transforming... and moving from a traditional company to a corporate organization requires excellence for success." Her EMBA capstone project, which won Best Capstone for 2022 reflected her personal life and professional ambition. "It was about developing my husband's interiors business and expanding it into the Saudi Arabian market. This exercise helped me study the Saudi ecosystem and think strategically about successful business operations and forecasting expansion."

"Some are curious, some ignore you."

As a woman in a traditionally male-dominated sector, she's never shied away from challenges. "It's not easy. Not even in Europe. But what I've learned is that if a woman wants to lead in these sectors, she should lead with her strengths. She should not apologize." She adds, "Some are curious. Some ignore you. But I enjoy challenging them a few minutes later. Then we switch immediately to connection mode."

Now her sights are firmly set on growth. "We want to become a leading MEP contractor in Saudi Arabia," she says. "For myself, I want to continue learning, challenging myself, and of course, inspiring others to reach their full potential."

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WELLNESS

Ghanim Al-Sulaiti (EMBA 2021)

The bustling city of Doha, Qatar, is currently experiencing a culinary revolution spearheaded by Ghanim Al-Sulaiti (E.24). It all started a decade ago. Ghanim was about to graduate in civil engineering at Drexel University in Philadelphia when he tuned in to Good Morning America. On that day, renowned nutritionist Kimberley Snyder made a special appearance. Intrigued by the benefits of veganism and broader environmental issues, he decided to learn more: “I bought her book and started to think. I was drinking milk and eating meat; something was about to change.”

The United States, Egypt, Morocco, China, Spain, Italy, France, and Bali—the entrepreneur traveled for two years, discovering and finding inspiration. He embraced veganism and embarked on a new journey.

Upon coming back, he finalized his plan to launch his company in the sectors of food, wellness, and services. His creed? “To address the concerns of vegans, animal lovers, and environmentalists by avoiding investments that directly contribute to animal suffering, destruction of the natural environment, and climate change.”

In 2016, Ghanim opened the doors of Doha’s first vegan restaurant: Evergreen. Immediately, his cuisine captivated a wide audience. “Evergreen was abuzz within the first 10 minutes, and it continued to attract crowds for four months, quickly becoming the trendiest spot to be. That wasn’t our original plan; we weren’t invested in social media or influencers at the time, since they weren’t even a thing. So it was a very organic kind of movement, you could say,” he says nostalgically.

Buoyed by this success, however, an essential aspect was still missing from his arsenal. “I started my business without the knowledge of doing business. I have had people telling me to join HEC for almost five years now. I began my EMBA in Qatar to refine and structure my knowledge. I used to make a lot of decisions somewhat randomly, based on my gut feeling. That won’t be the case anymore.”

Following his chosen path, Ghanim expands his empire while adhering to the principles of the circular economy. Nearly eight years after its inception, Enbat Holdings now boasts four restaurants, vegan cafes, including one at Doha Airport, and a mineral water brand. From Mylk to Green&GO, every establishment is a true gastronomic laboratory where innovation, quality, and environmental respect are paramount. In tandem, the group bolsters its reputation as a pioneer in sustainable entrepreneurship by setting up a factory for eco-friendly packaging and a spa offering natural treatments.

“It was abuzz within the first 10 minutes.”

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AGED CARE

Amr Metwally (EMBA 2016)

When Amr Metwally founded QWELL in 2021, his goal was to build the Middle East’s first lifestyle-focused senior living company. “Money alone isn’t enough to care for your loved ones. You need to provide the best services,” says the Egyptian entrepreneur, who was deeply affected by his parents’ experience with aging and depression, despite having access to high-quality medical care. He sought to create a concept tailored to the region, “where putting elders in a nursing home just doesn’t fit the culture”. Amr says the EMBA program equipped him with the tools to build a startup and craft a go-to-market strategy. Headquartered in Cairo, QWELL offers a fresh take on aging, centered around community and wellness—think Pilates, book clubs, and nice meals. “There was a lot of resistance early on,” Amr recalls. “But I never heard ‘why do we need this?’—only ‘why didn’t anyone do this sooner?’ That was encouraging.” A key milestone has been launching the first Middle-Eastern-flavored specialized elderly residences in the region, designed to provide seniors with a dignified, vibrant, and culturally fitting alternative to traditional nursing homes. Born and raised in Egypt, Amr chose to base QWELL in Cairo, home to over 12 million people aged 60 and over. “One of our most popular offerings is our tailored domestic trips, as well as our first Middle Eastern elderly special residences,” he says. “Some guests even ended up getting married!”



