

# A Library for All

QNL Annual Report **2025**



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2025  
at a Glance

# Foreword

**Dr. Hamad Bin Abdulaziz Al-Kawari**  
Minister of State and President of  
Qatar National Library



It is my privilege to present the Qatar National Library Annual Report 2025, reflecting a year in which the Library continued to strengthen its role as a strategic national institution—supporting Qatar’s priorities for human development, research excellence, and cultural leadership in a rapidly changing world.

The role of a national library today extends beyond preservation. It is about enabling opportunity: empowering informed citizens, supporting capable institutions, and safeguarding a cultural identity that anchors social cohesion. In 2025, Qatar National Library advanced this mandate through work aligned with national policy priorities—strengthening the knowledge ecosystem, expanding reliable access to research, and reinforcing the protection of documentary heritage.

At the national level, we deepened heritage safeguarding

through initiatives that connect research with real-world outcomes. A notable example is our partnership with the Qatar Research, Development, and Innovation Council (QRDI) through the Joint Call for the Preservation of Qatari Heritage—work that strengthens conservation capacity and translates research into practical national benefit.

Regionally, the Library reinforced leadership in open infrastructure and responsible innovation by convening Open Repositories MENA 2025, creating practical dialogue on repository development, rights management, and the evolving role of AI in widening access and strengthening scholarly visibility.

Internationally, QNL continued to advance Qatar’s knowledge diplomacy through partnerships and convenings that contribute to global cultural protection, open knowledge, and deeper

cultural understanding. Through Qatar’s Years of Culture program, the Library supported meaningful cultural exchange that brings communities closer—creating spaces for dialogue, shared storytelling, and lasting connections between Qatar and its partners. Under the Himaya initiative and in collaboration with UNESCO and international partners, the 4th Doha Conference on Combating the Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property brought together more than 100 participants from over 20 countries. We also signed a partnership with the Oxford University Bodleian Libraries, which will make over 100 rare astronomical manuscripts openly available through the Qatar Digital Library and Digital Bodleian under open-licensing terms.

These achievements reflect a wider strategic trajectory: a national library that protects what is rare and irreplaceable, expands what is accessible and shareable, and builds the capabilities—human and digital—needed for a knowledge economy. They also reflect a wider truth: that Qatar’s cultural and knowledge institutions are increasingly contributing to shaping global conversations, not simply participating in them.

I extend my appreciation to our national stakeholders and partners for their continued trust, and to the Qatar National Library team whose dedication transforms vision into lasting public value—guided by Qatar National Vision 2030.

01

# Introduction

02

**Tan Huism**  
Executive Director



As Qatar National Library begins another year in service of our community, I am pleased to present our 2025 Annual Report—capturing a year defined not only by growth in numbers, but by the lives those numbers represent: readers discovering new worlds, families learning together, students finding direction, and researchers advancing knowledge that matters.

In 2025, the Library continued to serve as a welcoming space for learning, culture, and connection. We recorded **1.25 million visits—the highest annual figure since opening**—underscoring the Library’s growing role in everyday life across Qatar. Physical borrowing remained strong, with more than **415,000 books checked out**, reflecting a vibrant and enduring reading culture.

Our digital reach expanded significantly. Library **research**

**e-resources** registered **3,054,961 views and checkouts**, while **e-resources targeted at the public** attracted **3,175,038 checkouts and views**, including **over 120,000 children’s e-resources**. Our **heritage digital collections** recorded **3,328,747 page views**, and our research repository, **Manara**, achieved **1,507,016 views and downloads**—broadening access to knowledge and extending the Library’s impact well beyond its physical walls.

Yet our impact is best measured in what these services make possible. Throughout the year, we worked to ensure that knowledge is not only preserved, but experienced—through programs, collections, and partnerships that connect people to ideas, to history, and to one another. As a guardian of Qatar’s documentary heritage, we deepened public engagement

with the past while also building the record of the present through contemporary collecting and responsible digital preservation, so future generations inherit stories of our time.

We also invested in the next generation—creating opportunities for young people to build skills and confidence through media literacy, hands-on technology learning, ethical engagement with AI, and pathways that connect curiosity to real-world leadership. At the same time, we continued strengthening the Library as a space of belonging, advancing accessibility through practical tools and experiences designed to ensure every patron can navigate, participate, and thrive.

Our contribution to research and scholarship also grew. We launched the **Qatar Research Collection**, bringing together **nearly 70,000 Qatar-focused research records—more than 25,000 of them available through open access**—while **Manara surpassed 10,000 items**. We also **funded 1,423 open access articles, supporting 809 authors from 29 institutions**, reinforcing Qatar’s presence in global scholarship.

This report reflects the shared effort behind these achievements. I extend my sincere thanks to our patrons and partners for their continued trust—and to the QNL team whose dedication turns purpose into service, and service into lasting public value.

# Vision, mission and values

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## *Our* **Vision**

To be one of the world's preeminent centers of learning, research and culture; a guardian of the region's heritage; and an institution that promotes imagination, discovery and the nourishment of the human spirit.

## Our Mission

The mission of Qatar National Library is to preserve the nation's and region's heritage and enable the people of Qatar to positively influence society by creating an exceptional environment for learning and discovery.

The Library will achieve its mission by creating and sustaining an intuitive and trusted information environment in a culturally and technologically exceptional setting and by developing innovative programs and services.

## Our Values

Qatar National Library supports the core values of librarianship as a profession to include:

1. **Openness and Transparency** with all patrons and organizations we deal with, where privacy and confidentiality are observed.
2. **Education and Lifelong Learning**, where we strive to offer services that facilitate equitable learning.
3. **Open Access**, where we are committed to free, open, unrestricted access to our collections and services.
4. **Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Accessibility, Respect and Fairness**, where our patrons are valued regardless of race, color, gender, religion, disability, age, genetic information, socioeconomic status, or national or ethnic origin, and where their opinions, needs and viewpoints are considered in every decision we make.
5. **Growth and Innovation**, where we encourage creativity, continuous learning, experimentation and the generation of ideas.
6. **Stewardship of all the resources** with which we have been entrusted and are accountable for, ensuring the proper use of state funds and the preservation of the nation's heritage and intellectual output.
7. **Intellectual Freedom**, where we are committed to facilitating the free exchange of information and ideas.

# Custodians of Qatar's and the Region's Heritage

Qatar National Library continued to strengthen its role as a guardian of Qatar's and the region's heritage by protecting rare materials while bringing them to life for the public. Through lectures, workshops, exhibitions, digitization, acquisitions, and international collaboration, we connected people to the sources that shape identity and scholarship—and collected today's stories before they fade. What follows is heritage in motion: preserved with care, shared with purpose, and carried forward together.

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## Journeys Through Time: History, Discovery, and Voices at QNL

*At QNL, we don't just preserve stories; we invite people to step into them.*

This belief set the tone for our public engagement throughout the year, guiding how we connected people with history, knowledge, and one another.

