

INSTITUTIONAL CAPTURE

**QATAR FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL:
USE OF SOFT POWER TO RESHAPE
EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES**



ISGAP

THE INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF
GLOBAL ANTISEMITISM & POLICY

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Institutional Capture: How Qatar Foundation International Reshaped US Education on the Middle East

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Executive Summary

Over the past sixteen years, Qatar Foundation International, LLC (QFI), the United States incorporated member of the Doha-based Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (“Qatar Foundation”) has conducted a systematic campaign to embed itself within US educational institutions, deploying at least \$65.3 million across 220 documented initiatives between 2009 and 2025. This comprehensive analysis reveals that QFI’s operations extend far beyond its now-publicly stated mission of solely supporting Arabic language education, encompassing a sophisticated influence operation designed to shape American educational narratives regarding Middle Eastern issues.

QFI’s own documents and communications demonstrate that, through systematic scaling efforts that has taken place over the last decade, it has functioned not just as a self-described “convener of thought”¹ across multiple educational domains but as a manipulator of thought—openly touting its reach and influence over US education in areas that go far beyond Arabic language programming and into the realms of the social studies, STEAM,² youth engagement, professional development, and social activism initiatives. QFI systematically obscured its activities and the repeated insertion of Qatari viewpoints in its work, and through corporate restructuring and strategic partnerships masked its actions behind the credibility of trusted institutions and the opacity of much of its grantmaking. QFI exploited the demand for professional development sponsorship to generously compensate teachers, get QFI materials directly in front of them, and leverage the reputation of host organizations to embed QFI’s viewpoint on the Middle East without any real oversight or vetting that might be expected when materials then reach students in both university and K-12 settings. QFI additionally leveraged its sponsorships at key educational events to spike event content with material and speakers that emanated from QFI’s own programs and partnerships.

Throughout this report, we document how QFI’s vast influence in the sixteen years since its founding should not be mistaken for an isolated product of benign philanthropic initiative and investment. Rather, it is the realized embodiment of defined civilizational jihad against Western society outlined by the Muslim Brotherhood decades ago, entrenching and embedding its influence within Western educational institutions to transform their narratives to align with the ideology of political Islam.

¹ “Qatar Foundation International: Creating Meaningful Connections to the Arab World,” *Q Magazine*, no. 3 (June 2017), filed with Supplemental Statement of Portland PR Inc., December 6, 2017, available at <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/6064-Supplemental-Statement-20171206-9.pdf>

² STEAM is the acronym for science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics.

Figure 1: Number of QFI-funded programs per state, 2009–2025*

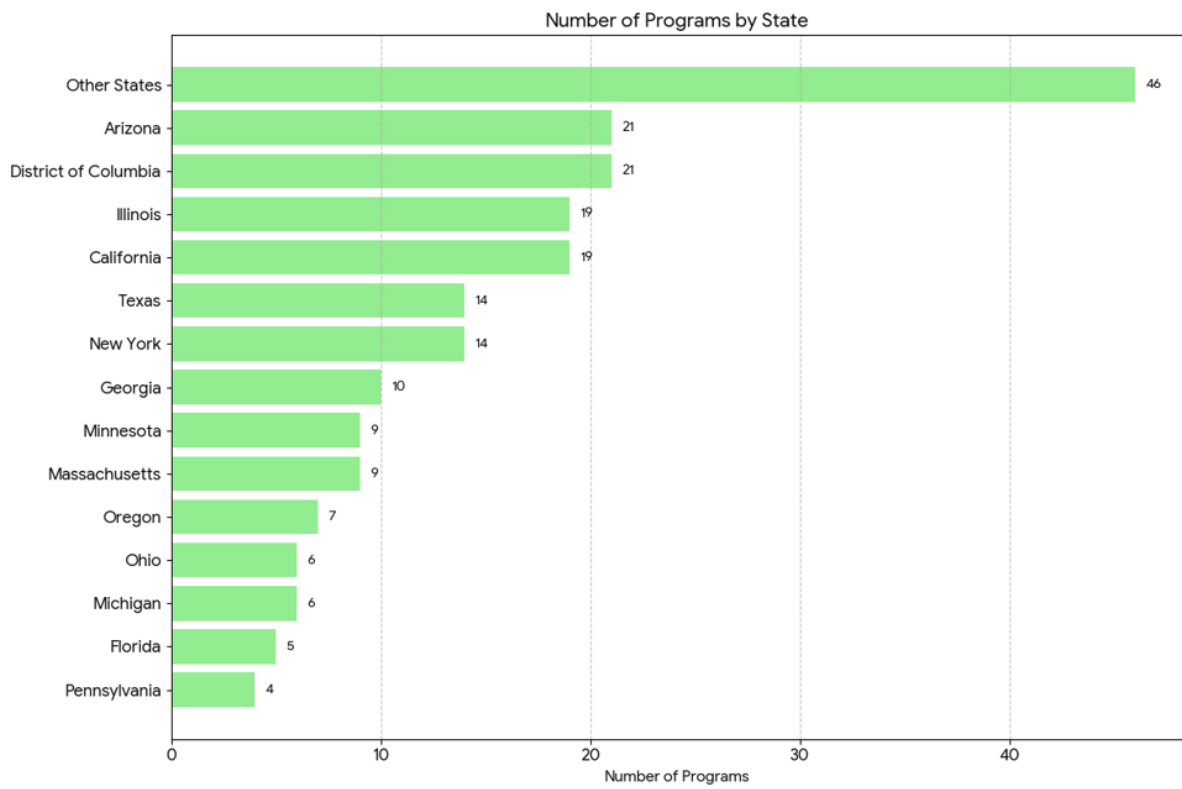
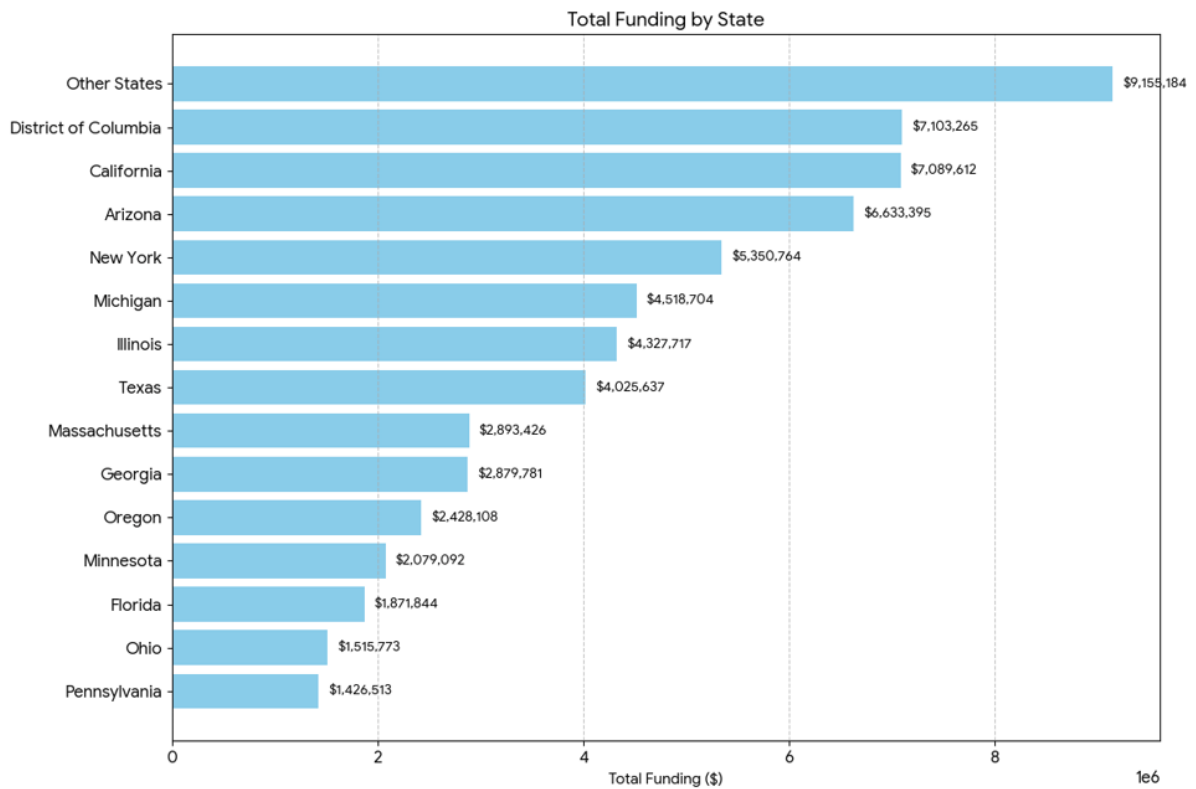


Figure 2: Total QFI funding per state, 2009–2025*



* Figures are derived from [reported data and methodologically grounded estimates](#).

Note on Methodology

This investigation relies on a synthesized dataset of 220 QFI-sponsored educational initiatives administered within the United States. Funding amounts were calculated using official Form 990 federal income tax documents, verified news reports, and official organizational publications. To account for missing data points, a systematic imputation process was utilized by calculating average funding levels within eleven distinct programmatic categories. All financial figures were converted to present value using annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) data to ensure accurate comparisons across the seventeen-year timeline. A more detailed discussion of the methodology underlying the investigation is available [here](#).

Key Findings

QFI's process for entrenchment into US educational institutions has employed several overlapping strategies:

- As illustrated in Figures 1 and 2, QFI strategically targeted geographic areas where influence could achieve maximum impact, focusing the bulk of its investments in areas with substantial immigrant populations, major metropolitan areas, or politically influential areas.
- QFI distributed its investments across broad programmatic areas and used a generous grant structure to quickly scale its influence.
- QFI heavily leveraged its partnerships with Title VI-funded Middle East National Resource Centers to embed QFI-produced content directly into outreach programming to regionally based educators and to utilize those same partnerships to promote QFI-run programs nationally. This included long-term training of teachers inculcated with QFI teaching methodologies on the Middle East in a self-perpetuating model where the trainees would then train other teachers in the same methodologies.
- QFI embedded pro-Qatari messaging in lessons supported by its grants and in its own open resource sites upon which QFI built nationwide reliance through its grants.
- QFI manipulated the content at national conferences for social studies educators by stacking the conferences with presenters trained by QFI on topics that aligned with Qatari interests.
- QFI amplified anti-Israel content by partnering with ideologically aligned organizations and by using QFI's relationships to help disseminate that content more widely.
- QFI used its grants to steer its preferred materials to teachers and into schools and to monitor the impact of its strategy, allowing it to maximize outcomes.
- QFI used organizational deception to shield from public disclosure the true nature of its funding, control and relationships.

The result of QFI's efforts has been the creation of an echo chamber—a repetitive reinforcement of the same narrative over time—sustained in large part by QFI's manipulation of an artificially heightened sense of urgency and importance of those narratives. It has, in effect, yielded a new baseline standard of pedagogy—one that was very much strategically designed to shape American educational narratives regarding Middle Eastern issues that casts doubt on Israel's very existence, rejects curriculum that teaches students about the efforts to normalize relations between Israel and Arab states, and normalizes and relativizes terrorism.

