

HBKU Signature Research Program 1st Cycle– Project Highlight

Project Title: Managing Social Transformation in Qatar: Risks, Trends and Future Trajectories

Research Team

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Executive Summary

The study aims to produce strategic insights that contribute to an understanding of the forces and trends shaping the future trajectories of Qatari society across socio-cultural and socio-economic domains. The project is situated methodologically in foresight analysis, drawing on trend projections, path dependency perspectives, Delphi techniques, and analysis of complex adaptive systems thinking.

study aims to provide policymakers with a comprehensive understanding of emerging trends, trend drivers, inflection points, and data analysis across four strategic areas: Higher Education, Technology in Public Health, National Culture, and Social Welfare. Further, the project also seeks to help identify the challenges and opportunities facing Qatar, regulatory and policy options, and innovative pathways for improving socio-economic well-being and for positioning Qatari society strategically in readiness to manage emerging trends. The study will generate knowledge of the Qatari landscape while promoting interdisciplinary and innovative approaches to understanding the policy and legal challenges for identity transformation in Qatar. In addition, the project will examine and assess the potential for reform and efforts for transformation, basing its findings on both desk and field research and in light of international standards by which Qatar is bound. At the same time, our research will promote interdisciplinary research and collaborations within Qatar Foundation and HBKU, aligning itself with the Qatar National Vision 2030, especially the benchmarks related to the building of knowledge-based societies, according to which 'Qatar aims to build a modern world-class educational system [...] and build an educated population'. It will further engage with the community via the organization of a number of community-based and participatory events (including, for instance, workshops on cultural heritage and transformation; events on education and capacity building; round table discussions over identity constructions and social development).

Further, the study aims to pave the way for a program/center for strategic foresight analysis at HBKU and focused on Qatar and the MENA region, with the aim of becoming a key resource of strategic foresight analysis, knowledge, and expert training available to Qatari policymakers. In doing so, the project aims to seed the foundations of the first regional center for foresight analysis, over-the-horizon forecasting, and training, providing an interface between day-to-day public sector management and public sector planning for the future by training officials in foresight analysis, resilience and sustainability, with a specialist focus on socio-economic aspects of policymaking for ‘future proofing’ Qatari society. The medium to longer-term aim is to strengthen the culture of public management in preparedness design as a key objective to meet Qatar’s long-term social and economic development objectives.

Expected Outcome

Outcomes include the identification of

1. Sectoral trends, highlighting emerging key threats and potential fissure points
2. Policy pathways, strategic choices, and decision point
3. Potential ‘shocks’ and impact assessment
4. Legal & governance gaps, including regulatory and policy gaps

Collaborating HBKU entities

College of Public Policy
College of Law
College of Islamic Studies
College of Humanities and Social Sciences