Across a rich lineup of talks and workshops, we invited our community to travel through time, place, and perspective. From retracing the journeys of an Ottoman traveler and uncovering Gulf history before the oil era, to exploring scientific expeditions that shaped knowledge of the Arab world, each event turned archives and manuscripts into living stories.

We also explored women's travel literature, reflecting on how female writers documented the world around them—sometimes realistically, sometimes imaginatively, but always with insight and depth. Their narratives offered fresh perspectives on culture, identity, and movement.

Researchers and history enthusiasts actively engaged in hands-on sessions that unpacked British historical sources on post-independence Gulf

history—learning how to work with archives, oral histories, and ethical research methods that bring the past into sharper focus.

We also hosted and led the first workshop in the Arab region on **Records in Context (RiC)**, the new archival description standard developed by the International Council on Archives (ICA), giving participants direct exposure to emerging global practice.

The third edition of **From the Memory of Private Collections in Qatar** brought together more than 150 deeply engaged attendees, mostly Qataris, alongside a focused seminar on the Moroccan art of the book, underscoring the depth of local interest in preserving, studying, and sharing cultural heritage.

Together, these events did more than share knowledge. They sparked curiosity, encouraged dialogue, and reminded us that history is shaped by travelers, scientists, writers, and communities alike.

## A Scholar's Spark: How One Lecture Changed Everything



Sometimes inspiration shows up when you least expect it. For Namsha Nasser Al-Marri, a Qatari student, it happened in her very first year of university during her participation in one of QNL's manuscript-related lectures. She wasn't interested in codicology (the study of manuscripts)—not yet. But one quiet moment with a manuscript—followed by QNL's live and recorded lectures and multiple return visits to explore the field more deeply—flipped a switch. Curiosity took over.

Fast-forward to today: Namsha is now a fourth-year student diving deep into manuscript studies for her graduation project. She's exploring paratexts, structure, and all the hidden clues that bring old texts to life. And she's not stopping there—she plans to specialize in this field in her postgraduate studies, a rare and exciting path in Qatar and the region.

Namsha's story is exactly why QNL invests in opening doors. One encounter. One spark. And a future scholar is born—ready to help preserve the written heritage that shapes us all.





*“Qatar National Library provided a rigorous academic research environment that directly contributed to the successful completion of my study. The support of the Library’s staff played a significant role in facilitating my research work, and greatly assisted me in accessing the most important specialized sources and references in manuscript studies. They also provided me with highly valuable information closely related to my research topic.”*



## Preserving the Past. Sharing It Forward

*That same commitment shaped how our heritage collections grew, traveled, and reached new audiences.*

We launched a new digital platform for the **Family Papers Collection**, making personal histories easier to explore. Spanning from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, these materials offer rare insights into everyday life, education, trade, and politics—narratives often absent from institutional archives. They expand the scope of Gulf studies by introducing diverse primary sources that were previously unavailable to scholars and researchers.



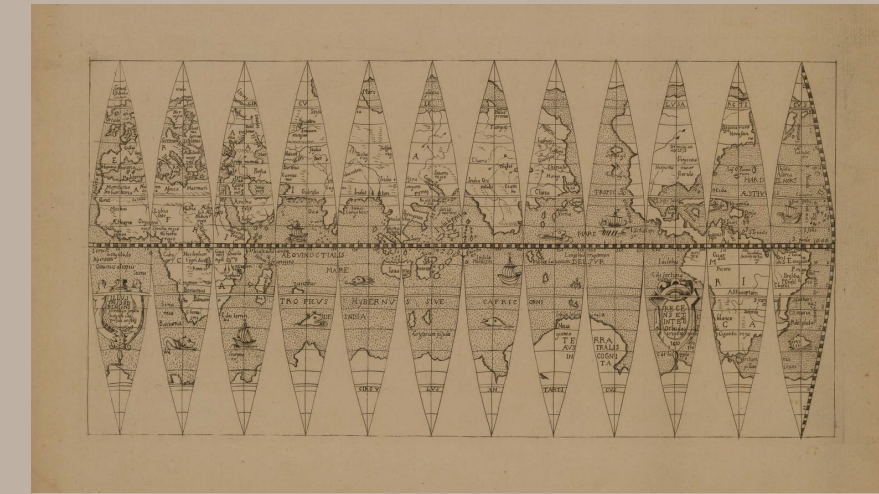
And when key local moments unfolded—like the Iranian missile attack in June—we documented them in real time, because today’s history deserves care, too.

Behind the scenes, we leaned into smart tools and new ideas. We kicked off collecting soundscape oral histories—capturing not just what people said, but how places sounded and felt. We also launched the **Gulf History online lecture series** that brought fresh global perspectives on the

region. These efforts strengthen our position as a key resource for research on Islamic intellectual heritage and foster greater global access, collaboration, and scholarly exchange.

And online? Our revamped Heritage Library social media account saw its following grow exponentially, expanding engagement and bringing Qatar’s heritage—and that of the Islamic world—to a wider audience.

## New in 2025: Maps, Stories, and a Sense of Wonder



This year’s new heritage acquisitions were integrated into our Heritage Library collections, where rare materials are preserved not only as artefacts, but as sources that document and convey historical narratives. From French engraver Nicolas Spirinx’s 1610 terrestrial and celestial globe gores, which once shaped how people understood the Earth and the skies, to a 1918 Ottoman pamphlet tracing early political interests along Qatar’s coast, each item adds a new layer to our shared memory. A 1665 jewel-filled history of Gulf pearls by French scholar Samuel Chappuzeau and a 1701 hand-drawn Red Sea chart by famed

Dutch cartographer and master chart maker for the Dutch East India Company (VOC) during the Dutch Golden Age, Joan Blaeu II, further anchor these works in the region’s cultural and maritime past.

Together, these acquisitions strengthen our Heritage Library as a living record of place and people, while opening new pathways for interdisciplinary research and offering scholars primary sources through which the region’s history can be re-examined, contextualized, and newly interpreted.

## Collecting Today’s Stories

*We’re building snapshots of today—one story, one post, one object at a time, for future generations.*

Our contemporary collections now span both digital content and physical items, helping preserve the everyday moments that shape our cultural memory.

To further strengthen access to Qatar’s national collection through our Digital Repository, we are enriching it with significant press archives. We are currently in the process of securing **digital copies of the complete publications of Dar Al Sharq—Al Sharq, Al Arab, The Peninsula, and Lusail newspapers since their inception—as well as Al Arabi Al Jadeed** from 2014 onward. Once made publicly accessible, these collections will significantly enrich access to Qatar’s contemporary record and historical narratives.

The momentum grew even stronger after our public panel discussion on digital content creation and cultural heritage preservation. Sixty-five participants joined the conversation. The outcome? A signed agreement to archive the Qatari influencers’ social media accounts as part of our digital national collection—so today’s voices remain accessible tomorrow.