FITNESS

Betool Zeraie (EMBA 2020)

Betool Zeraie spent over a decade working with luxury brands like Patek Philippe, Harry Winston, and Dior before pursuing an Executive MBA at HEC Paris with a specialization in Luxury Brand Management. “I signed up for my EMBA not knowing Covid was going to come around the corner.” Her capstone project—an online flash sale platform for unsold luxury goods—earned her an A. But when the pandemic hit, she paused the venture. “I didn’t want to throw away all my lifetime’s investment, not knowing what was going to happen.” Instead, she launched a marketing consultancy, producing major events like a Bulgari showcase in the Gulf. Then came a new chapter: “My husband got relocated to Kuala Lumpur. It’s been two years. The first six months I was going nuts... and then I opened up my fitness studio.” Studio8 introduced the Lagree Method to Malaysia—a first for the country. Adjusting to a new market and clientele brought unexpected challenges: “In Malaysia, clients are so diverse. Every two people who walk into the studio are completely different.” Drawing on what she learned at HEC Paris, she tailored her approach without compromising her core. Now, Betool is building an online academy, yet her mission remains clear: to bring “that extra luxury touch to the fitness world,” and help others see that “your health is the best luxury you can invest in.” HEC Paris, she says, “transformed me into the person I used to always look up to.”

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MANUFACTURING

Salman Shaban (EMBA 2019)

As a third-generation family business owner at Lucky Group, a Director at its metals recycling and metal manufacturing business, Salman Shaban (EMBA'19) has made it his mission to align industry with innovation and environmental responsibility. Raised in Dubai and educated in Toronto, he brings over two decades of international experience to his role. Since settling in Qatar in 2010, he has been working to turn his vision for a sustainable industrial hub into reality. He co-leads his family enterprise's flagship project that is the launch of Qatar's premium green certified, low carbon aluminum alloy plant. "It was my HEC Paris capstone project, back in 2019," he explains. "We started the pilot production at the state-of-the-art plant in 2020, a 15,800 square-meter plot in Doha, Qatar. Today, we employ over 100 employees with a design capacity of 12,000 metric tons of aluminum alloys annually." The factory exports to over 20 global markets.

Used in everything from aviation to building materials and automotive parts, the green aluminum comes with a significantly lower carbon footprint than virgin metal. "Sustainable manufacturing in Qatar was uncommon when we started. Now we're proving that it's not only possible: it's sustainable in all ways," Shaban notes.

His commitment to impact goes beyond business. A recent graduate of the Conscious Investor Fellowship—an initiative by NYU Abu Dhabi—Shaban has deepened his engagement with climate tech. "The program gave me frameworks like logic models and scorecards to assess how we, as investors, can make better environmental choices," he says. He's also an active board member at leading environmental awareness associations and serves on advisory boards for esteemed schools and hospitals. Shaban's most personal connection to Qatar, however, may be through his family. A father of two children, he's deeply involved with Qatar Foundation (QF), where his wife also works. "My children participate in QF's programs in art, culture, and sports. It's a community that embraces difference."

That sense of belonging was never more vivid than during the 2022 FIFA World Cup, where Shaban volunteered. "The World Cup was literally at my doorstep," he recalls with a smile. "I saw the opening and final matches live and got to attend all the highlights of the tournaments up close and personal. I even got to hold the winning balls of many matches as part of my job role before it was sent back to FIFA." He worked in marketing rights delivery, ensuring the protection of sponsorship rights, and contributed to youth development programs, where youths were invited to participate in training sessions, ceremonies, and break times. An unforgettable experience, for sure!

"It was my HEC capstone project... today we employ over 100 employees."

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E-COMMERCE

Noura Al Jurdi (SBUM 2020)

"I come from a family of doctors," says Noura Khalid Aljurdi, CEO and Co-Founder of Shnaita and Grade A Marketing and Consultancy. "So I always just thought I had to study medicine. Otherwise, I wouldn't be a successful person." That all changed when she took a short course on entrepreneurship: "I never really enjoyed learning until I took that course." She was hooked. "I told my mom I wanted to switch from studying medicine to studying entrepreneurship." She applied to Carnegie Mellon and was accepted. "I opened my first business while I was still studying." That first venture—Shnaita, launched in 2014—was Qatar's first second-hand luxury store. "It was driven by passion... I just really perceive these items that I never used again. That's money on the shelf." She has since founded Grade A, a consultancy born out of necessity: "I had five other businesses, and I needed a backbone for all of them...plus my friends were coming to me because I already had the businesses." To fill the gaps she encountered early in her journey, she turned to HEC Paris. "I realized networking and deeper research in entrepreneurship were where I really wanted to grow, and that's how I decided to study at HEC Paris, Doha." She was awarded Best Thesis for her research into Qatar's entrepreneurial education, and now teaches entrepreneurship herself. "Don't think twice about HEC Paris. You will see a different version of yourself, like meeting someone new."