Introduction

For decades, Qatar has strategically positioned itself as an international funder of education, science, health, sports, arts and culture, communications, and development.³ It is, in fact, the largest foreign donor to US universities,⁴ while simultaneously building an extensive network of partners dedicated to expanding Islamist⁵ influence and extremist ideology around the globe.⁶ Qatar hosts, supports, and empowers the Muslim Brotherhood; maintains ties with Iran; hosts the Taliban; has supported and maintained an office for Hamas and its exiled leadership; and has backed militias in Syria and Libya.⁷ The Qatari establishment's commitment to Islamism runs deep. Its political, cultural, and social establishment has been profoundly influenced by Muslim Brotherhood activists who fled Egypt in the 1950s. These activists played an essential part in founding Qatar's Ministry of Education and helped establish Islamism in the emirate between the 1960s and 1980s. The combination of newfound wealth and an influx of educated members of the Muslim Brotherhood allowed Qatar to develop an education system where Brotherhood members were essential at all levels. In 1999, the Qatari branch of the Muslim Brotherhood was officially disbanded, with the explanation that the organization's formal structure had become "an irrelevant matter," as the group could easily offer the same services without any defined structure. Despite this, the Brotherhood's ideology, network, and influence remain prominent in Qatar today, having developed a mutually beneficial relationship with the royal family.⁸ The radical Islamist leaders Qatar has harbored include the late Yusuf al-Qaradawi, the spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, who was welcomed by Qatar⁹ while he was

³ *Networks of Hate: Qatari Paymasters, Soft Power, and the Manipulation of Democracy* (ISGAP, 2023), https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Networks-of-Hate_5DEC.pdf; Testimony of Dr. Charles Asher Small before the US House Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Oversight, July 23, 2024, <https://waysandmeans.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Small-Testimony.pdf>.

⁴ Sophie Shulman, "Tuition of Terror: Qatari Money Flowed into US Universities—And Now It's Fueling Violence," *CTech*, October 30, 2023, <https://www.calcalistech.com/ctechnews/article/jwhsqhrat>.

⁵ We refer here to the political ideology of Islamism, not the religion of Islam as practiced peacefully by Muslims worldwide.

⁶ "Written evidence submitted by Steven Merley," UK Parliament Defence Committee Inquiry on Global Islamist Terrorism (2018), <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/87421/pdf/>.

⁷ David B. Roberts, "Reflecting on Qatar's 'Islamist' Soft Power," policy brief (Brookings Institution, 2019), https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/FP_20190408_qatar_roberts.pdf.

⁸ *The Qatari Regime, Hamas, and the Muslim Brotherhood: The Globalisation of Antisemitism and Anti Democracy* (ISGAP, 2023), https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/QATAR-REGIME_HAMAS_MB_FINAL.pdf.

⁹ "Yusuf al-Qaradawi," Counter Extremism Project, n.d., accessed March 1, 2026, <https://www.counterextremism.com/extremists/yusuf-al-qaradawi>; Habib Toumi, "Al Qaradawi Role in Tamim's Qatar Sparks Debate," *Gulf News*, September 15, 2018, <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/qatar/al-qaradawi-role-in-tamim-s-qatar-sparks-debate-1.1202306> (reporting on the Qatari Emir's inauguration: "Shaikh Yousuf Al Qaradawi was taken directly to Shaikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani and Shaikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, the outgoing emir and the new emir. The father promptly moved forward and kissed the frail-looking man in a gesture that indicated the deep trust the two men have developed over the years.

banned from entering not only Western countries such as the United States, France, and the United Kingdom¹⁰ but also Muslim-majority countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Tunisia. In 2008, the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (Qatar Foundation) established the Al-Qaradawi Centre for Research in Moderate Thought within the Qatar Faculty of Islamic Studies in Education City, Doha, with al-Qaradawi as its main theorist.¹¹ In 2009, Al Jazeera, the Qatar-owned media network, broadcasted al-Qaradawi's sermon that called on Allah to "take this oppressive, Jewish, Zionist band of people ... and kill them, down to the very last one."¹² A recent report by the Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education (IMPACT-se) documents how the current national curriculum of Qatar teaches hatred of both Jews and Israel, elevating antisemitic tropes, supporting violent jihad, glorifying martyrdom, omitting Jewish ties to Jerusalem, and refusing to recognize Israel's existence.¹³

As a recent ISGAP report, *The Muslim Brotherhood's Strategic Entryism into the United States: A Systemic Analysis*, explains, the Muslim Brotherhood's long-term strategy for civilizational jihad against Western society utilizes educational institutions as a primary vector to shape, produce, and disseminate knowledge, gradually normalizing ideological positions that align with its broader objectives.¹⁴ The doctrine and process of *tamkeen* described in the organization's internal strategy documents, commonly referred to as the "Explanatory Memorandum" and "The

The scholar then moved to the son, 33, the youngest ruler of an Arab country. Shaikh Tamim planted a kiss on Al Qaradawi's head and then his shoulder.").

¹⁰ Ibid.; "The 'Global Mufti' Sarkozy Barred from Entering France," *France 24*, March 28, 2012, <https://www.france24.com/en/20120328-sarkozy-bars-global-mufti-entering-france-sheikh-yusuf-qaradawi-toulouse-shooting>; "Muslim Cleric Not Allowed into UK," *BBC News*, February 7, 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7232398.stm>.

¹¹ "Al-Qaradawi Center for Islamic Moderation and Renewal," Qatar Faculty of Islamic Studies, n.d., archived March 6, 2026, at <https://web.archive.org/web/20160306202509/http://qfis.edu.qa/research-centres/alqaradawi-center/qcimir>; *Qatar's Multimillion-Dollar Plan to Influence American Media* (Canary Mission, February 2022), https://cm2cdn.canarymission.org/application/pdf/Northwestern_Qatar_Canary_Mission_Report_Mr2igl.pdf.

¹² "Sheik Yousuf Al-Qaradhawi Incites against Jews, Arab Regimes, and the US, and Calls on Muslims to Boycott Starbucks, Marks and Spencer," MEMRI TV, January 9, 2009, <https://www.memri.org/tv/sheik-yousuf-al-qaradhawi-incites-against-jews-arab-regimes-and-us-and-calls-muslims-boycott>; see also "Sheik Yousuf Al-Qaradhawi: Allah Imposed Hitler upon the Jews to Punish Them—'Allah Willing, the Next Time Will Be at the Hand of the Believers,'" MEMRI TV, January 28, 2009, <https://www.memri.org/tv/sheik-yousuf-al-qaradhawi-allah-imposed-hitler-upon-jews-punish-them-allah-willing-next-time-will>.

¹³ *Review of the Qatari National Curriculum 2025–2026: Grades 1–12* (IMPACT-se, 2026), https://www.impact-se.org/wp-content/uploads/Qatar-Report-2026-final.pdf?utm_source=blognotification&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Blog%20Post%20Notification%20Pressure%20Points&utm_term=PressurePoints; see also Elliott Abrams, "Pressure Points: School Books in Qatar Continue to Teach Hatred of Jews and Israel," Council on Foreign Relations, February 9, 2026, <https://www.cfr.org/articles/pressure-points-school-books-in-qatar-continue-to-teach-hatred-of-jews-and-israel>.

¹⁴ *The Muslim Brotherhood's Strategic Entryism into the United States: A Systemic Analysis* (ISGAP 2025), <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/MB-Project-Final-251117-01.pdf>.

Project,” is one of deliberate entrenchment, embedding influence to create long-term transformation in Western institutions.¹⁵ The comprehensive framework outlined in these documents emphasizes the development of sustained leadership capacity by systematically training and placing Brotherhood-aligned educators within mainstream educational institutions, recognizing the multiplying effect on subsequent generations.

Qatar’s strategy to penetrate US educational institutions did not begin with QFI. Years before it was established, Qatar had already begun cultivating relationships with influential figures who could provide insight into the structures and networks that would later become QFI’s targets. In 2002, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan arranged the introduction of the Emir of Qatar and Sheikha Moza bint Nasser to Vartan Gregorian, then president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York and a former president of Brown University, to assist with Qatar’s higher education projects in the United States.¹⁶ By 2003, Gregorian had joined the board of the Qatar Foundation, where he served while simultaneously running the Carnegie Corporation.¹⁷ He brokered relationships between Qatar and US universities aimed at developing Doha’s “Education City.”¹⁸ After the launch of QFI in 2009, he also served on QFI’s board until QFI dissolved its nonprofit structure and reemerged as an LLC in 2011,¹⁹ before finally

¹⁵ Ibid.; “An Explanatory Memorandum on the General Strategic Goal for the Group in North America” (1991), part of Government Exhibit GX003-0085, *U.S. v. Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development et al.*, 3:04-CR-240-G (ND Tex., 2008), available online at [https://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/20/an-explanatory-memorandum-on-the-general.pdf](https://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/20/an-explanatory-memorandum-on-the-general); “The Muslim Brotherhood Project: Towards a Worldwide Strategy for Islamic Policy (1982),” translated by Scott Burgess (based on the French text published in Sylvain Besson, *La conquête de l’Occident: Le projet secret des islamistes* (Éditions du Seuil, 2005), 193–205), first published serially in *The Daily Ablution* in December 2005, available online at: <https://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/misc/687.pdf>.

¹⁶ Letter from UN Secretary General Kofi A. Annan to Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, March 13, 2002, archived December 2, 2023, at <https://web.archive.org/web/20231202121224/https://search.archives.un.org/uploads/r/united-nations-archives/5/c/7/5c753dd1ffbf7aadec524129380381aec905f487c2f442030df25602c79ecd1e/S-1096-0164-01-00009.pdf>; Letter from Abudulla Bin Mohamed Bin Saud Al-Thani, May 1, 2002, archived December 2, 2023, at <https://web.archive.org/web/20231202012013/https://search.archives.un.org/uploads/r/united-nations-archives/9/6/0/96022d76f47afb60f818d884290f91a6d4b653b35348df10cfec5a843a55e7cf/S-1096-0164-01-00005.pdf>.

¹⁷ “Vartan Gregorian: 1934–2021,” Carnegie Corporation of New York, April 16, 2021, <https://www.carnegie.org/news/articles/obituary-president-vartan-gregorian/>; “Their Highnesses Attend Qatar Foundation Appreciation Celebration,” website of Moza bint Nasser, March 7, 2012, <https://www.mozabintnasser.qa/en-gb/news/their-highnesses-attend-qatar-foundation-appreciation-celebration>.

¹⁸ Neetu Arnold, *Outsourced to Qatar: A Case Study of Northwestern University-Qatar* (National Association of Scholars, 2022), <https://www.nas.org/reports/outsourced-to-qatar/full-report>; see also “Gala Ceremony Marks Launch of Education City,” *Weill Cornell Qatar Chronicle*, 1, no. 4 (December 2003): 19, <https://qatar-weill.cornell.edu/Portals/0/Qatar%20Chronicle/Documents/2003/qatar-chronicle-winter-2003-en.pdf>.

¹⁹ Qatar Foundation International, Return of Private Foundation (Form 990-PF), 2009 (Schedule B, Part I), accessed March 1, 2026, available at <https://pdf.guidestar.org/PDF/Images/2010/205/714/2010-205714317-0740bcd0-F.pdf>; Qatar Foundation International, Return of Private Foundation (Form 990-PF), 2010, accessed March 1, 2026, available at <https://pdf.guidestar.org/PDF/Images/2011/205/714/2011-205714317-083b6ef6-F.pdf>; Qatar Foundation International, Return of Private Foundation (Form 990-PF),

departing the Qatar Foundation board in 2012.²⁰ Gregorian’s value extended beyond these relationships in higher education: he could provide essential insight into K-12 institutions and networks with national reach, including Brown University’s Choices Program, a nationwide K-12 curriculum program that grew during and after his university presidency,²¹ and the National Council for the Social Studies’ Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools—now encapsulated in the College, Career and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards adopted by states nationwide—that received essential support from the Carnegie Corporation.²² These were precisely the institutions and frameworks that QFI would later target.