## Building the Future, Guided by the Past



A construction project sparked a journey into the past. When Daniel Smith sought historical photographs for a project he was working on in Doha, QNL teams stepped in. Based on the geo-coordinates he provided, our staff provided a tailored set of images spanning 1944 to 1975, drawn from 29 aerial flights, offering a rare, layered view of the site over time. Mr. Smith confirmed the photographs were invaluable in shaping expectations for the excavation process—and, in his words, they even transported him back in time.

This is what Qatar National Library does best: preserving memory to inform progress—connecting Qatar’s past with the projects shaping its future.



## Safeguarding Manuscripts Through Innovation

Mr. Smith’s individual experience reflects a broader approach we apply across our work. In partnership with the Qatar Research, Development, and Innovation Council (QRDI), the Library launched the Joint Call for the Preservation of Qatari Heritage. From **15 qualified submissions**, **three research proposals** were selected, reflecting both scholarly rigor and practical relevance. Two of the projects address the deterioration caused by iron gall ink and verdigris corrosion in Islamic manuscripts, while the third will develop a database of inks and pigments used in early Islamic manuscript production.

Ultimately, this work is about protecting fragile heritage so future generations can continue to engage with it. It will generate scientifically grounded guidelines to stabilize and mitigate material degradation, while also establishing a reliable research resource that strengthens conservation practices and supports the long-term preservation of manuscript collections.

## Protecting What Makes Us Us: The 4<sup>th</sup> Doha Conference

*When a community loses its heritage, it loses part of its soul.*

That idea resonated deeply within Qatar National Library in September 2025—and stayed with everyone long after.

A flagship initiative within QNL’s strategy to combat the illicit trafficking of documentary heritage, the *4th Doha Conference on Combating the Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property* marked its most ambitious edition to date.

The conference brought together **more than 100 participants from over 20 countries**, including policymakers, law-enforcement professionals, cultural experts, and international partners united by a shared commitment to protecting culture before it is lost. **Featuring 30 high-profile expert presentations**, the program moved decisively beyond theory, focusing on crisis readiness alongside in-depth sessions on heritage protection and recovery.

Described by returning participants as the strongest edition yet, the conference—**held under QNL’s Himaya project** and in collaboration with the Embassies of the United States,

France, and Italy, as well as UNESCO—turned complex challenges into practical action. Discussions spanned legal frameworks, risk preparedness, cultural first aid, restitution, and lessons drawn directly from the field, with firsthand accounts from Yemen and Iraq underscoring the human stakes behind cultural loss.

Highly rated for both the quality of its content and the strength of its organization, the conference reaffirmed QNL’s role as an influential convener for cultural preservation in the Arab world, while enhancing Qatar’s visibility within the international cultural and heritage landscape. Each year, the Doha Conference expands its circle—deepening expertise, strengthening networks, and empowering a new generation of cultural guardians ready to keep history alive, together.



— Christos Tsirogiannis, Head of Research on Illicit Antiquities, UNESCO Chair on Threats to Cultural Heritage, Ionian University, Greece



*“Without any exaggeration, this was by far the best organized and interesting conference I have been to during the last 25 years.”*

*“I really hope that all the participants will transfer this amazing experience to their institutions, as an example to be followed. Really grateful to you and all the QNL team for the exemplary work on every level, and looking forward to our further cooperation in the near future.”*



# Inspiring Lifelong Learning and Discovery

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## A. BUILDING A READING NATION

### Turning Pages, Sparking Joy: Qatar Reads in 2025

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Learning came alive this year—and you could feel it everywhere. In living rooms and classrooms, exhibition halls, public spaces and book fairs, QNL's Qatar Reads sparked curiosity and brought people together through stories.

Participation in the Family Reading Program more than doubled in 2025, rising from **809 children in January to 1,755 by December**—representing **117% growth** and a strong **77% retention rate**, with each child taking home **an average of 16 books**. That's how reading becomes a lasting habit. Stories didn't simply pass through these young readers; they stayed with them.

Kids showed up proud, books in hand, eager to share what they loved reading. To keep the energy going, we delivered **six focused Family Reading Program events** that sustained engagement and strengthened community connection.

We also delivered **eight Read to Lead sessions**—creating meaningful partnerships with institutions and opening doors to

real conversations with leaders. These sessions gave participants space to learn, connect, and imagine what's possible, supporting both community learning and career growth in practical, personal ways.

Overall, Qatar Reads programs attracted **approximately 85,000 in total footfall**, driven by stronger partnerships and more targeted programming—**an increase of 10,000 visitors compared to last year**.

Our Qatar Reads' exhibitions and programs also reached new audiences in Italy, Argentina, Iraq, the UAE and Azerbaijan, proving that storytelling crosses borders easily, engaging **more than 16,000 participants globally**.

Our Qatar Reads initiative doesn't just put books in hands—it helps young minds think, imagine, and connect. It turns reading into a *shared adventure*, building a culture where every page turns into an opportunity to discover something new.



## One Book, One Doha: One Story, Many Voices

*What happens when a whole city reads the same book?*

*You get conversations. Curiosity. And a lot of happy readers.*

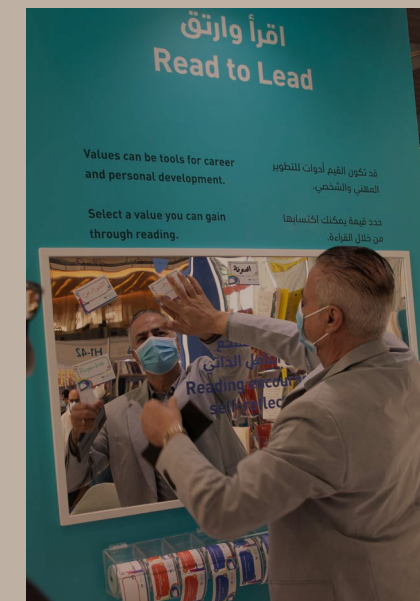
In 2025, **One Book, One Doha** campaign brought the community together around *Maqamat Al-Hariri*, transforming a literary classic into a shared, living experience. Through **33 events and activities** that engaged **nearly 23,000 participants** across Qatar, families, students, and curious passersby joined in at Qatar National Library, Katara Cultural Village, and beyond. From games and creative challenges to exhibitions and lively discussions, each interaction made Arabic literature feel fresh, engaging, and deeply relevant.

The program's main milestones included the *Maqamat Al-Hariri* exhibition at the Library, the **One Book, One Doha Festival** at Katara, and an imaginative turn into the world of style with *Fables in Fashion* at M7. Stories leapt off the page into an exhibit, as artists and young fashion designers reimagined literary characters through bold, inventive works. It was storytelling you could see, wear, and celebrate—proof that reading doesn't end with the last page.

More than **26,000 participants** engaged with the campaign, while its educational impact extended into classrooms through the integration of *Maqamat Al-Hariri* into school curricula. Working with **over 30 schools and academic partners**, the initiative reached more than **1,000 students**.