CONSTRUCTION

Nishad Azeem (EMBA 2013)

"When I founded Coastal Holding in 2007, Qatar's construction sector was growing at a rate of 10 to 15% annually, fueled by iconic developments such as Hamad International Airport, the Museum of Islamic Art, and Aspire Zone. Coastal Holding emerged from a gap I identified in the local industrial landscape for a diversified, reliable construction partner capable of executing complex, large-scale projects. What started with construction soon evolved into a multifaceted enterprise spanning steel fabrication, galvanizing, manufacturing, trading, industrial services and even healthcare. Each move aligned with Qatar's Vision 2030. Today, we're proud to be one of the country's largest manufacturers in the construction sector. One of the most defining chapters of our story was the FIFA World Cup 2022. Coastal played a pivotal role designing, manufacturing, and installing over 300,000 seats across six new stadiums. We also fabricated structural steel, lighting towers, and other key components, all while navigating the dual challenges of the Qatar blockade and the COVID-19 pandemic. Witnessing our contribution to an event that welcomed over 1.4 million visitors was profoundly moving. If there's one piece of advice I'd offer to fellow entrepreneurs and students, it's this: build your reputation on integrity. Long-term success comes from honoring commitments and creating value not just for shareholders, but for your employees, clients, and community."

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LUXURY GOODS

Jana Alqahtani

(EMBA 2025)



I“In LVMH, it’s an unspoken advantage,” says Jana Alqahtani, “that having HEC Paris on your resumé can fast-track your growth.” That expectation, coupled with her own restlessness in a role that had become too comfortable, led her to the Executive MBA. “I had a big team, fully automated, minimal interference needed from my side. I mean, I couldn’t just sit and wait until I got my promotion.”

Jana joined the EMBA in February 2024, graduating in June 2025—just as she stepped into her new role as Regional Marketing Director for Givenchy Beauty. “The timing was perfect. I had these mentors during my transition... I’d run to them after class and say, “This is what’s happening at work... what would you do?” It was the support I needed.”

After more than a decade in luxury retail with LVMH, Jana wanted a broader view of business. “It definitely did not disappoint... it was very informative, very reassuring. You’re always involved in operations, you’re always involved in finance. I’m on the right track as a person to grow into that leadership level.”

She was particularly drawn to the EMBA’s luxury specialization. “It was the cherry on top; it was honestly very well curated. We went to Bocconi in Milan and NYU in New York. The quality of information, the people that came, the level

“I couldn’t just sit and wait...”

of experience—they were just on another level.” Her favourite modules covered finance and leadership. “Looking at the bigger picture, the cash flow, the balance sheet, how does global look at it and how does it trickle down to us?” she recalls.

“The leadership courses led to really deep reflections in front of a bunch of strangers. It was all very valuable.” Asked to describe her leadership style, she’s quick to respond: “I’d like to think of myself as a servant leader. It’s about democratizing the role of leadership, removing the hierarchy and just rolling up your sleeves to be there with your team.”

That belief is rooted in an awareness that leadership today requires more than functional expertise. “When you really go into the core of leadership, what you need to understand more is people, human design, emotional intelligence. It becomes more about people management than work management.”

Jana’s perspective is also shaped by her early experience in aviation and FMCG, and by a growing conviction that the Gulf region is waking up to the value of the luxury sector. “If you ask anyone what their dream job is, they’re going to say Aramco, oil and gas, but there’s very little awareness about the luxury sector—how big it is, what kind of revenue it generates.”

In the long term, she hopes to give back through education. “I would love to create a program that focuses on luxury in business schools. “In our region,” she explains, “we don’t really have focused programs about luxury.”