QFI appears to have served as Qatar’s force multiplier for a generation of students and educators. QFI was established in 2009 as the US member of the Qatar Foundation, which as per QFI’s own documents directly reflected the mission of the Qatar Foundation and its chair, Sheikha Moza bint Nasser (mother of the current Qatari Emir). QFI was formed for the purpose of “advancing the vision of Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser and the vision of [the] Qatar Foundation of connecting cultures and advancing global citizenship through education.”²³ Yet, on October 8, 2023, the day after Hamas, a terrorist organization funded extensively by Qatar,²⁴ carried out a massacre in Israel, murdering some 1,200 people, kidnapping

2011 (Statements 6, 7, and Certificate of Dissolution), accessed March 1, 2026, available at https://pdf.guidestar.org/PDF_Images/2012/205/714/2012-205714317-083b6edb-F.pdf.

²⁰ “Their Highnesses Attend Qatar Foundation Appreciation Celebration,” website of Moza bint Nasser, March 7, 2012, <https://www.mozabintnasser.qa/en-gb/news/their-highnesses-attend-qatar-foundation-appreciation-celebration>.

²¹ “History of the Choices Program,” Choices Program, n.d., previously available at <https://www.choices.edu/about/history-choices-program/>.

²² “The Civic Mission of Schools,” *Social Education* 69, no. 7 (2005): 414–6, <https://www.socialstudies.org/social-education/69/7/civic-mission-schools>; *The Civic Mission of Schools* (Carnegie Corporation of New York, 2003), <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED498891.pdf>; *Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools* (Carnegie Corporation of New York, December 2011), https://media.carnegie.org/filer_public/ab/dd/abdda62e-6e84-47a4-a043-348d2f2085ae/ccny_grantee_2011_guardian.pdf?_gl=1*6plevd*_gcl_au*MTA3MjI0NTc2NS4xNzYxMTMxNDQz; “A New Civic Mission for Schools,” *Carnegie Review* (Spring 2011), https://media.carnegie.org/filer_public/85/8b/858b7e5d-c538-42e2-ae78-24471dce73d7/ccny_creview_2011_civic.pdf; *The College, Career and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards: Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K-12 Civics, Economics, Geography and History* (National Council for the Social Studies, 2013), available at https://www.resa.net/downloads/education-resources/social-studies/what_is_not_covered_in_the_c3_framework.pdf.

²³ Memorandum of Understanding between QFI and Houston Independent School District, n.d., archived August 8, 2017, <https://web.archive.org/web/20170808194941/http://www.stophemagnet.com/sites/default/files/blog-attachments/mou-qataraims-pdf.pdf>; Job Posting for Program Manager, Al Bayt, Qatar Foundation International, n.d., archived August 29, 2013, at <https://web.archive.org/web/20130829000348/http://www.qfi.org:80/uploads/files/Program%20Manager,%20Al%20Bayt.pdf> (“Join us on our mission dedicated to advancing Qatar Foundation’s (QF’s) vision and Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser’s vision of connecting cultures and advancing global citizenship through education.”).

²⁴ Doron Peskin, “Cash Flow: 16 Years of Qatari Money to Hamas Has Created a Monster,” *CTech*, October 26, 2023, <https://www.calcalistech.com/ctechnews/article/lretnzx9l#:~:text=The%20Qatari%20government%20began%20financing,and%20through%20real%20estate%20companies>.

251, and perpetrating acts of torture, mutilation, rape, and sexual assault, Sheikha Moza posted a single terse message in Arabic on Instagram: “O Allah, we entrust Palestine to You.”²⁵ Nearly a year after the massacre, Sheikha Moza published a tweet in Arabic and English eulogizing former Hamas leader and October 7 mastermind Yahya Sinwar and referencing Israelis when she stated, “Like his namesake ... he will live on and they will be gone.”²⁶ In the ensuing months, evidence emerged that at least half a dozen Hamas terrorists were moonlighting as Al Jazeera journalists.²⁷ And, in the wake of the March 2024 protests that erupted among Gazans *against* Hamas,²⁸ a sweeping *fatwah*, or Islamic legal ruling, issued by the al-Qaradawi-founded International Union of Muslim Scholars (IUMS) in Qatar appeared designed to quash these protests from abroad, calling on all Muslims and Muslim-majority countries to wage “armed jihad” against Israel and religiously ban normalized relations with Israel.²⁹ Though IUMS claims to represent thousands of Muslim scholars, prominent members of the Muslim Brotherhood direct its leadership.³⁰ In 2017, a bloc of Arab countries including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain blacklisted IUMS as a terrorist group.³¹

²⁵ Jon Levine, “Activists Make Appeal to Qatari Queen Mother for Release of Hostages in Gaza,” *New York Post*, February 17, 2024, <https://nypost.com/2024/02/17/world-news/activists-make-appeal-to-qatari-queen-mother-for-release-of-hostages-in-gaza/>; Moza bint Nasser (@mozabintnasser), “O Allah, we entrust Palestine to You” [in Arabic], Instagram, October 8, 2023, <https://www.instagram.com/p/Cylwfy6KIHB/?hl=en>.

²⁶ Moza bint Nasser, “The name Yahya means the one who lives,” X, October 18, 2024, <https://x.com/mozabintnasser/status/1847276461671035391>.

²⁷ “Palestinian Authority Bans Al Jazeera, Escalating Row with Qatari-Owned Network,” Foundation for Defense of Democracies, January 3, 2025, https://www.fdd.org/analysis/policy_briefs/2025/01/03/palestinian-authority-bans-al-jazeera-escalating-row-with-qatari-owned-network/ (discussing suspension of Al Jazeera’s West Bank operations). Various states, including Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and Bahrain have either closed the local offices of Al Jazeera, the Qatar-owned media network, or blocked the channel and its affiliate sites. “Joining Arab States, Israel Says It Plans to Ban Al-Jazeera,” *Associated Press*, August 6, 2017, <https://apnews.com/article/96b43517e3764177be88fcc6ce21b5de>.

²⁸ Einav Halabi, “ Hamas Begins Brutal Crackdown on Gaza Protests with Torture, Executions,” *Ynet News*, March 30, 2025, <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/sjl5xnua1x>; Sudarsan Raghavan, “Palestinians Stage Rare Protest against Hamas in Gaza,” *Wall Street Journal*, March 26, 2025, <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/palestinians-stage-rare-protest-against-hamas-in-gaza-ffd9ab14>; Ahmad Sharawi, “Palestinians in Gaza Protest against Hamas Rule,” Foundation for Defense of Democracies, March 27, 2025, https://www.fdd.org/analysis/policy_briefs/2025/03/27/palestinians-in-gaza-protest-against-hamas-rule/.

²⁹ The International Union of Muslim Scholars was founded in 2004 by al-Qaradawi. Ohad Merlin, “Qatari-based Council: Armed Jihad against Israel an Obligation,” *Jerusalem Post*, April 7, 2025, <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-849253>.

³⁰ Sergio Altuna, *Beyond Islamic Guidance: Qatar-based IUMS as an Agitator in the Israel-Hamas War* (Program on Extremism, George Washington University, 2023), <https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs5746/files/2023-12/beyond-islamic-guidance.pdf>.

³¹ “Islamist Group Rejects Terrorism Charge by States Boycotting Qatar,” *Reuters*, December 1, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/gulf-qatar/islamist-group-rejects-terrorism-charge-by-states-boycotting-qatar-idUSL8N1O12V8/>.

ISGAP’s ongoing “Follow the Money” research project examines the impact on academia, politics, and civil society of funding from foreign governments, foundations, and corporations that adhere to and promote anti-democratic and antisemitic ideologies and have connections to terrorism and terror financing.³² In the course of this research, ISGAP has uncovered and established that foreign donations from Qatar, in particular, have contributed substantially to rising levels of antisemitic discourse and campus politics at US universities, as well as growing support for anti-democratic values within these institutions.³³ ISGAP has also documented how extreme anti-Israel rhetoric in the K-12 history and current events curriculum sold by Brown University and used by over 8,000 schools in fifty states involved QFI in shaping the program’s training of US teachers on issues pertaining to the Middle East.³⁴

In June 2024 and again in June 2025, Qatar’s registered foreign agents filed briefing packs with the US Department of Justice on behalf of Qatar.³⁵ Both briefing packs emphasized the importance of Qatar’s perceived reciprocal relationship with the United States while asserting that incorrect inferences were being drawn about the hundreds of millions of dollars that Qatar annually donates to US universities and about the influence of QFI in US educational institutions.³⁶ With regard to QFI, Qatar’s briefing pack described it as a limited grantmaking organization geared toward Arabic language education. Qatar additionally asserted that QFI has no large-scale programs for funding K-12 education in the United States, that QFI is a

³² Charles Asher Small and Michael Bass, *Volume Two: Examining Undocumented Foreign Funding of American Universities: Implications for Education and Rising Antisemitism* (ISGAP, 2020), <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/ISGAP-Report-Volume-II-3.pdf>.

³³ *Cornell University’s Ten Billion Dollar Sale: Soft Power, Qatar, the Muslim Brotherhood, and an Antisemitism Crisis on Campus* (ISGAP, 2024), https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Cornell_Ten_Billion_Dollar.pdf; *Columbia University—From the Classroom to Campus Politics: The Normalization of Antisemitism, Anti-Democratic Politics, Marginalization, and Intimidation* (ISGAP, 2024), https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Columbia_University_Report_2024_.pdf; *The Ongoing Failure to Report: Yale University, Qatar and Undisclosed Funding, Volume Two* (ISGAP, 2024), https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Yale_Report_V4-1.pdf.

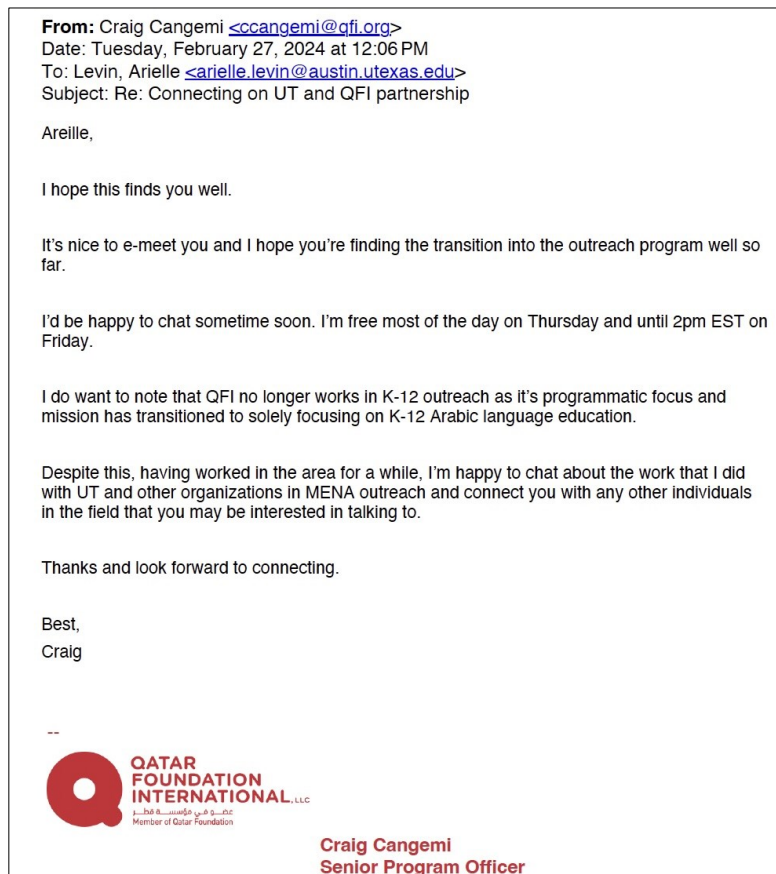
³⁴ *Foreign Influence and Anti-Israel Bias in K-12 Classrooms: An Investigation of Brown University’s Choices Program* (ISGAP, 2025), https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/K12_Report_Final_20250310.pdf.