The campaign's impact was reflected in strong community engagement and positive participant feedback. Notably, **95% of participants from the Qatar Leadership Center reported positive feedback** on a day of lectures and tours at QNL focused on *Maqamat Al-Hariri*—an activity that connected literature with leadership.

To sustain the momentum of Qatar Reads' programs every year, we carry that shared reading experience into the workplace—through our **Read to Lead** program, we invite executives to harness the same transformative power of reading to inspire leadership and culture change.



## How Read to Lead Is Shaping Workplace Culture

In 2022, we launched under our Qatar Reads initiative the **Read to Lead** program to bring reading into the lives of working professionals. The program brings executives and middle managers together around books, ideas, and meaningful conversations. By 2025, it had engaged **265 participants from 15 organizations**, alongside a new monitoring exercise to better understand its impact and reading habits. Sessions take two forms: annual cross-organization principal sessions and workplace-led sessions. Some of these conversations don't end when the session does. The **Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT)** is one of two organizations where spotlight sessions became a quarterly tradition—showing how reading can move from activity to culture.

The initiatives described—from family reading programs and city wide reading campaigns to executive book clubs—show how QNL weaves reading into the fabric of daily life, sparking curiosity, connection and lasting habits across all ages and sectors.



Amy Johnson,  
Ministry of  
Communications and  
Information Technology,  
Qatar



*“Ever since Read to Lead, I noticed a big change in my colleagues’ attitudes and performance. I really believe that Qatar Reads is transforming the community.”*



## B. EMPOWERING LIFE-LONG LEARNERS & YOUNG MINDS

### Young Minds, Big Ideas: Learning That Sticks at QNL



At Qatar National Library, young people don't just attend programs—they *step into experiences* that build skills, confidence, and curiosity.

It starts with **Digital Truth Seekers**, where teens learn how to spot misinformation, question what they see online, and think critically in a noisy digital world. Add a friendly competition, and suddenly media literacy feels sharp, relevant, and empowering.

We also launched the **Alif Baa exhibition**—an interactive experience that introduces children to the Arabic alphabet and language, turning early learning into something playful, immersive and memorable.

Creativity took center stage at the **Science Book Forum (SBF)**, with two well-received sessions that blended science and storytelling. From "Doing the Impossible: If We Can Reverse Cell Fate, Why Can't We Reimagine Success?"—exploring fate, identity, war and



Palestinian refugees through a scientific lens—to the SBF Club, where students journeyed through the universe with Las Cumbres Observatory and created AI-powered animated stories. Young participants also had the unique opportunity to meet a real astronaut at the Library, Mr. José Hernández.

Hands-on learning also expanded through the national **FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC)**,



delivered in partnership with Hamad Bin Khalifa University, giving high school students valuable exposure to the latest developments in robotics while strengthening essential skills such as teamwork, problem-solving and effective communication. The winning team went on to represent Qatar in the USA.

Learning doesn't stop when school's out. The **Summer Camp**, the **Winter Camp** and the **Summer Reading Challenge** turn the Library into a creative space—where stories spark ideas and learning feels exciting, not required.

Together, these initiatives engaged **nearly 10,000 participants** across Children's and Young Adults' programs, with an additional **nearly 8,000 school students** visiting the Library—further extending its role as a dynamic learning space for young minds across Qatar.



Different formats. One goal. QNL helps young people think sharper, create boldly, and feel ready for what's next.



## Turning Ideas into Impact



Hands-on learning brings ideas to life through initiatives like **FIRST Tech Challenge**, where participants build and program robots to perform simple tasks. For Hamad Al Saadi, a Qatari high school student, the experience went far beyond developing technical skill; it strengthened his teamwork and leadership abilities while igniting a deep passion for engineering. Inspired by this journey, Hamad now looks forward to joining the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), where he aspires to learn from world-leading innovators, contribute to groundbreaking research, and transform bold ideas into meaningful global impact.



– Shams Al-Agha,  
Murshidi Participant and  
Founder of STEM Up



*“Murshidi was a turning point for me; it helped me in ways I could not have anticipated.”*



## Murshidi - Where Students Meet CEOs

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What happens when 94 mentors from across Qatar team up with ambitious students? Murshidi happens— a mentorship community that’s buzzing with ideas, ambition, and real change.

With **over 422** sessions in 2025, mentors helped students take bold steps forward. Some, like Saba Al-Haj and Ahmad Hani, earned spots in top programs in genomics, precision medicine, and molecular life sciences. Others, like Shams Al-Agha, launched initiatives such as STEM Up, which offers high school students internships and shadowing opportunities within real research environments. Supported by her mentor, Dr. Hilal Lashuel, Shams is helping inspire the next generation of scientists in Qatar and bridging education with real-world experience—**advancing the transfer of knowledge and nurturing a spirit of initiative and positive action**— proof that one meaningful conversation can spark a lasting breakthrough.

Several Murshidi mentees have gone on to create wider impact: Dr. Yusra Mekki and Zainab Siddiq launched **Arab Stars** after

their mentorship journey and have since joined the program as mentors, while Zainab and Shams co-hosted a research-skills workshop for 50 students at the Education City Student Center. Murshidi’s reach now extends beyond Qatar, with participants traveling from countries like Kuwait to attend one-to-one sessions at the Library, and others from the region joining mentoring sessions online.

And we’re growing fast. With Murshidi Talks, a Schools Edition, and our Appreciation Event, we’re opening more doors—so every student feels supported, inspired, and ready for what’s next.



## C. CREATIVE EXPRESSION & LITERARY ECOSYSTEM

## When Stories Find Their Voice

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The voices of domestic workers reached a lasting milestone with the publication of *Through Their Eyes: The Untold Stories of Migrant Domestic Workers in Qatar* becoming part of QNL’s collection — a powerful platform for domestic worker’s stories to be shared. This book started simply: a room, a table, and an invitation to write. In 2024, QNL partnered with the UN International Organization for Migration (IOM) Qatar to deliver two weeks of creative writing workshops for 30 domestic workers.

Alongside discovering how to use the Library’s resources and services, participants received practical writing tailored to their creative ambitions. As the workshops unfolded, confidence grew. Pens moved faster. Stories took shape. Through guided activities and discussion, each participant developed a personal narrative reflecting lived experience, imagination, and voice.

- Roula Hamati,  
International Organization  
for Migration Qatar  
Mission Representative



*“Seeing their personal stories compiled into a book on the Library’s shelves sent a strong message: domestic workers are not invisible; they are valued members of the community whose journeys enrich Qatar’s social fabric.”*





“QNL turned my daydreams into achievable goals. Through the Books and Authors event and the Novel November Workshop, I gained the support and publishing insight I needed. I never imagined I could write 30,000 words in a month—now I’m continuing my journey to becoming a published writer with the tools QNL gave me.”



That momentum extends across QNL’s wider writing community. Doua Al Jefairi first discovered the program at the *Write to Inspire: Books & Authors* event, later joining the *Write to Inspire: Novel November Workshop* and drafting around 30,000 words of her novel. The impact didn’t stop there.