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institutions

CHAPTER QATAR

Rasha Al Sulaiti (EMBA 2012)

In Doha, the HEC alumni chapter is thriving—thanks to the dedication of Rasha Al Sulaiti, whose commitment to connection and community has brought a growing calendar of events to life. Under her leadership, the chapter introduced new formats rooted in local culture—like the HEC Alumni Majlis, a roundtable-style evening of discussion inspired by traditional Arabic gatherings. The recent edition gathered 15 people to discuss the finer points of education. Another key initiative is the alumni book club, a monthly gathering launched late last year. Designed as a space where executives can engage in structured self-learning, it offers the chance to explore business texts—from Daniel Kahneman’s *Thinking, Fast and Slow* to more locally resonant selections—and extract practical insights for their professional lives. The chapter’s activities reflect the diverse strengths of its members, combining professional expertise, cultural insight, and a passion for learning. With this mix of talents, the Doha chapter continues to grow as a vibrant hub for HEC alumni in Qatar. Looking ahead, the team hopes to deepen engagement and encourage more alumni to contribute their time and ideas. “We have very strong graduates—C-level, ministers, and under-secretaries,” Rasha says. “We want more people to be active, and to show them how much they can give back to HEC and the community.”



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CHAPTER SAUDI ARABIA

Assim Al Attas (EMBA 2017)

I started the HEC Paris Saudi chapter before it was officially launched. This experience has deepened my connection to HEC Paris in unexpected ways. Beyond just networking, I’ve come to appreciate the breadth of talent and generosity across our alumni base. Whether it’s a senior executive offering mentorship or a recent graduate eager to contribute, the sense of shared identity and support is tangible. Executive roundtables, industry-specific panels, and fireside chats with thought leaders consistently draw interest. Informal gatherings—like suhoor during Ramadan or casual meetups—also do incredibly well. They offer a space to reconnect without an agenda, which many alumni value in today’s fast-paced world. I’d love to launch a local mentorship program and a curated speaker series featuring HEC alumni and regional leaders who are shaping the future across different sectors. With the significant growth of HEC Paris activities in the Kingdom, we are excited to see the rapid development of the community and look forward to an even more robust engagement. For alumni who want to get involved—reach out! Whether it’s suggesting a speaker, hosting an event, or just showing up with ideas, this community thrives on shared energy. See you soon!”



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CHAPTER KUWAIT

Mathew Essa (EM 2022)

When I took on the role of President of the HEC Alumni Kuwait International Chapter, I saw a mission to connect, build, and reimagine our community, with early months dedicated to aligning with HEC’s global standards, establishing governance, and laying the groundwork for growth. Inspired by Dean Eloïc Peyrache’s “One HEC” vision, I am fortunate to collaborate with colleagues worldwide, reflecting the unity that defines HEC. The concept that wherever we are in the world, we are part of one unified family: The University, The Foundation, and The Alumni. We also have the honor of attending co-hosted events by Campus France Koweït, Institut Français Koweït and Ambassade De France Au Koweït; reaffirming the bridges we continue to build between institutions, cultures, and alumni. Leading this chapter is a deeply rewarding experience. I remain humbled by the trust placed in me and energized by the journey still ahead. My hope is that our chapter will evolve into a vibrant hub; an international cornerstone that connects alumni within Kuwait and links them to the broader HEC global ecosystem. Our sincere thanks to HEC Paris, Doha for this interview and for their role in connecting alumni voices across the region.



CHAPTER UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Nabil El Jamali (MIF 2011)

For Nabil El Jamali, building a thriving alumni chapter in the UAE has always been about more than just a mailing list. “When I arrived in Dubai, I didn’t have many friends. My first thought was, let me tap into the HEC Paris network.” Since 2019, as Chapter President, Nabil has embraced the role of maven—a person who naturally connects people, ideas, and opportunities, and thrives on bringing together like-minded HEC Paris alumni. “We have the same mindset, the same values, these shared experiences,” he says. When he first stepped into the role, the chapter was quiet. There was a group, but no real communication: no WhatsApp, no LinkedIn, no mailing list, and very few events. “I felt we were not making the most of our network.” Today, the community is thriving. “We now have more than a thousand alumni based in the UAE,” he says. From casual drinks and breakfasts to curated panels and the flagship annual gala—recently attended by over 200 people, including the French ambassador—the chapter’s calendar is now full. “The winners are always the events with the right balance, being professional but also human.” For Nabil, the role is both a privilege and a continuous learning experience. “It’s very rewarding from a human perspective. You learn a lot about yourself—how to work with others, how to understand others.” Looking ahead, he hopes to build stronger ties with chapters across the region while keeping a personalized approach. “The idea is that each alum has events they feel are tailored to their needs.”