³⁵ “The State of Qatar,” briefing pack, US Department of Justice, June 5, 2024, <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/5931-Informational-Materials-20240605-20.pdf>; “US-Qatar Bilateral Relations,” US Department of Justice, June 30, 2025, <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/7271-Informational-Materials-20250630-1.pdf>.

³⁶ In June 2024, the same month that Qatar asserted that virtually all of the funds to US universities were contract payments covering the operating costs incurred in the operation of the Doha campuses of six prominent US universities, ISGAP published a report revealing that Yale University, with no campus in Qatar, had received at least \$15.9 million from Qatar since 2012 but had reported a mere \$285,000 from a single grant in its federally mandated disclosures. See *The Ongoing Failure to Report: Yale University, Qatar and Undisclosed Funding, Volume Two* (ISGAP, 2024), https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Yale_Report_V4-1.pdf. To date, Yale has not updated its disclosures on foreign funding from Qatar.

non-profit organization whose role is limited to “providing financial assistance to K-12 schools” through “grants to support teaching the Arabic language,” and that “QFI has no role in curriculum or classroom content, and provides no books, literature or other teaching materials.”³⁷

Figure 3: Email from QFI Senior Program Officer regarding QFI’s “transition”



While clearly self-serving, as they carry the “informational materials” designation required under the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA), which previously referred to such materials as “political propaganda,”³⁸ Qatar’s briefing packs are notable in that they conspicuously employ only the present tense when describing what QFI is or does. In reality, they reflect the lengths to which QFI has gone to rebrand itself since 2024, following the public outcry, congressional inquiries, and revelations made by ISGAP and other organizations and news outlets regarding QFI’s role in US education. As reflected above in Figure 3, QFI’s senior program

³⁷ “The State of Qatar,” briefing pack, US Department of Justice, June 5, 2024, <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/5931-Informational-Materials-20240605-20.pdf>; “US-Qatar Bilateral Relations,” US Department of Justice, June 30, 2025, <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/7271-Informational-Materials-20250630-1.pdf>.

³⁸ “Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA): Background and Issues for Congress,” Congressional Research Service, June 30, 2020, <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R46435>.

officer noted in a [2024 email](#) that QFI should be understood to have closed up shop (for now) with regard to everything but Arabic language programming.³⁹

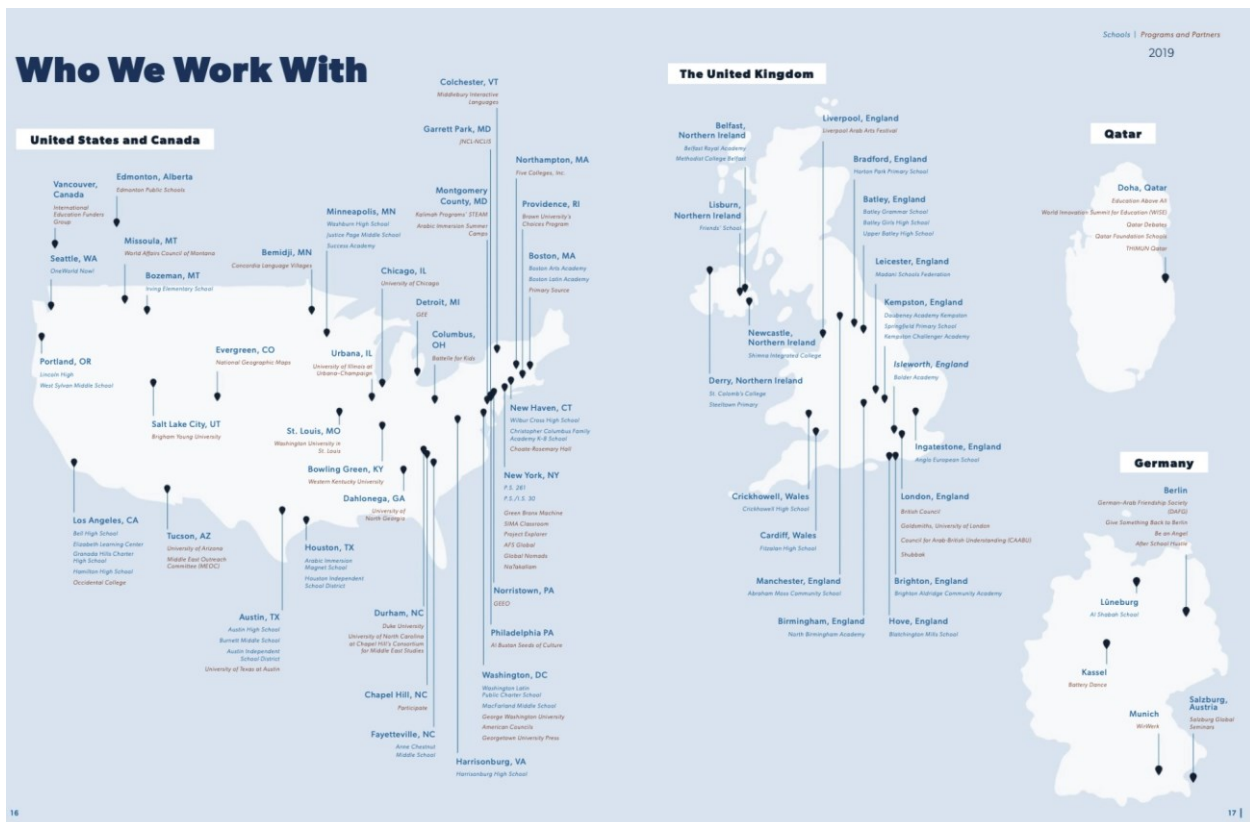
This report exposes that, despite what it now holds itself out to be, QFI long ago planned a strategy to investigate where US educational systems were permeable, to gain access to those entry points, and to methodically scale its influence and gain control over messaging and content, altering the landscape of education on the Middle East and impacting generations of educators and students. QFI's own materials and communications, including prior versions of its website, material that is or was publicly available on the web, and material held by universities and school districts and obtained through Freedom of Information requests, all reflect QFI's strategy and execution over many years.

³⁹ C. Cangemi, email message to A. Levin, February 27, 2024, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/01.238956.pdf>.

The Sophisticated Financial Architecture and Geographic Strategy of QFI's Institutional Capture

QFI revealed the geographic distribution of its investment and strategy in its own [Year-in-Review report](#) for 2019, which was published just prior to Covid pandemic but has now been scrubbed from the internet (including web archives). There, QFI provided a map depicting its broad reach within the United States and abroad, distinguishing between schools that merely benefit from QFI grant money (labeled in blue) and those that designated as programs and partners (labeled in brown) that serve to amplify QFI's reach to educators and students across geography and content areas.⁴⁰

Figure 4: QFI's 2019 Year-in-Review influence map



ISGAP's financial analysis of QFI reveals a carefully orchestrated funding strategy that, though not large relative to Qatar's overall funding of US universities, has

⁴⁰ YIR 2019: 10 Years of Inspiring Meaningful Connections with the Arab World (Qatar Foundation International, 2020), previously available at <https://issuu.com/qfintl/docs/catalogue-2019-pages>, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/02.238957.pdf>.

created institutional dependencies across US educational systems. We estimate that by 2025 QFI's cumulative funding conservatively totaled \$65.3 million, with the geographic distribution of its funding of over 220 programs and projects⁴¹ demonstrating a deliberate targeting of districts where influence could achieve maximum impact, namely those with substantial immigrant populations, in major metropolitan areas, or located in politically influential areas.

Table 1: State-level funding distribution and strategic indicators (2009–2025)

State	Total funding (\$)	Average* (\$)	Strategic significance
California	7,089,612	373,137	Largest state economy, diverse demographics
District of Columbia	7,103,265	338,251	Federal policy influence center
Arizona	6,633,395	315,876	Border state, demographic shifts
New York	5,350,764	382,197	Financial/media capital
Michigan	4,518,704	753,117	Large Arab-American population (Dearborn)
Illinois	4,327,717	227,775	Major urban center (Chicago)
Texas	4,025,637	287,545	Second largest state, energy sector ties
Massachusetts	2,893,426	321,492	Educational hub, elite institutions
Georgia	2,879,781	287,978	Growing diverse population
Minnesota	2,079,092	231,010	Significant refugee resettlement
Oregon	2,428,108	346,873	Progressive education policies
Florida	1,871,844	374,369	Third largest state
Pennsylvania	1,426,513	356,628	Key swing state
Ohio	1,515,773	252,629	Midwest influence point
Other States (10)	9,155,184	199,026	Broader network establishment
Total	65,300,000	296,818	National scope achieved

* Average per program

Michigan received the highest level of per-program investment at \$753,117, nearly triple the per-program investment in Illinois at \$227,775, indicating the strategic prioritization of the Dearborn area's substantial Arab-American population. The concentration of funding in California and the District of Columbia, each exceeding \$7 million in total, reflects the targeting of the nation's largest state economy and

⁴¹ Our research identified over 220 discernible programs and projects. The categorical assignment of these programs as described in Table 2 enabled a more precise estimation by ensuring that missing values were imputed based on comparable grant types rather than using a single dataset-wide average. Missing values were estimated by calculating the average funding level for each grant type using available data within the corresponding conglomerate category. This approach ensured that imputed values reflected typical funding patterns for similar grants within each category. A detailed note on methodology is available [here](#).

the seat of federal policy. The funding architecture operates through a sophisticated two-tier system. Major urban school districts such as the Tucson Unified School District received \$5.14 million over six years, while Chicago Public Schools received \$3.24 million and the Los Angeles Unified School District received \$2.38 million. These anchor investments create deep institutional dependencies that make it difficult for districts to extricate themselves from QFI programming. Simultaneously, QFI distributed standardized base grants of approximately \$109,000 to \$124,000 to smaller districts, creating a network effect that amplifies its reach across diverse educational contexts.

Table 2: Program category distribution and financial allocation (2009–2025)

Program category	Percentage	Funding (\$)	Average* (\$)	Strategic function
K-12 Arabic language programs	44.10%	28,797,300	296,879	Primary entry vehicle
Academic degree/university programs	29.75%	19,426,750	298,873	University influence
Academic research studies	11.75%	7,674,250	295,163	Policy development
Summer programs & institutes	4.82%	3,147,460	286,133	Intensive indoctrination
Student leadership	2.45%	1,599,850	319,970	Future influencer cultivation
Teacher associations & councils	1.78%	1,162,140	290,535	Educator network control
Online learning academies & professional development	2.36%	1,494,120	298,824	Scalable distribution & teacher training
Social justice & activism	1.39%	907,570	302,523	Ideological alignment
Cultural events, exchange & artistic programs	1.67%	1,090,510	493,015	Soft power projection & cultural narrative
Total	100%	65,300,000	296,818	Comprehensive strategy

* Average per program

The distribution across programmatic scope demonstrates that QFI’s activities have extended significantly beyond Arabic language instruction, broadly encompassing various networks and content areas that, for a relatively low-level investment, greatly allowed QFI to scale its influence and reach.