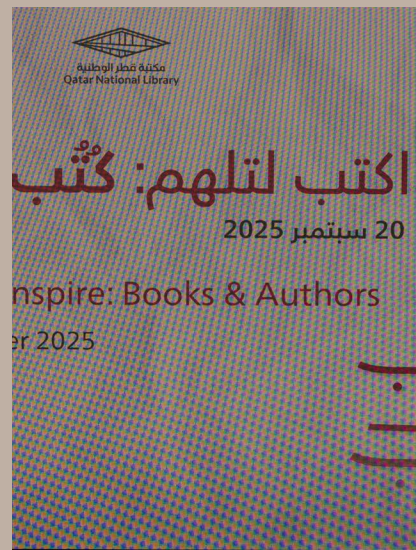
Shannon Hugman, a participant in the annual *Write to Inspire: Novel November*, recently shared the exciting news that she has signed a two-book publishing contract, crediting a significant part of this milestone to her experience in the program. Now in its fifth year, the initiative continues to turn writing aspirations into real outcomes—proof that at QNL, stories find momentum, an audience, and a place to belong.

These workshops are part of a continuum that supports writers from first draft to published work, as explored in our *Stories Behind the Spines* event.

## Stories Behind the Spines

When *Write to Inspire: Books and Authors* returned in 2025, the energy was unmistakable. Writers, publishers, and readers came together not just to talk books—but to talk reality. The late nights. The false starts. The “maybe this will work?” moments that eventually turn into pages worth sharing. Authors spoke candidly, and the room leaned in. Because these weren’t polished success stories—they were lived ones.

Publishers like Dar Nebras, HBKU Press, and the Al-Noor Institute for the Blind added depth to the conversation, showing how stories travel from draft to bookshelf—and how inclusive publishing ensures everyone gets to read along, including readers with visual impairments. What emerged was more than an event. It was an ongoing conversation about identity, creativity, and courage.



## D. COMMUNITY WELLBEING & SOCIAL IMPACT

### Small Questions, Big Reassurance

Stories build belonging—and that belonging supports wellbeing.

Beyond the literary scene, QNL continued in 2025 to offer practical guidance, reassurance, and services that meet people where they are. The following highlights reflect the Library’s community wellbeing and social impact.



In September 2025, QNL reached out to parents (and parents-to-be) with one simple goal: you’re not alone. The annual **Parents to Be** forum brought together experts in nutrition, newborn care, breastfeeding, and child development for two days of practical advice and honest conversation. 2,161 people attended the **Parents To Be** festival. They asked real questions and got useful answers.

In November, we also hosted the second edition of our annual **Our Children Matter Forum**, bringing together **300 parents, teachers and educators** to explore key issues shaping children’s wellbeing and development.

Parents left with more than tips and notes—they left calmer, more confident, and connected. By creating space for learning and reassurance, QNL continues to



support families at the moments that matter most, helping support not just informed parents, but a stronger, healthier next generation.

This commitment to support families informs our outreach efforts across Qatar, which signals the move to *Being Where Our Patrons Are*.

## Being Where Our Patrons Are

We meet people where they are—and keep the doors open wider than ever. In 2025, we expanded access in practical, people-first ways: **launching a book lending machine at Al Khor Mall**, opening a dedicated study room for children aged 7–12, and widening access to sensory and innovation spaces.

Reading also moved beyond the Library's walls with the launch of **a new family-friendly reading space at Doha Festival City from 1 to 20 September**, bringing books and interactive activities directly into a shared public environment and inviting families of all ages to discover, read, and connect at the start of the academic year. Our Qatar Reads initiative also **hosted 5 book club**

**sessions in public spaces** as part of the Reading Spaces program.

This commitment to outreach was further reflected at the Doha Book Fair, where our Short Story Dispenser became a surprise favorite— **about 1 in every 50 people visiting the Book Fair** stopped by our booth, smiled, and walked away with a story in their pocket.

The Library's reach continues to grow, with e-books and audiobooks for hospital patients and public transport users scheduled to launch in 2026—because lifelong learning does not follow a schedule, and neither does QNL.



We actively listen to our community, using insights from patron experience surveys to inform and shape our future planning. Responding to feedback from night owls seeking extended overnight access, we **introduced a dedicated late-night study area**. Open until 6:00 AM, this space offers an ideal environment for researchers, students, and professionals to read, study, and work throughout the night.

The Library's digital reach also expanded with the launch of its **Virtual Tour**, which has attracted **nearly 6,400 visitors**, primarily from Qatar, Saudi Arabia, India, and the United States—strengthening connections with the Library's online community, wherever they may be.



## E. EXHIBITIONS & CULTURAL DIALOGUE

Step into our exhibitions and something shifts. You're not just looking—you're connecting. In **Heritage in Art: Reflections by Qatari Artists**, seven Qatari artists engaged with our collections and reimagined them through their own creative lens. Drawing inspiration from rare maps, manuscripts, and photographs, they crafted deeply personal narratives of memory, place, and identity—bringing fresh voices to the present through the echoes of the past.

As part of the Qatar–Argentina & Chile 2025 Year of Culture, the **Antarctica Exhibition** takes you from desert heat to polar ice. You see scientists, hear the stories of Qatari explorers, and understand why the frozen South matters to all of us.

Our **Maqamat Al-Hariri: The Art of Eloquence** exhibition transported audiences to twelfth-century Basra, where language dazzles and storytelling flourishes. Including manuscripts from our heritage collections, the exhibition showcased the enduring power of masterful narratives.

These QNL exhibitions prove that heritage isn't meant to sit behind glass—it is alive, shared, and meant to be experienced together.

## Culture in Action: Qatar Argentina and Chile Year of Culture

*In 2025, we opened our doors—and our stages—to Argentina and Chile.*

As part of the **Qatar Argentina and Chile Year of Culture**, QNL brought people together through **13 vibrant cultural events**. Think live concerts, an immersive Antarctica exhibition, and hands-on creative workshops—each one a window into Argentinian and Chilean heritage.

We teamed up with the **Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra**, embassies, and leading cultural institutions to make it real, authentic, and human. The result? Cultural moments that didn't just showcase art—they sparked conversations, curiosity, and connection.

Together, these exhibitions and Year of Culture events affirm QNL as a vibrant meeting ground where heritage, creativity, and intercultural exchange come alive—strengthening international partnerships, deepening bilateral ties, and placing Qatar at the heart of global creative dialogue. By bringing diverse audiences together around shared stories and experiences, the Library reinforces its role as a cultural bridge that transcends borders and fosters deeper mutual understanding.



## F. EVERYONE'S WELCOME HERE

At Qatar National Library, we provide a welcoming space for everyone—an atmosphere that is immediately evident upon entering the building. We are committed to creating environments and opportunities where people can learn, engage, and connect in meaningful ways. In 2025 alone, we **served 1,108 children and people with disabilities** through tailored programs and experiences designed to support meaningful participation for all.