HEC Foundation: driving global impact at HEC Paris

In a competitive global landscape, **the HEC Foundation** supports HEC Paris' ambitions by promoting social and international diversity, pedagogical innovation, faculty excellence, and cutting-edge research.

"The year 2005 marked the beginning of structured fundraising at HEC Paris."

Established in 1972, the HEC Foundation supports the HEC Paris' public mission through philanthropy, powered by a dynamic community of engaged alumni and corporate partners. The Foundation allocates funds to projects aligned with HEC Paris' strategic priorities: promoting inclusion through scholarships, accelerating pedagogical innovation and digital transformation, supporting entrepreneurship, and strengthening academic excellence and research to contribute to global knowledge and deepen understanding of today's key challenges.

HEC Paris goes global

The year 2005 marked the beginning of structured fundraising at HEC Paris. Over the past 20 years, the growing support of alumni, friends of HEC Paris, corporate sponsors, and private foundations have been instrumental in transforming HEC Paris into one of the world's leading business schools. Since 2010, the HEC Foundation has also held the status

"The HEC Foundation is committed to advancing HEC Paris' mission to generate impact through knowledge creation."

of a sheltering foundation, allowing it to host dedicated foundations whose missions align with its own. Alumni can also create named funds, contributing to HEC Paris' openness, diversity, and excellence by providing vital support to students. As a result, the Foundation's ability to support HEC Paris' projects and ambitions have grown substantially.

Greater research capacity

From 2019 to 2024, the Foundation led the Impact Tomorrow, an unprecedented collective effort that raised €213 million. The campaign drew support from 5,914 individual donors—34% of whom were international, and 53 corporate partners, whose contributions represented 45% of total funds raised. The campaign notably provided decisive support in scholarship provision, the accelerated development of HEC Paris' three major centers and institutes (S&O, I&E, and Hi! PARIS), and the expansion of research capacity. It also enabled the launch of new scholarships for both local and international students and attracted several major gifts from private foundations.

More than ever, the HEC Foundation is committed to advancing HEC Paris's mission to generate impact through knowledge creation, the inclusion of diverse talent, an entrepreneurial spirit, and societal engagement, contributing to a more prosperous, inclusive, and sustainable world.

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HEC Paris institutes and centers

Rooted in research and teaching, **HEC Paris's three institutes and centers** amplify the School's impact in sustainability and ESG, entrepreneurship and innovation, and AI and data science. Their work is integrated into academic programs and shared more broadly with businesses and society through extensive partnerships.



Sustainability & Organizations Institute (S&O)

Founded in 2008, S&O is an interdisciplinary institute uniting 60 professors and researchers across three areas of expertise: Purpose, Inclusive Economy, and Climate & Earth. They conduct research, teach, and apply ideas in practice to prepare future generations of leaders for the major challenges of the ecological and social transition. S&O develops innovative educational programs to foster new managerial approaches capable of addressing environmental, social, and governance (ESG) issues. Through its Impact Company Lab, the institute promotes action-oriented research and contributes to public debate on responsible governance and corporate social responsibility.



Innovation & Entrepreneurship Institute (IEI)

Ranked among Europe's top four entrepreneurial hubs by the Financial Times, the I&E Institute fosters a dynamic ecosystem for innovation, entrepreneurship, corporate transformation, and lasting impact on business and society. Through its 3 centers of expertise (Incubation & Acceleration, Deep Tech, and Social Entrepreneurship) it offers a wide range of tailored programs that provide entrepreneurs with the right support at the right time. In 2024, the institute supported 599 startups and more than 100 social and environmental projects. Over the past five years, companies from the I&E ecosystem have raised €16.5 billion, including €1.9 billion in 2024 alone.



Hi! PARIS Center

Founded in 2020 by HEC Paris and Institut Polytechnique de Paris, Hi! PARIS advances education, research, and innovation in artificial intelligence and data analytics. Combining both institutions' strengths and a multidisciplinary approach, the center addresses the core challenges of technological transformation and its impact on business and society. It explores the legal, economic, ethical, managerial, and societal implications of AI-driven data use. Hi! PARIS fosters collaboration through dynamic events that connect researchers, experts, and corporate donors to exchange knowledge and spark new ideas. In 2023, it was officially recognized as an AI cluster by the French government.