The Operational Strategy behind QFI's Institutional Capture

QFI's broadly influential role in US education was summarized by the State of Qatar's own marketing for QFI in *Q Magazine*, distributed widely in 2017 by Portland PR Inc., a registered foreign agent of Qatar:

“QFI operates as both a grant-making organization, and a convener of thought leadership on issues related to global and international education, open education, and education technologies as they intersect with the three core QFI programmatic areas: Arabic language and Arab culture, STE{A}M (STEM plus the Arts), and Youth Engagement.”⁴²

Portland PR Inc. is a sister company of the UK-based Portland Communications (a.k.a. Portland PR Ltd), another agent of Qatar that has explicitly spotlighted its expertise in soft power.⁴³ Portland Communications achieved notoriety for its ties to the UK “Qatargate” scandal, in which it was accused of using widespread lobbying efforts to whitewash Qatar's human rights abuses and terrorism connections.⁴⁴ More recently, Portland Communications was exposed for operating a scheme for paid edits to Wikipedia on behalf of Qatar.⁴⁵ The fact that Qatar envisioned QFI as the center of soft power for influencing US education was evident from its own 2013 [job posting](#) for Al Bayt, which translates as “The Home,” in which it stated that its

⁴² “Qatar Foundation International: Creating Meaningful Connections to the Arab World,” *Q Magazine*, no. 3 (June 2017), filed with Supplemental Statement of Portland PR Inc., December 6, 2017, available at <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/6064-Supplemental-Statement-20171206-9.pdf>. Portland PR Inc. appeared to have already provided work on behalf of QFI, having discussed QFI programming opportunities during a visit with the Emir of Qatar. Supplemental Statement of Portland PR Inc, Informational Materials Activity Log, April 13, 2015, available at <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/6064-Supplemental-Statement-20150413-2.pdf>.

⁴³ *The Soft Power 30: A Global Ranking of Soft Power* (Portland Communications 2015), https://portland-communications.com/pdf/The-Soft-Power_30.pdf; *The Soft Power 30: A Global Ranking of Soft Power* (Portland Communications 2018), <https://softpower30.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/The-Soft-Power-30-Report-2018.pdf>; *The Soft Power 30: A Global Ranking of Soft Power* (Portland Communications 2019), <https://softpower30.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/The-Soft-Power-30-Report-2019-1.pdf>.

⁴⁴ Hans van Scharen and Pascoe Sabido, “Qatargate Was Made Possible by Loopholes in Current Transparency and Ethics Rules,” *Le Monde*, December 22, 2022, https://www.lemonde.fr/en/opinion/article/2022/12/22/qatargate-was-made-possible-by-loopholes-in-current-transparency-and-ethics-rules_6008736_23.html; “Portland Communications, Qatar’s Tool to Conceal Its Terrorism,” *Egypt Today*, July 12, 2017, <https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/1/11400/Portland-Communications-Qatar-s-tool-to-conceal-its-terrorism>; Ian Black, “Qatar’s PR Efforts on Labour Scandal Backfire with BBC Team’s Detention,” *The Guardian*, May 18, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/on-the-middle-east/2015/may/18/qatars-pr-efforts-labour-scandal-backfire-bbc-detention>.

⁴⁵ Claire Wilmot, “London Firm Rewrites Wikipedia for Governments and Billionaires,” Bureau of Investigative Journalism, January 14, 2026, <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/stories/2026-01-14/london-pr-firm-rewrites-wikipedia-for-governments-and-billionaires>.

goal was to be “the leading sponsor” of Arab cultural education and resources and that Al Bayt would be an integral component of QFI as a hub of learning. The broad job description included cultivating that power by engaging relevant institutions, individuals, professional groups, teachers, and administrators in social studies and other interdisciplinary areas, with particular attention to issues of curriculum and professional development.⁴⁶

QFI’s institutional entrenchment and capture of US education was the culmination of all the tasks described the Al Bayt job posting. In fact, a prior version of QFI’s website (before it was recently scrubbed of all references to activity other than Arabic language grants and programming) had a section devoted to QFI’s work on “Arab Societies and Cultures.” The breadth and depth of QFI’s work there is described as follows:

“We understand that teachers are integral to fostering students’ global awareness and understanding. QFI’s Arab Societies and Cultures programming is focused on delivering what educators need to effectively teach about the Arab world. We do this by collaborating and partnering with peers, like-minded institutions, and recognized experts to identify gaps in the field and then develop and implement programs that offer the greatest impact. Through these collaborations and partnerships, we design and implement professional development opportunities, teaching materials and resources, and activities focused on topics including the geography, cultures, and history of the Arab world.”⁴⁷

QFI’s Exploitation of Title VI–Funded Middle East Outreach Centers to Disseminate Qatari Viewpoints on the Middle East and to Scale QFI’s Influence

While many universities host Middle East study centers, only a handful have been specifically designated by the federal government as National Resource Centers (NRCs) that receive federal funds under Title VI of the Higher Education Act of 1965⁴⁸ and are required to conduct “public outreach” to extend the impact of their

⁴⁶ Job Posting for Program Manager, Al Bayt, Qatar Foundation International, n.d., archived August 29, 2013, at <https://web.archive.org/web/20130829000348/http://www.qfi.org:80/uploads/files/Program%20Manager,%20Al%20Bayt.pdf>.

⁴⁷ “Arab Societies and Cultures,” Qatar Foundation International, n.d., archived May 6, 2021, at <https://web.archive.org/web/20210506222020/https://www.qfi.org/arab-societies-and-cultures/>, also available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/03.238958.pdf>.

⁴⁸ As of late 2025, continued federal funding to these universities that would impact the employment of outreach coordinators and other staff members remains largely uncertain. “University May Close Six Area Studies Centers,” *Carolina Alumni Review*, January 6, 2026, <https://alumni.unc.edu/news/university-set-to-close-six-area-studies-centers/>.

programs beyond the university.⁴⁹ Over a decade ago, the Brandeis Center published a white paper documenting the bias emanating from various NRCs providing programming on the Middle East and warning that the lack of proper reform and oversight over these institutions had a particularly compounding effect. In other words, thanks to their mandate to reach out to a broad audience, including in K-12 education, these programs greatly amplify biased agendas and messages, perversely creating national security risks:

“Particularly troubling is that these government-funded centers also disseminate one-sided views to an audience far wider than on our college campuses. The centers conduct “public outreach” programs as a condition of receiving Title VI funds and present their biased and often inaccurate views to K-12 teachers, educators, and the general public. Teachers, educators, and members of the public are thus being misled by programs that promote a particular political agenda, rather than a balanced and accurate perspective. Rather than serve American national security and foreign policy interests, these programs do the opposite.”⁵⁰

QFI targeted its strategy directly at this oversight gap. Before it was cleaned of references to anything beyond K-12 Arabic language grants, [QFI’s website](#) proclaimed, “We work closely with ... Title VI Middle East K-12 Outreach Centers at universities across the U.S.”⁵¹ As the map in QFI’s 2019 Year-in-Review report indicates, several of the universities and institutions that QFI partnered with were such outreach centers, including, for example, the Duke-UNC Consortium for Middle East Studies (Duke-UNC CMES),⁵² the University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin), the University of Arizona, and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.⁵³

These NRCs utilize listservs to disseminate program information to their outreach network, which encompasses K-12 teachers at regional and national level as well as

⁴⁹ 20 USC §1122; 34 CFR §656.

⁵⁰ “The Morass of Middle East Studies: Title VI of the Higher Education Act and Federally Funded Area Studies,” Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights under Law, November 2014, https://brandeiscenter.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/antisemitism_whitepaper-1.pdf.

⁵¹ “Arab Societies and Cultures,” Qatar Foundation International, n.d., archived May 6, 2021, at <https://web.archive.org/web/20210506222020/https://www.qfi.org/arab-societies-and-cultures/>, also available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/03.238958.pdf>.

⁵² Duke-UNC CMES was later renamed the North Carolina Consortium for Middle East Studies and remained an NRC, though that status now appears to be uncertain with UNC’s plans to merge six area study centers into one. Jane Winik Sartwell, “UNC Is Merging 6 Global Studies Centers into One, with a Fraction of the Budget,” *News & Observer*, February 12, 2026, <https://www.newsobserver.com/news/local/education/article314676026.html>.

⁵³ *YIR 2019: 10 Years of Inspiring Meaningful Connections with the Arab World* (Qatar Foundation International, 2020), previously available at <https://issuu.com/qfintl/docs/catalogue-2019-pages>, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/02.238957.pdf>.

community college and undergraduate university instructors. For example, the University of Arizona has indicated that, by late 2020, its Middle East listserv included “1,629 Arizona teachers, 2,632 teachers from other states, and another 465 community college and undergraduate university-level instructors.”⁵⁴ QFI’s own documents indicate that, by leveraging its relationships with these centers, it was able to broadly disseminate QFI’s own materials to educators at workshops on the Middle East, control the messaging in the listservs about those programs, have QFI’s own representatives educate teachers about the Middle East, and even impose QFI oversight of the classroom content teachers generated as a result of the workshops. Several critical examples are presented below.

Duke-UNC CMES

In 2019, Duke-UNC CMES was investigated by the US Department of Education for misusing Title VI funds, although the government’s investigation did not appear to focus specifically on the center’s relationship with QFI. Instead, the investigation concerned the general lack of programs promoting foreign language learning and advancing US national security interests (both conditions of Title VI funding), the skewing toward Islam of Duke-UNC CMES programs, and the lack of balance and perspective the programs offered with regard to belief systems in the Middle East.⁵⁵

By the time of the government’s investigation, however, QFI was already deeply entrenched in Duke-UNC CMES. At the QFI-sponsored “Dimensions of the Middle East” five-day summer institute for secondary school educators, which was held at Duke University for several consecutive years and run through Duke-UNC CMES, attendees received a QFI-published booklet entitled “Inspiring Meaningful Connections with the Arab World,” as captured in Duke’s promotional video for the event.⁵⁶

The summer institute’s flyer made it clear that there was a *quid pro quo*: teachers receiving QFI grants to attend the program were required to follow up by submitting the lesson plans or activities they designed for their classrooms based on their workshop attendance to QFI—not to Duke-UNC CMES staff.⁵⁷ Both the distribution of the booklet and QFI’s oversight over the subsequent lesson plans were entirely

⁵⁴ “In Memoriam: Lisa Adeli,” University of Arizona College of Social & Behavioral Sciences, January 25, 2021, <https://sbs.arizona.edu/news/memoriam-lisa-adeli>.

⁵⁵ “Notice of a Letter Regarding the Duke-UNC Consortium for Middle East Studies,” *Federal Register* 84, no. 180 (September 17, 2019), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/09/17/2019-20067/notice-of-a-letter-regarding-the-duke-unc-consortium-for-middle-east-studies>.

⁵⁶ Screen capture from video, Duke University–John Hope Franklin Center, “Duke hosts Middle East Summer Institute,” Facebook, July 26, 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=873808926159683>.