## Sign Language for All

For the first time, QNL offered hands-on **Arabic and Qatari Sign Language training**. Over five fun, interactive days, people of all abilities came together to learn new skills and communicate in new ways—because connection should *never* be limited by speech.

To deepen this commitment to accessibility and inclusion, sign language videos were also created for the *Maqamat Al-Hariri* exhibition, ensuring more visitors could fully experience and enjoy the content.

## A Day for the Senses

During **Sensory Exploration: A Family Day for Autism Awareness Month**, families enjoyed sensory-friendly storytelling and hands-on activities designed to be calming, engaging, and welcoming. Experts were on hand to chat and support, making the library feel like a safe space for discovery.

Across events big and small, QNL brings people together, *not just to attend*, but to belong. Whether through language, sound, or sensory play, the message stays the same: **you're part of this community—your way.**

From building a reading nation and empowering young minds to fostering creative expression, supporting wellbeing, showcasing culture, extending digital reach and ensuring accessibility, QNL's public engagement in 2025 reflects a holistic commitment to learning, connection and inclusion. As you turn the last page of this section, let the stories you've read reaffirm one central truth — QNL is a library for all. Only when every individual, regardless of ability or background, feels welcome can our Library truly fulfil its purpose as a hub of learning, connection and shared discovery.

# Facilitating and Promoting Knowledge Creation in and about Qatar

Qatar National Library continues to strengthen its role as an enabler in the field of research—facilitating knowledge to be created, preserved, and shared with the world. By expanding open access infrastructure, enhancing platforms that amplify Qatar's scholarly output, and investing in people through fellowships, training, and partnerships, QNL is supporting a research ecosystem that is more visible, more connected, and built to last.

06



## Strengthening Qatar's Research Ecosystem

In 2025, Qatar National Library further strengthened national research visibility with the launch of the **Qatar Research Collection**, a comprehensive database documenting Qatar's scholarly output.

The new Collection brings together information about **nearly 70,000 research works** with contributions from Qatar-based researchers, with **more than 25,000 available through Open Access**, making it the largest freely accessible resource dedicated exclusively to Qatar's research landscape.

While **Manara**, our **Qatar Research Repository**, preserves and publishes a variety of outputs by Qatar-based researchers, the Qatar Research Collection aggregates and connects metadata for Qatar-

based research published worldwide, enabling users to discover open access ones, apply advanced filters, and monitor national research trends. Together, the two platforms significantly enhance accessibility, discoverability, and long-term preservation of Qatar's intellectual output—positioning QNL as a key driver of Open Access and a cornerstone in building a sustainable, globally visible national research ecosystem.

In 2025, QNL also **funded 1,423 open access articles and supported 809 authors from 29 institutions across Qatar**, further strengthening the presence of Qatar-based research within the global scholarly community.

- Md Mizanur Rahman  
Qatar University



*"The Open Access (OA) Program of QNL caught our attention while we were completing our book manuscript titled "Social Change in the Gulf Region: Multidisciplinary Perspectives for Springer Nature". We reached out to the Open Access team and secured funding for the open access publication of our book. The book has been downloaded more than 469,000 times since it was published."*



— Ghalia Al-Mohannadi,  
QNL Fellow



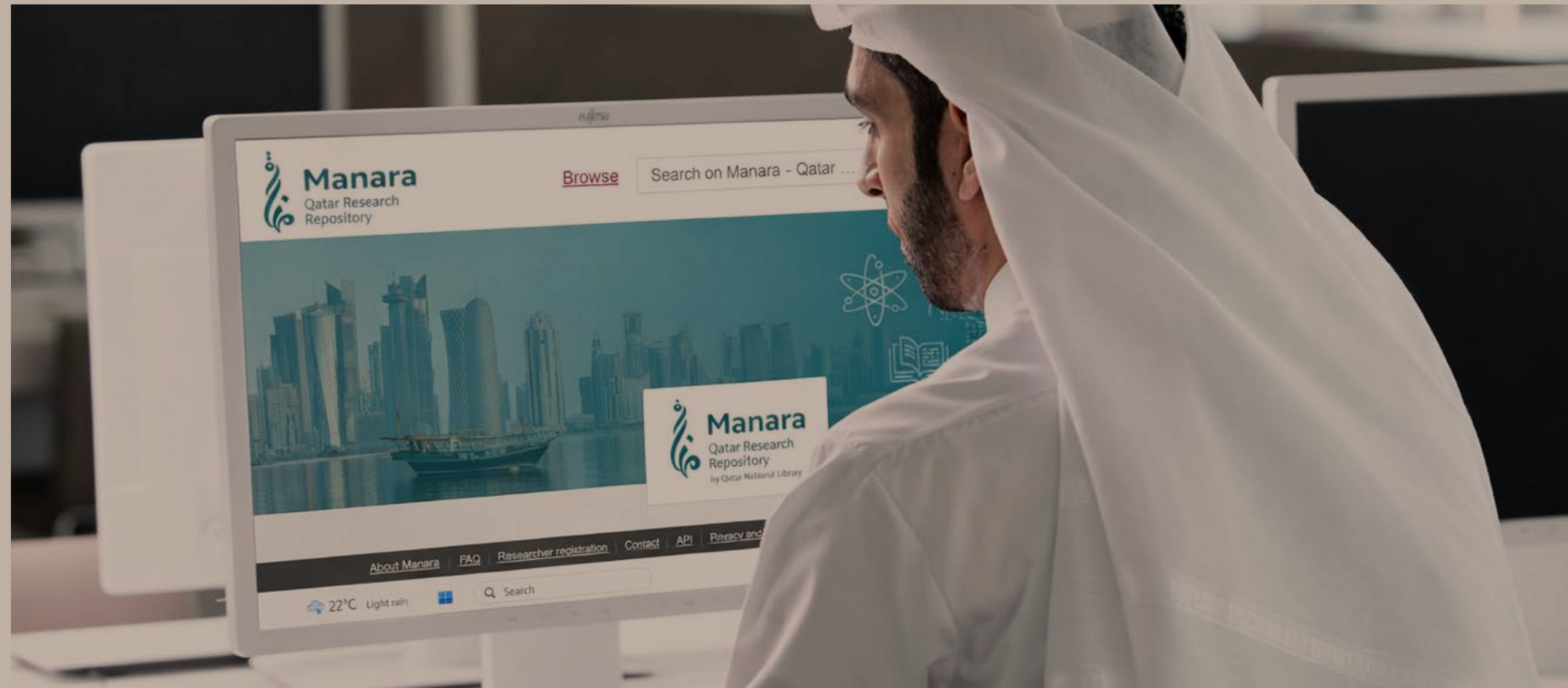
*“Qatar National Library’s Architectural Photo Archive was an invaluable foundation for my research on the sensory and spatial experience of Qatari heritage architecture. I hope this work deepens understanding of traditional architecture—and inspires contemporary expressions of our identity.”*



Momentum continued with the recruitment of researchers for the second edition of the QNL Fellowship, which attracted 49 applications representing 16 nationalities and reflected strong engagement and interest.

