



Sheikh Saud Bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research Strategy Overview: Understanding the Impact of COVID-19

Case Study Summary

The overall strategy of the Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research is centered on equipping the local community in Ras al Khaimah with the tools to find creative and collaborative approaches to the challenges they face, primarily through research. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Foundation's main activities lay in funding, conducting, and disseminating research in the areas of Education, Public Health, and Urban Development. The pandemic, however, brought with it a set of challenges and visible shifts in strategy and operations for the Foundation.

Challenges posed by the pandemic

- The primary challenge posed by the pandemic was maintaining community coherence as in-person activities and engagements came to a halt, particularly in reference to vulnerable populations who were unable to access the internet.
- In-person data collection for research, afterschool programs for children, and other activities the Foundation is engaged in were hindered, inducing the need to update strategy and operations.

Shift in focus of programmes and activities

- There was a shift from a longer-term focus on the Foundation's core research areas to activities that would provide immediate relief to the local community.
- Operations included distributing relief packages to facilitate both continuing online education and general subsistence for families in need.
- As such, the Foundation engaged in new collaborations with humanitarian agencies and nonprofits such as the Red Crescent to distribute these relief packages.



"The biggest challenge as a community foundation, was really how to maintain community coherence during a time when everything suddenly went online and then more importantly, how to maintain it with the more vulnerable people in our community who are not able to be online."

*Dr. Natasha Ridge, Executive Director,
Sheikh Saud Bin Saqr Al Qasimi
Foundation for Policy Research*



Challenges in launching new activities

- Moving into a new area of operation away from research meant that the Foundation had to establish a network of humanitarian agencies– outreach with new organisations and constructing a network in relief work was the biggest hurdle.
- Minor difficulties were also posed by the logistical challenges pertaining to the distribution of physical assets and relief under COVID-19 restrictions.

Effect on long-term strategy

- The Foundation's collaborative work has expanded into a new sector in relief work, which intersects variously with its existing portfolio.
- There is also a renewed focus on exploring the mobilisation of local communities, their diversity breakup, and encouraging community cohesion.

General advice on CSR and sustainability

- Starting with the needs of the organisation's local community is an important foundation for CSR work, particularly in trying to "make the invisible visible" by catering to the needs of those who go unnoticed.

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