⁵⁷ Flyer for 2019 Duke Summer Institute, n.d., archived January 23, 2020, at https://web.archive.org/web/20200123133313/https://islamicstudies.duke.edu/sites/default/files/atoms/files/2019%20Summer%20Institute%20Flyer_Dimensions%20of%20the%20Middle%20East.pdf, also available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Duke-Summer-Institute-2019.pdf>.

consistent with QFI’s presence at the institute. The biography of QFI program officer Craig Cangemi, who was listed as one of the speakers in the agenda promoting the institute, describes his expertise of providing “effective strategies” for teaching about the Middle East in primary and secondary school classrooms.⁵⁸

Figure 5: QFI-published materials distributed to teachers at the “Dimensions of the Middle East” Summer Institute

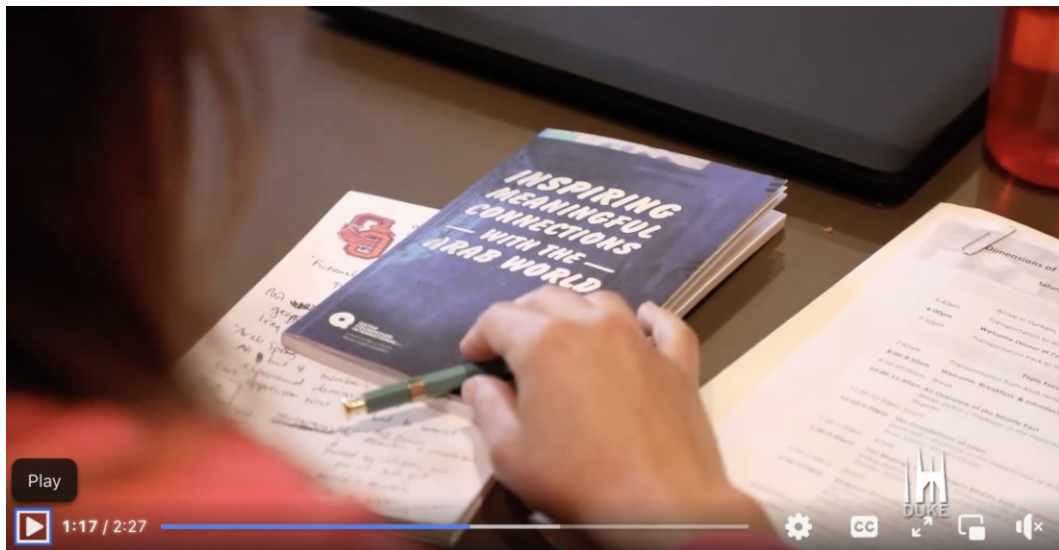


Figure 6: Biography of QFI Senior Program Officer Craig Cangemi from agenda for “Dimensions of the Middle East” Summer Institute

Craig Cangemi

Craig Cangemi is a Senior Program Officer at Qatar Foundation International (QFI) who oversees its Arab Societies and Cultures Program. In this role, he develops and implements professional development and grant opportunities for primary and secondary educators throughout the United States to develop a better understanding of the Middle East and Arab world and to provide effective strategies for teaching about the region in the classroom. Craig joined QFI in 2015. Prior to his work at QFI, he briefly served as a federal management consultant after three years of managing a diverse portfolio of research and development grants in the Middle East on behalf of the US Department of State and US Department of Energy at CRDF Global. In addition to his current role at QFI, Craig also currently serves as the President of the Middle East Outreach Council, a national network of educators dedicated to disseminating apolitical and nonpartisan information, resources and activities that further the understanding about the Middle East, including the Arab world. Craig is a graduate of Davidson College in Davidson, NC where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science with a concentration in Arabic Studies.

⁵⁸ Agenda for the 2019 Duke Summer Institute, n.d., available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Duke-20019-Agenda-and-speaker-bios.pdf>.

By the time Cangemi was appearing in front of audiences of teachers at Duke and disseminating QFI's materials to them, he and QFI had already laid two years' worth of groundwork through Emma, the Middle East Title VI public outreach coordinator at the Duke-UNC CMES. UNC documents show that, while Cangemi and Harver initially **connected** over Arabic language programming and related resources in late 2015,⁵⁹ within several months QFI was already **suggesting** more robust involvement in the summer of 2016 with a "new round of funding."⁶⁰

By August, 2016, Cangemi **proposed** meeting in person in the fall, pointedly telling Harver about QFI's strategy to scale its influence:⁶¹

"Over the past couple of months, we've been developing a strategy for our non-language programming and are interested in identifying ways to support and collaborate with MidEast Outreach Centers/NRC's throughout the country. Being from NC, I'd love to find a way to work with and support your work at the UNC/Duke center!"

In essence, Cangemi was suggesting that the federal structure of regionally based NRCs with local public outreach endeavors was insufficient, because QFI wanted to lead a bigger, national strategy.

By October 2016, Harver and Cangemi had met in person and she followed up by **email** to what appeared to be his request for more information and resources, giving him several contacts and informing him of a networking opportunity with NRC professionals that would focus on outreach strategies.⁶² She also responded to what appeared to be Cangemi's offer at their in-person meeting for QFI to provide direct and more substantial funding.⁶³ She explained that, based on her supervisor's feedback, UNC would be reluctant to accept more substantial funding because of federal scrutiny under Title VI, but that funding non-Title VI programs and programs offered by private institutions (UNC is not a private university) would be a better fit for QFI grants, noting her thanks for the funding QFI paid to Duke that

⁵⁹ E. Harver and C. Cangemi, email messages, November 25, 2015, through December 15, 2015, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/3a.238959.pdf>.

⁶⁰ C. Cangemi, email message to E. Harver, April 4, 2016, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/3b.238960.pdf>.

⁶¹ C. Cangemi, email message to E. Harver, August 22, 2016, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/04.238961.pdf>; see also E. Harver, email message to C. Cangemi, August 23, 2016, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/04.238961.pdf>.

⁶² E. Harver, email message to C. Cangemi, October 28, 2016, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/05.238962.pdf>.

⁶³ *Ibid.*; Frannie Block and Jay Solomon, "How Qatar Bought America," *The Free Press*, May 13, 2025, <https://www.thefp.com/p/how-qatar-bought-america>.

benefited the shared Duke-UNC CMES for a language symposium.⁶⁴ She was referring to the [confirmation](#), days earlier, of a \$1,000 sponsorship from QFI supporting a Duke-UNC CMES Learning through Languages symposium that would be paid directly to Duke.⁶⁵

After Harver thanked QFI's representative for the organization's contribution through Duke and explained UNC's unwillingness to directly receive QFI grant money, UNC then received what can only be described as a staggering Qatari proposition, but not from QFI's officer. Less than three months after Harver's email, UNC's Gillings School of Global Health received a [solicitation](#) to partner with Synensys, a US-based global consultancy firm with offices in Doha, on the basis of an imminent request for proposal (RFP) from the Qatar Ministry of Health that would purportedly be worth \$750 million and would involve the development of a public health strategy for Qatar.⁶⁶ The outreach document from Synensys outlined the "value proposition for UNC," which included:

"Establishment of a new channel to funding sources previously not part of the University portfolio—the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries with energy-driven revenue (high income) resources."⁶⁷

This led to an all-hands-on-deck email from the executive director of the school's Gillings Global Gateway group to personnel at UNC, including the codirector of UNC's Center for Middle East and Islamic Studies.⁶⁸ The executive director compartmentalized the solicitation into areas of expertise the school could identify and pressed the group to respond no later than the end of the next day so that the school could promptly respond to the solicitation.⁶⁹ One of the recipients in the group, who was involved in the leadership of UNC's Center for Middle East and Islamic Studies, forwarded it to the person responsible for administering the multi-million-dollar federal Title VI grant that funded the Duke-UNC partnership.⁷⁰

UNC documents do not indicate what happened after that. Beyond this email thread, there is no indication that a deal was ever inked, that an RFP was transmitted, or that UNC further considered the offer. There's certainly no

⁶⁴ E. Harver, email message to C. Cangemi, October 28, 2016, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/05.238962.pdf>.

⁶⁵ Thomas Degeorges, email message to Craig Cangemi, October 24, 2016, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/06.238963.pdf>.

⁶⁶ J. Herrington, email message to "Chairs and Colleagues," January 24, 2017 (attaching "two-pager" from Synensys), available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/07.238964.pdf>.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ C. Kurzman, email message to S. Tamari, January 24, 2017, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/07.238964.pdf>.

indication of any such contract with Qatar in Section 117 disclosure data available to the public.⁷¹ However, it is clear from the thread that UNC's Gillings School of Public Health was well aware of the university's connection to Qatari interests such as QFI via the university's Middle Eastern and Islamic studies programs and that further discussions undoubtedly took place, though perhaps not via email. There is also a realistic possibility that this specific public health deal was *never intended* to materialize; instead, the solicitation was a decoy designed to reveal to UNC the opportunities that would arise as a result of aligning with Qatar and provide QFI with the leverage it needed with Duke-UNC CMES. By April 2017, a Duke employee [inquired](#) about Harver's salary as the public outreach coordinator, which was funded 50% through the federal Title VI grant to the NRC, with the remaining 50% split between Duke and UNC.⁷² Specifically, he asked whether a portion of the university-funded salary could be allocated to "Qatar Foundation" under the grant money being received,⁷³ an indication that the funds flowing to Duke from QFI and indirectly supporting Duke-UNC CMES were by then sufficiently significant such that it seemed superfluous to spend university dollars on the administrator's salary. Nobody on the email thread appeared to hesitate at the apparent ethical ramifications of the suggestion, namely whether it was appropriate for a government-funded NRC to assign to an outside private entity (much less one connected to a foreign government) the university's share of a government-subsidized salary.

Other emails do suggest that a substantial portion of Harver's time was now spent managing QFI-backed programs for Duke-UNC CMES. By that summer of 2017, just as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Egypt initiated a 43-month blockade against Qatar for its funding of terror, its backing of Iran, and its foreign meddling,⁷⁴ the first of QFI's summer institutes was held at Duke in conjunction

⁷¹ Section 117 of the Higher Education Act 1965, codified at 20 USC §1011f, requires institutions of higher education to disclose to the Secretary of Education gifts from any foreign source and contracts with any foreign entity with an aggregate value of \$250,000 or more. The DETERRENT Act (HR 1048) would strengthen this requirement by lowering reporting thresholds to \$50,000 or \$0 for certain countries. It's also possible that the solicitation was structured to leverage a seeming loophole in the disclosure requirements by positioning UNC as the potential subcontractor for a US-based consulting firm doing work for the Qatari government.

⁷² T. DeGeorges, email message to E. Göknaar and E. Duffy, April 13, 2017, and S. Tamari, email message to E. Göknaar and T. DeGeorges, April 17, 2017 (attaching Memorandum of Understanding), available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/08.238965.pdf>.

⁷³ T. DeGeorges, email message to E. Göknaar and E. Duffy, April 13, 2017, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/08.238965.pdf>.

⁷⁴ Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, "Saudi Arabia Just Lifted Qatar's 43-Month Blockade. How Did This Rift End?," *Washington Post*, January 8, 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/01/08/saudi-arabia-just-lifted-qatars-43-month-blockade-how-did-this-rift-end/>; Patrick Wintour, "Gulf Plunged into Diplomatic Crisis As Countries Cut Ties with Qatar," *The Guardian*, June 5, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jun/05/saudi-arabia-and-bahrain-break-diplomatic-ties-with-qatar-over-terrorism>.

with Duke-UNC CMES.⁷⁵ And by that fall, as QFI was sponsoring another workshop on the Ottoman Empire in conjunction with QFI and Cangemi, the director of the Duke Islamic Studies Center **told** Harver that her work was “so indispensable for our relationship with the Qatar Foundation.”⁷⁶ Though the references to “Qatar Foundation” in both emails may have been intended as references to QFI, it is telling that the relationship appears to have reached the point that Duke-UNC CMES personnel and the faculty connected to the grants had no reason to distinguish between QFI, the Qatar Foundation and Qatar. Harver, for her part, **pushed out** QFI opportunities for K-12 educators through her public outreach listserv⁷⁷ and **asked** her counterparts at other universities to do the same.⁷⁸

Secondary school teachers attending the QFI-sponsored programs and summer institutes connected to Duke-UNC CMES perceived their university hosts as credible and elite institutions. They had every reason to assume that the content and materials disseminated through these programs were educationally sound and had been properly vetted. They would have had no idea of the relationship that had been cultivated just so they could be in the room. They would not have known, for example, that the leader of UNC’s Center for Middle East and Islamic Studies had **expressed disagreement** with the decision to apply for “Gulf money” (as he termed it) to fund the summer institute in 2017, that Harver herself acknowledged that a program funded almost entirely by QFI might be “contentious,” but that, ultimately, with the funds managed by Duke, the programs moved forward.⁷⁹

UT Austin CMES and QFI’s Teacher Leadership Program

As its relationship with Duke-UNC ramped up, QFI launched its multi-year Teacher Leadership Program. In its inaugural year in 2018, Cangemi **advertised the program** as a joint effort between QFI and three NRCs: New York University’s Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies (NYU CNES), the University of Texas at

⁷⁵ “Duke Hosts ‘Dimension of the Middle East,’” UNC Center for Middle East & Islamic Studies, July 31, 2018, <https://mideast.unc.edu/duke-hosts-dimensions-of-the-middle-east/> (explaining that Duke and QFI piloted the summer institute in June 2017).