Major milestones were also achieved for Manara, which now hosts **more than 10,000 items from over 30 institutions.**

For researchers and institutions, the benefits are immediate: increased global visibility, simplified deposit processes, improved discovery across disciplines, and access to rich metadata alongside links to both paywalled and Open Access content.



- Fahad Al-Dariham  
Library Manager,  
Hamad Bin Khalifa



*“Our collaboration with QNL is driven by a shared commitment to strengthening Qatar’s national research capabilities through the promotion of open access to multidisciplinary research. HBKU Repository demonstrates the university’s commitment to building capacity in Qatar, as it promises to strengthen the country’s inclusive, high-quality research and education ecosystem by making expertise and knowledge available to all.”*



Strategic institutional partnerships further strengthened Manara’s content base. We successfully completed the first batch upload of Hamad Bin Khalifa University theses (2017–2025), making **884 theses available on Manara** and bringing the total number of **openly accessible theses to 1,000.**

Each upload strengthens Qatar’s research ecosystem, preserves the nation’s intellectual legacy, and expands global access to local scholarship—supporting innovation while positioning Qatar as a contributor to the world’s knowledge.

— Researcher ,  
From an anonymous post  
event survey



*“Every program I attended stood out for its strong focus on practical outcomes. I left each session equipped with detailed knowledge that I could immediately apply to my own research and creative projects. This emphasis on actionable takeaways makes the library’s offerings not only intellectually stimulating but also highly relevant and beneficial for professionals and researchers.”*



## Growing Our Research Community

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In 2025, we doubled down on people, not just programs. We delivered a vibrant series of research-focused activities designed to connect scholars and strengthen networks around Qatar’s history and heritage.

We also hosted specialized workshops and supported researchers through tailored consultations—across academic, institutional, and independent projects.

Collaboration powered the work. Alongside international partners like INTBAU and Caravane Earth, we delivered targeted training that brought global expertise into local conversations. And we stayed deeply connected to the wider ecosystem—participating in research events and professional programs with

partners such as the International Council on Archives (ICA), Qatar Museums, Qatar University, Community College, and the National Archives, including training around archival description standards (ISAD(G)).

Creating real connections, strengthening practical skills, and expanding a community of researchers contribute to shaping knowledge about Qatar.



## Supporting Research Culture and Community Impact

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Impact also meant listening closely to community needs. Through a joint study with Hamad Bin Khalifa University, QNL launched a 10-month research project exploring how early reading supports new mothers in Qatar—combining surveys, focus groups, and a targeted literacy intervention to generate findings that will shape future national reading initiatives and inform policy.

We also achieved a 95% research-related interlibrary loan fulfillment rate and partnered with QRDI, HBKU, and VCU on forward-looking research spanning AI, Islamic manuscripts and their preservation.

## Advancing Global Openness and Heritage Leadership

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QNL advanced international access to Arabic scientific heritage through a new digitization partnership with the Oxford University Bodleian Libraries, which will make over 100 rare astronomical manuscripts openly available via the Qatar Digital Library and Digital Bodleian under open-licensing terms—enabling scholars worldwide to study, cite, and integrate these primary sources into new research, and significantly expanding the history of science in the Arab and Islamic world.

Alongside these advances, QNL contributed to the development of, and became a signatory to, the Open Heritage Statement—a key international document that articulates shared values around open access to heritage content, identifies persistent

barriers, and proposes strategic directions for global advocacy—further reinforcing the Library’s leadership in advancing openness across knowledge and cultural heritage sectors.

These initiatives make knowledge about Qatar and the Islamic world easier to create, access, and sustain—today and for generations to come.

# International Engagement and Regional Leadership

In 2025, Qatar National Library stepped boldly onto the world stage. We shared our heritage through exhibitions and manuscripts that traveled far and wide, worked with partners to protect cultural memory, championed librarianship at record-breaking conferences and training programs, and embraced digital innovation through open repositories and AI initiatives. The stories that follow weave these strands together, showing how QNL connects cultures, safeguards the past, empowers professionals and shapes the future of libraries.

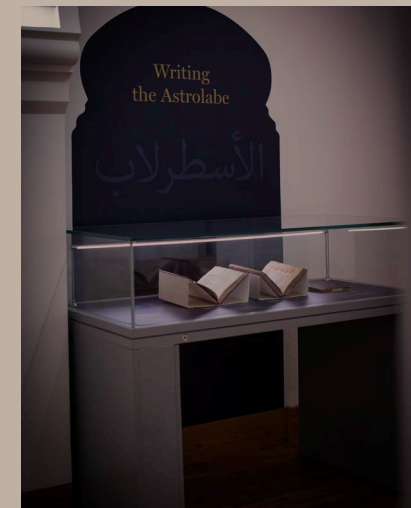
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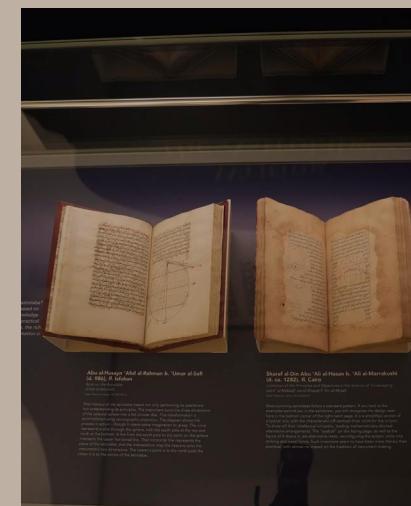
## A. HERITAGE BEYOND BORDERS

### Oxford & Jeddah Exhibitions

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We took our heritage on the road—and it traveled far. As content partner for the **Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies' 40th anniversary exhibition, *Lines of Faith***, Qatar National Library brought four rare manuscripts from its Heritage Library into the spotlight related to astrolabes, scientific ingenuity and centuries-old ideas, reminding visitors that knowledge has always crossed borders. The exhibition drew international attention and sparked conversations on social media, **reaching more than 2.4 million people**. This helped QNL deepen ties with one of the world's leading centers for Islamic studies.



We carried the same spirit to Jeddah, where we joined over 30 institutions at the **Islamic Arts Biennale** to celebrate the global legacy of Islamic art and science. Ten carefully selected manuscripts and artefacts—among them works

by al-Tusi, Abd-ur-Rahman al-Sufi and one of our oldest Latin manuscripts—featured in an exhibition of over 500 historical objects and contemporary artworks. **Around 648,000 visitors engaged with these stories**, extending our reach across the region and connecting wider audiences with our heritage collections.

For QNL, these collaborations were about more than exhibitions. They were about connection, dialogue, and keeping heritage in motion—one manuscript, one conversation at a time—advancing heritage diplomacy and global cultural exchange.

### Protecting Memory, Together

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Sharing our heritage is only part of the story; ensuring its preservation is the other. For one inspiring week in Rabat, Morocco (30 June – 5 July), We undertook intensive, practical work. The Library's Himaya Project brought together **40 customs officers and law-enforcement professionals from the region** for hands-on training on protecting cultural property—how to spot it, safeguard it, and work across borders to keep it safe.