Research in action: from insight to impact

Through cutting-edge research and innovative teaching materials, **HEC Paris, Doha contributes to knowledge creation** and supports entrepreneurship with strong regional relevance through its Business Research Laboratory.

Publishing insight, powering entrepreneurs

Since 2021, HEC Paris, Doha has published **the annual Qatar's Entrepreneurial Ecosystem series**, based on research by Allan Villegas-Mateos, to foster entrepreneurship and support national transformation. The first edition, Empowering the Transformation, was followed by Evolution of Qatar's Entrepreneurial Ecosystem: Pathways for Innovation, which mapped key ecosystem players and provided tools to scale entrepreneurial growth, in line with Qatar National Vision 2030. In 2023, The Founders' Guidebook became a practical resource for aspiring entrepreneurs navigating Qatar's startup landscape. A bilingual edition released in 2024 further reinforced HEC Paris's commitment to advancing innovation and impact in the region.

Dr. Allan Villegas-Mateos



Allan Villegas-Mateos is a Senior Research Fellow and Entrepreneur in Residence at HEC Paris, Doha. His research focuses on the macroeconomic drivers of entrepreneurship in emerging economies, entrepreneurship education, women's entrepreneurship, and university-based entrepreneurial ecosystems. A published author, he writes the series Qatar's Entrepreneurial Ecosystem and contributes to the GUESSS reports on the entrepreneurial career intentions among university students in Qatar.

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Qatar-focused, globally relevant: case study innovation

Launched in 2022 and led by Deval Kartik, **the Business Research Lab** at HEC Paris, Doha creates high-quality, locally and regionally relevant teaching materials for the Gulf region. Its work includes business case studies, industry insights for broader audiences, and targeted research for key sectors. The case studies span a wide array of organizations (startups, SMEs, non-profits, and large local and international firms) tackling global challenges such as sustainability, innovation, digitalization, and diversity. Today, the Lab serves as a leading source of original case material focused on Qatar and the GCC, offering students data-driven, real-world insights. Over the next five years, it aims to develop multimedia-enhanced content, while expanding its portfolio of regionally grounded content.

Dr. Deval Kartik



Deval Kartik is a Senior Case Writer at HEC Paris, Doha, where she develops impactful case studies and teaching notes for executive education and corporate programs. Her cases are published by Harvard Business Publishing and The Case Centre, and she co-authors cases with HEC faculty on topics such as strategy, sustainability and digital innovation. She also serves on the MENA Regional Advisory Board of The Case Centre.

A faculty leading with global excellence

The HEC Paris, Doha faculty comprises **world-class researchers and thought leaders** with a global outlook, actively contributing to the growth of the academic and knowledge community in Qatar and the Gulf region.

Prof. Konrad Grabiszewski



Konrad Grabiszewski joined HEC Paris, Doha, as an Associate Professor of Economics in 2022. His theoretical and empirical research explores how individuals make decisions across various contexts. A specialist in game theory, decision theory, and behavioral economics, he also investigates topics related to espionage, terrorism, and government regulations. His work appears in top-tier journals such as the *Journal of Economic Theory*, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, and the *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*.

Prof. Tomas Farchi



Tomas Farchi is a Professor of Organizational Behavior and a leading scholar in organizational sociology and innovation. His research examines how groups and institutions mobilize and transfer knowledge from other domains to address complex business, scientific, and societal challenges. A frequent speaker at academic and practitioner conferences, he designs executive education programs for top companies across various industries. His work has been featured in major journals like *Organization Studies* and *Social Science & Medicine*.

Prof. Seungah Sarah Lee



As an Assistant Professor of Entrepreneurship and Organizations, Seungah Sarah Lee conducts research on how nation-states and firms respond to globalization, adapting sustainable development models to promote social entrepreneurship and innovation in local contexts. Her secondary research interest focuses on the organization of higher education. Her work has received support from the Fulbright-Hays Fellowship, the Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation, and the Stanford Abbasi Program in Islamic Studies.

Prof. Wolfgang Amann



Wolfgang Amann is an affiliate professor of Strategy and Leadership, who designs and delivers executive education seminars worldwide. He has led degree, corporate, open, and certificate programs at HEC Paris, Doha, since 2014. His research spans strategy, leadership, governance, and innovation in higher education. He has authored over 50 books for executives and earned several awards for his writings and seminars, along with honorary professorships. Beyond academia, he advises senior leaders and serves on multiple boards.

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