⁷⁶ O. Safi, email message to E. Harver, November 16, 2017, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/09.238966.pdf>.

⁷⁷ See, e.g., E. Harver, email message to “ncteachmideast” listserv, May 11, 2017, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/10.238967.pdf> (posting about the 2017 summer institute).

⁷⁸ See, e.g., E. Harver, email message to Middle East program coordinators, May 11, 2017, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/11.238968.pdf> (requesting assistance in advertising the Duke 2017 summer institute).

⁷⁹ C. Kurzman, email message to S. Tamari and E. Harver, March 10, 2017, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/12.238969.pdf>; S. Tamari, email message to E. Harver and C. Kurzman, March 9, 2017, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/12.238969.pdf>; E. Harver, email message to C. Kurzman and S. Tamari, March 9, 2017, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/12.238969.pdf>.

Austin’s Center for Middle Eastern Studies (UT Austin CMES), and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign’s Center for South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies (UIUC CSAMES).⁸⁰ University Middle East Outreach coordinators [advertised the program](#) to their listservs.⁸¹ QFI’s Teacher Leadership Program apparently expanded quickly, with QFI listing additional partnerships with Portland State University and the University of California, Berkeley.⁸²

The Teacher Leadership Program was a two-year program designed to arm participants with enough training to become effective providers of professional development programs to their peer educators. The [memorandum of understanding](#) between QFI and UT Austin CMES notes that the latter’s role was to host the program, providing logistics and promotional support and helping to secure some local speakers for the program, and that QFI’s role was to pay for all aspects of the program and to oversee all of its details, including the coordination of the application, solicitation, review, and selection processes.⁸³ Materials produced would be housed on QFI’s Al Masdar website but were to be considered open education teaching materials and resources that could be freely used, shared, and adapted by others.⁸⁴ While potential program applicants were advised they could reach out to QFI’s Cangemi or UT Austin’s Kathryn Aslan, they were only provided a single “leadership@qfi” email address, reinforcing that QFI wanted to remain the point of contact for any questions or interest in the program.⁸⁵

By its third year, the program consisted of (1) five different three-day workshops held in Austin, Dearborn, Toronto, Chicago, and New York City; (2) a week-long “cultural immersion” tour in Doha; (3) the completion of pre-workshop

⁸⁰ C. Cangemi, email message to MEOC working group list, February 14, 2018, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/13.238970.pdf>; see also “Teacher Leadership Program,” Hemispheres: The International Outreach Consortium, University of Texas at Austin, February 15, 2018, <https://liberalarts.utexas.edu/hemispheres/news/teacher-leadership-program>.

⁸¹ L. Adeli, email message to “middle_east_outreach” listserv, February 28, 2018, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/14.238971.pdf>.

⁸² Qatar Foundation International, “Teacher Leadership Program, Washington, D.C.,” Facebook, May 10, 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?vanity=QFINTL&set=a.10155950935357107> (describing “partnership with Portland State University, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and the University of Texas at Austin”); see also “Teacher Leadership Program,” Qatar Foundation International, n.d., archived September 6, 2019, at <https://web.archive.org/web/20190906183253/https://www.qfi.org/opportunities/teacher-leadership-program/> (describing partnership with the University of Texas at Austin, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Portland State University and the University of California, Berkeley).

⁸³ Memorandum of Understanding between QFI and the Center for Middle East Studies at the University of Texas at Austin’s Outreach Program, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/15.238972.pdf>.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ “Call for Applications, Teacher Leadership Program 2020–2021,” Qatar Foundation International, n.d., archived May 7, 2021, at https://web.archive.org/web/20210507031426/https://www.qfi.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/QFI_UT-Austin-2020-TLP-Call-for-Applications_FINAL-1.pdf.

assignments; (3) monthly hour-long check-ins with peer mentors (i.e. teachers who had been through the program in previous years); (4) monthly webinars or activities to reinforce content knowledge and skills; (5) the completion and submission of one lesson plan per workshop based on the workshop content; (6) the completion and submission of a cumulative capstone project that the participant would then present, with the help of QFI funding, at one local or regional event and at one national event such as the National Council for the Social Studies⁸⁶ annual conference; (7) the opportunity to serve as mentors for the following year’s cohort; and (8) funding from QFI to attend one additional professional development event.⁸⁷

Table 3: Estimated average investment per participant per year in QFI’s Teacher Leadership Program*

Expense Category	Coverage Description	Est. Unit Cost (\$)	Notes/Assumptions
Air travel (domestic + international)	Round-trip airfare for 5 US/Canada workshops + cultural immersion trip to Doha	6,000–8,000	5–6 round-trip flights @ ~\$800 domestic avg. + ~\$1,500–\$2,000 for Doha
Lodging (workshops + Doha)	Hotels covered for all workshops and Doha tour	4,500–6,000	Avg. \$200/night × ~25–30 nights total
Meals & per diem	All meals or stipends covered	2,600–3,120	\$104/day × ~ 25–30 days
Ground transportation	Airport transfers, local transit, etc.	500–800	Includes shuttle/taxi/reimbursement
Substitute teacher reimbursement	Paid to participant’s school for missed days	1,000–2,000	10–15 school days × \$100–\$150/day
External PD event	Participant’s chosen professional development (conference or institute)	2,000–3,000	Includes travel, lodging, food and registration
Local/national PD event funding	Funding to present at 2 events	2,000–4,000	Covers materials, venue, and logistics, registration, travel lodging and food
Materials & resources	Books, teaching kits, supplies	300–500	Approximation
Administrative/coordination overhead	Program coordination, logistics, staff support	1,000–2,000	Approx. 10–15% administrative load

* Figures are derived from [reported data and methodologically grounded estimates](#).

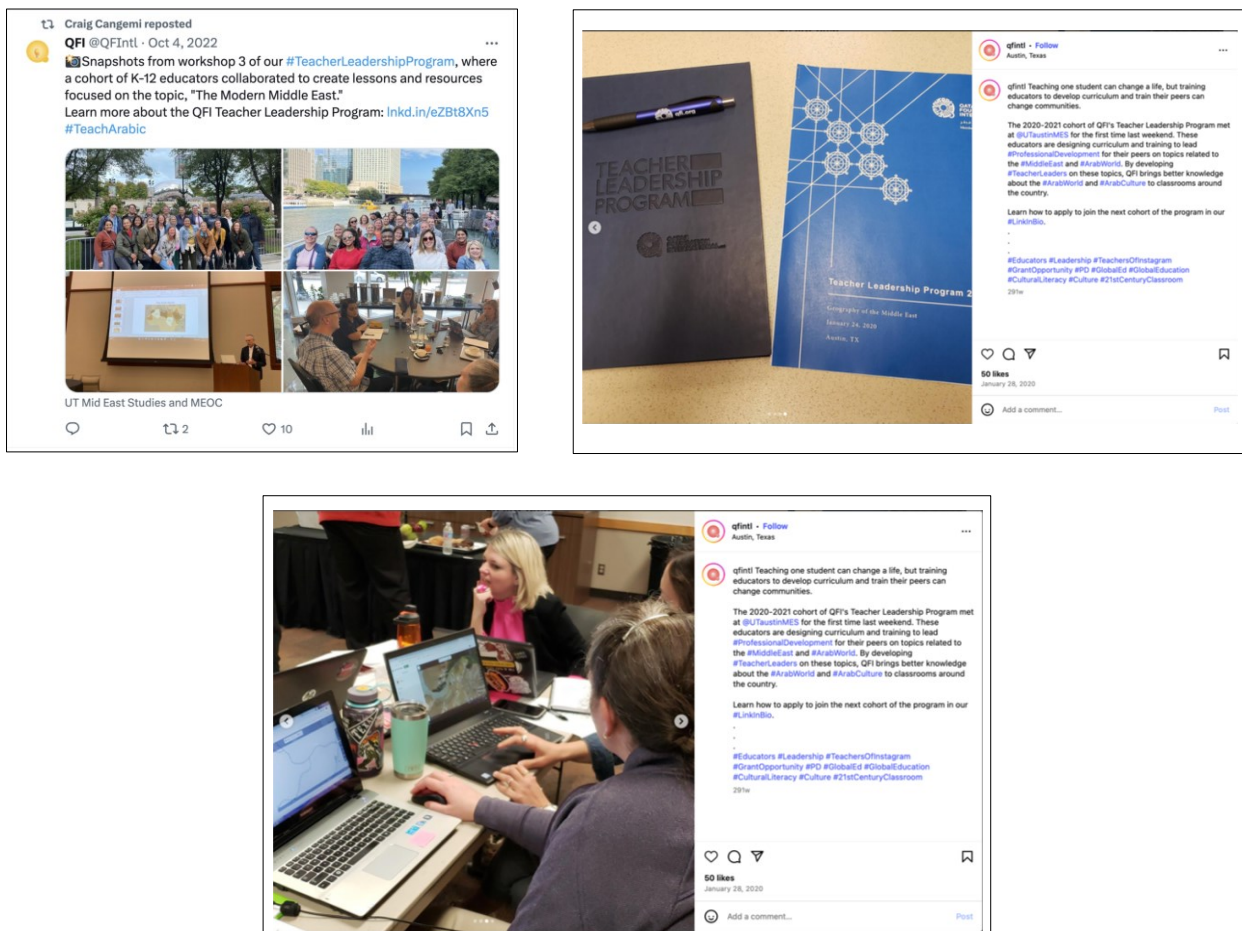
⁸⁶ The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) is a self-governing professional association for social studies educators in the United States that sets national standards for social studies education and teacher preparation. “About NCSS,” National Council for the Social Studies, n.d., accessed March 1, 2026, <https://www.socialstudies.org/about>; “NCSS Social Studies Standards,” National Council for the Social Studies, n.d., accessed March 1, 2026, <https://www.socialstudies.org/standards>.

⁸⁷ “Call for Applications, Teacher Leadership Program 2020–2021,” Qatar Foundation International, n.d., archived May 7, 2021, at https://web.archive.org/web/20210507031426/https://www.qfi.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/QFI_UT-Austin-2020-TLP-Call-for-Applications_FINAL-1.pdf.

Table 3 analyzes the significant value of the program for first-year participating teachers as well as their schools, which could receive QFI funding for substitute teacher replacement during the participant’s absences. As the program envisioned the participants serving as mentors to newly starting cohorts of teachers, much of this funding would be repeated in their second year of participation.

As shown in Figure 7, QFI advertised the Teacher Leadership Program on social media as an opportunity to collaborate on curriculum design, as teachers in the program were creating lessons and resources on the modern Middle East that they could use to train their peers and change communities.⁸⁸ QFI used various educational hashtags to cast a wide net, spreading its message to educators utilizing those hashtags to search for information, resources, and professional development opportunities.

Figure 7: Social media posts of QFI and its program officer on QFI’s Teacher Leadership Program



⁸⁸ QFI (@QFIIntl), “Snapshots from workshop 3 of our #TeacherLeadershipProgram...,” Twitter (now X), October 4, 2022, <https://x.com/QFIIntl/status/1577344217118023683> (as retweeted by Craig Cangemi); QFI (@qfintl), “Teaching one student can change a life...,” Instagram, January 28, 2020, https://www.instagram.com/p/B74MOsAkpy/?img_index=4 and https://www.instagram.com/p/B74MOsAkpy/?img_index=3.