Co-organized with ICESCO and customs authorities from Qatar and Morocco, the program mixed big-picture conversations with practical, real-world skills. And it worked. Participants shared stories, swapped expertise, and built connections that matter long after the workshop ends. As our Executive Director reminded everyone in her speech at the workshop: cultural objects carry our shared memory. Protecting them takes teamwork—and long-term partnerships.

— An AFLI delegate,  
From an anonymous post  
event survey



*“An exceptional, inspiring conference—rich in specialized content and outstandingly organized. It enabled high-level professional exchange and showcased Qatar as a leading hub that blends cultural authenticity with cutting-edge knowledge management.”*



## B. ADVANCING LIBRARIES AND LIBRARIANS

### How QNL Is Shaping the Future of Libraries

The 36th Annual AFLI Conference broke records, drawing the largest crowd in AFLI history. Around 700 participants filled the space, learning, discussing, and connecting, with QNL staff contributing to panels and presentations that encouraged thoughtful discussion and professional dialogue.

As host of the IFLA MENA Regional Office, QNL kept the region talking—and moving forward. Through the Librarians for Libraries program alone, 20 professional development sessions were held in 2025, attended by 1,954 participants from 29 countries, bringing the totals since the program’s launch in October 2024 to 36 sessions and 2,846 participants from 38 countries. This supports the development of core library skills across the region and beyond.

An IFLA World Library Appreciation Day gathered 48 libraries from across Qatar who contributed to the IFLA’s Library Map of the World project, and the launch of QIMAM—the Qatar-IFLA MENA Award for Aspiring Librarians—attracted 40 applicants and celebrated two outstanding winners.



We also organized the Arabic Caucus Session at IFLA WLIC 2025, selected and supported six regional speakers to deliver lightning talks, participated in the Special Libraries Association Arabian Gulf Chapter (SLA-AGC) Conference, and had a team member appointed as Qatar’s representative to the newly established Gulf Arabic Library Institutes Association (GALIA)—reinforcing Qatar’s presence within regional professional networks.

We also kicked off the year with the Libraries Lead Forum, bringing regional leaders together to explore what it takes for libraries to thrive today, and closed it by hosting the first-ever IFLA Regional Offices Meeting in Doha, aligning global priorities and shaping what comes next.

Hands-on training in cataloguing and metadata for teams from Lekhwiya and Bahrain University Library complemented these efforts, ensuring our partners have the skills they need.



— Raghad Alqahtani,  
Saudi Arabia



*“Being selected for the QIMAM Award is an honor that opens doors to global learning, collaboration, and impact. This is not the destination, but the beginning of a bigger journey—one that starts in the library and reaches the world.”*





*“I never thought that we would have such a platform for library capacity-building in MENA, free and accessible! Thank you QNL for making this dream come true. I enjoyed all the sessions, and I am looking forward to the 2026 season of Librarians for Libraries”*



Behind the scenes, support from QNL flowed too: collection development for seven libraries and cultural institutions, the creation of the FM Husain Museum Library, and major digitization milestones with Qatar Foundation and Qatar Museums.

By showing up consistently, QNL strengthened its presence in the library world and earned its place in international library conversations—not just as a participant, but as a voice that is heard. We shared ideas on heritage, preservation, and digital access, while building partnerships across the region that feed directly into our programs and collections.

The payoff? Direct access to global expertise, stronger regional connections, and a growing reputation for Qatar as a knowledge hub. Just as importantly, we invested in emerging MENA librarians—supporting the next generation of leaders and bringing them into QNL’s orbit, networks and future.



## Driving Open Knowledge and Digital Innovation

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In December 2025, we brought the region together for **Open Repositories MENA 2025**—a lively virtual gathering that connected around 100 librarians, researchers and repository experts from across the Middle East and North Africa. We explored how open repositories are shaping the future of research in our region—and how technologies like AI are

opening doors to wider access, smarter workflows, and stronger visibility for scholarly work. We also tackled the tough questions, from managing rights to dealing with bot traffic, creating space for practical, grounded dialogue that participants could take straight back to their institutions.

The webinar strengthened regional connections, sparked new ideas, and reinforced QNL’s role as a driving force for open knowledge in the MENA region.



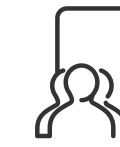
# 2025 at a Glance

08



1.25M

Total number of visits to the Library—the highest since opening



29K+

New members registered—an average of 82 people every day—bringing total membership to 319,190



415K+

Total number of print books borrowed—an average of 4.7 books borrowed per active member this year



3.1M+

Checkouts and views of our e-resources by the public, including over 120K children's e-resources



191 K+

People participated in our events



93%

Program/event satisfaction rate, i.e., 9 out of 10 participants rated their QNL events experience positively



85K+

Participants and visitors attended Qatar Reads events—an increase of 10,000 compared to last year



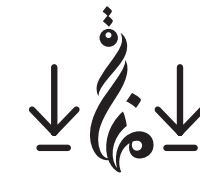
3M+

Research e-resources views and checkouts—an average of 8,300 digital uses daily, providing the community with 24/7 seamless access to global knowledge



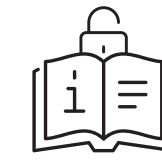
3.3M+

Digital heritage collections page views—a high-volume access to our online platforms, connecting users with our unique digital heritage collections



1.5M+

**Manara Research Repository views and downloads**—reflecting strong engagement with research content and enhancing the global reach and visibility of Qatar-based scholarship



1.4K+

Open access articles funded—**removing financial barriers** to ensure Qatar’s research is freely available to the world



767 K

Total number of pages digitized—**an average of more than 2,100 pages preserved every day to safeguard Qatar’s documentary heritage**

**Social media Reach & Engagement**



33.5 K+

**Impressions** across all social media platforms—**an increase of 32.8% from 2024**



272 K+

**Engagements** across all social media platforms—**an increase of 12.3% from 2024**

## A MESSAGE FROM ONE OF OUR PATRONS

*“Qatar National Library is more than a center of knowledge; it is a refuge for the soul and a home for thoughtful reflection. Within its expansive spaces, one feels as though in a serene retreat, where the spirit withdraws from the noise of the world and reconnects with sources of guidance and insight.*

*From the moment you enter, you are met with a sense of openness and clarity, embodied in a modern architectural design that radiates calm and invites contemplation. Here, among shelves that safeguard heritage and walls that look toward the future, I discovered a rare blessing in time itself—where the dignity of the place harmonizes with the visitors’ quiet respect and the solemnity of knowledge. For me, spending hours in this setting is not simply about seeking knowledge; it is a daily journey of renewal, through which I rediscover myself and regain mental clarity.”*

- Dr. Abdullah Al Naama,  
Consultant and Expert in  
Humanitarian and Non-Profit  
Sector Development