The missionary-style strategy of the program brought QFI-trained teachers to cities that were key to QFI’s geographic strategy described at the outset of this report. The impact of the participants’ presentations at the annual conference for National Council for the Social Studies was summed up by QFI in a [piece](#) it authored for one of its nonprofit partners, Salzburg Global, which stated that the Teacher Leadership Program had the effect of tripling NCSS presentations on the Arab World, with fourteen teachers trained under QFI presenting at the NCSS annual conference as well to other history and social studies conferences at state and national level.⁸⁹

Figure 8: QFI-published piece describing the impact of its Teacher Leadership Program

Second, under our ASC program, we run the Teacher Leadership Program (TLP) whose goal is to train a cohort of educators who have a strong understanding of various issues related to the Arab world to equip them to not only teach about the Arab world in their classrooms, but also to work with other teachers to help bring this increased level of understanding to their classrooms. The TLP focuses on current events including migration and displacement from and in the region. The push-pull factors, concepts as to what causes migration and displacement, what the different types of migration are, and the impacts of migration are on the country they leave from and the country they go to are all discussed in detail. The first cohort of 20 teachers hailed from 15 states and as a result of their training 14 teachers had presentations accepted at the National Council for Social Studies (NCSS) conference. This tripled the presence of presentations on the Arab world at NCSS over the last few years. Teachers from this cohort are also presenting at the Progressive Education Network Conference, the National Council for Teachers of English Conference, the National Council for History Education in addition to state social studies conferences including in Wisconsin and Colorado. The next cohort of 15 teachers from 11 different states will begin in 2020.

QFI Insertion of Messaging Favorable to Qatar in Its Curricular Material and Online Learning Platforms Accessed by Teachers and Students

QFI-sponsored programs and content reached beyond mere Arabic instruction or even Middle Eastern cultural education. On multiple occasions, it disseminated a pro-Qatari stance that was not merely promoted but embedded into lessons and evaluations. In January 2024, New York City’s PS 261, a multi-year recipient of QFI Arabic language grants (and one of the schools listed as a QFI-funded school on the map in QFI’s 2019 Year-in-Review report) was the subject of news reports indicating that a map of the Middle East displayed in one of its classrooms had omitted Israel,

⁸⁹ “Language, Culture and Connected Communities: Supporting and Empowering Displaced and Vulnerable Populations,” Salzburg Global, n.d., previously available at <https://www.salzburgglobal.org/news/topics/article/language-culture-a...nities-supporting-and-empowering-displaced-and-vulnerable-populations>, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/16.238973.pdf>.

labeling the entirety of modern-day Israel as “Palestine.” An image of the map as seen in the classroom was posted by QFI on its X account.”⁹⁰ Financial figures suggest a deep partnership, with the House Committee on Oversight and Reform calculating QFI’s funding of PS 261 and another Brooklyn school, PS/IS 30, as at least \$1 million in the aggregate,⁹¹ a concentration of funding that is anomalous to the national average grant size of \$109,000–\$124,000 documented in broader QFI data.

As Sheikha Moza bint Nasser and [correspondence](#) from QFI’s Executive Director Maggie Mitchell Salem both indicate, the Arabic lessons taught under these grants were provided in conjunction with another one of QFI’s partnerships, namely with the nonprofit group Global Language Project (GLP).⁹² The [curriculum](#) for first grade students provided by GLP through QFI’s sponsorship (access to which has since been scrubbed from the web) included seven units,⁹³ the last of which was a forty-three-page [unit](#) on Qatar that concluded with an assessment for students.⁹⁴ To help solidify their admiration for Qatar, the schoolchildren and teachers at PS 261 in Brooklyn were treated to a royal visit by Sheikha Moza bint Nasser (chair of the Qatar Foundation) in 2018, in the same week that her visit to Columbia’s University’s Mailman School of Public Health provided a platform for the announcement of one of the university’s partnership projects with QFI.⁹⁵ Such visits from Qatar

⁹⁰ Frannie Block, “NYC Public School Wipes Israel from the Map,” *The Free Press*, January 11, 2024, <https://www.thefp.com/p/nyc-public-school-wipes-israel-from-the-map>; Melissa Koenig, “Brooklyn Public School Omits Israel from Qatar-Funded Classroom Map, Labels It Palestine: ‘Jewish Erasure,’” *New York Post*, January 11, 2024, <https://nypost.com/2024/01/11/metro/brooklyn-public-school-erases-israel-from-map/>.

⁹¹ Elyse M. Stefanik, letter to Hon. Kathy Hochul, December 17, 2025, <https://oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Letter-to-Hochul-re-Malign-Influence-in-NYC-Schools-121725.pdf>. The Committee further noted the NYC Department of Education’s obstruction of transparency efforts by refusing to release copies of QFI-funded curriculum materials in response to Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) requests on the grounds that the requests were “not reasonably described” or exempt from disclosure.

⁹² “HH Sheikha Moza Visits QFI-Partner Elementary School in Brooklyn,” website of Moza bint Nasser, April 26, 2018, <https://www.mozabintnasser.qa/en-gb/news/hh-sheikha-moza-visits-qfi-partner-elementary-school-brooklyn> (“QFI ... utilized its partnership with the NYC-based educational nonprofit Global Language Project to enable the school to expand its Arabic education offerings ... to full day programming”); M. Mitchell Salem, email message to A. Skopp, July 11, 2018, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/17.238974.pdf>. Though the New York City Department of Education redacted the name of the QFI employee sending the email, it disclosed the title of “Executive Director” in the signature block, and Mitchell Salem was QFI’s Executive Director from its founding in 2009 until 2019. “Meet IRIS’s New Executive Director,” Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services, n.d., <https://irisct.org/story/meet-iris-new-executive-director/>.

⁹³ “Global Language Project—Arabic Curriculum—Year 1,” Aldaad, n.d., previously available at <https://resources.aldaad.org/resources/global-language-project-arabic-curriculum-year-1/>, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/18.238975.pdf>.

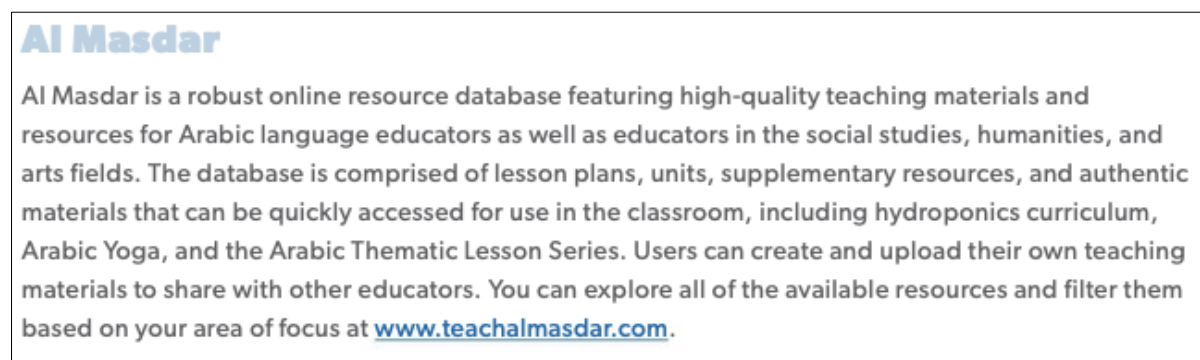
⁹⁴ “GLP Arabic Curriculum, Year 1, Unit 7: Qatar,” Aldaad, n.d., previously available at <https://resources.aldaad.org/resources/global-language-project-arabic-curriculum-year-1/>, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/19.238976.pdf>.

⁹⁵ “Sheikha Moza Visits Qatar Foundation International’s Partner Elementary School in New York,” *The Peninsula*, April 27, 2018, <https://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/27/04/2018/Sheikha-Moza-visits-Qatar-Foundation-International-s-partner-elementary-school-in-New-York>; “HH Sheikha Moza Launches

Foundation heads were not unusual for public schools that partnered with QFI. In 2017, the Washington Latin Public School hosted a visit from Sheikha Hind bint Hamad Al-Thani, the CEO of the Qatar Foundation, with QFI program officer Craig Cangemi also in attendance.⁹⁶ These QFI partner schools were also invited on trips to Doha by Mitchell Salem, with in 2018 led the superintendents of the districts hosting PS 261 and PS/IS 30 [discuss](#) the invitation and plan for a group of students, teachers, and chaperones, as well as the superintendents themselves, to participate in a seven-day trip to Doha with other QFI partners.⁹⁷

For both teachers and students directly connected to QFI through its grants, as well as those that were not, QFI developed Al Masdar (“The Source”), an open access database for teaching materials and resources for Arabic language, social studies, arts, and humanities, that included shared lesson plans, units, and supplementary resources and materials. As Figure 9 shows, QFI’s 2019 [Year-in-Review report](#) highlighted Al Masdar’s importance.⁹⁸

Figure 9: Description of Al Masdar in QFI’s 2019 Year-in-Review report



Consistent with its overhaul of its own website to remove references to its work outside the Arabic language area, QFI has also taken down the Al Masdar website, relocating the relevant Arabic language content elsewhere. However, previous news reports indicate that, in its live iteration, Al Masdar offered lesson plans and

Partnership between Columbia University and QFI,” *Qatar Tribune*, April 25, 2018, <https://www.qatar-tribune.com/article/122278/NATION/HH-Sheikha-Moza-launches-partnership-between-Columbia-University-and-QFI/amp>.

⁹⁶ Qatar Foundation International (@qfintl), “HE Sheikha Hind bint Hamad Al-Thani got a sweet sendoff...,” Instagram, January 12, 2017, <https://www.instagram.com/p/BPLkf9bhZFS/>; Qatar Foundation International (@qfintl), “We’re so honored to have HE Sheikha Hind...,” Instagram, January 12, 2017, <https://www.instagram.com/p/BPLMzWxhQfy/> (Cangemi is pictured in the center of the bottom left image).

⁹⁷ M. Mitchell Salem, A. Skop, and J. Allen, email messages, July 11, 2018, through August 20, 2018, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/20.238977.pdf>.

⁹⁸ *YIR 2019: 10 Years of Inspiring Meaningful Connections with the Arab World* (Qatar Foundation International, 2020), previously available at <https://issuu.com/qfintl/docs/catalogue-2019-pages>, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/02.238957.pdf>.

resources on various Middle Eastern countries, painting a particularly flattering picture of Qatar, even including a resource titled “Express Your Loyalty to Qatar.”⁹⁹

QFI’s work on pro-Qatari messaging went further than reinforcing admiration and loyalty from the students and teachers in its programs and on its platforms. It created activist content to elevate it politically over its neighbors in the Middle East. In 2017, when Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Egypt imposed a blockade on Qatar in a show of solidarity against Qatar’s funding of terror, backing of Iran, and foreign meddling, QFI and Al Jazeera co-produced an advocacy video featuring Qatari residents speaking out against the blockade.¹⁰⁰

QFI’s Manipulation of Grants and Fiscal Sponsorships to Control Communication Networks, Steer Content to Schools, and Monitor Its Impact

As seen from QFI’s partnerships with Duke-UNC CMES and UT Austin, QFI carefully laid the groundwork to amplify its narrative through trusted NRC regional networks, steer QFI-backed content directly into the hands of educators, spike demand for the very content it controlled through generous grant offerings, and impact classroom outcomes by conditioning the grants on the creation of specific lesson plans. QFI then scaled the same strategy nationally so that its impact would not be constrained by the reach of QFI’s NRC partners alone. The following examples help illustrate both the impact of these grants and the incentives that may have prevented QFI’s manipulation from being exposed earlier.

Middle East Outreach Council

The Middle East Outreach Council (MEOC) describes itself as a “national network of educators dedicated to disseminating apolitical and nonpartisan information, resources and activities furthering understanding about the Middle East” to “non-specialists at the K-12 and college levels.”¹⁰¹ QFI’s Cangemi was elected to the board of MEOC in November 2017, along with Kathryn Aslan of UT Austin (the same public outreach coordinator who worked with Cangemi on the Teacher Leadership

⁹⁹ Oren Litwin, “Islamist Qatar Buys American Teachers,” *National Review*, March 2, 2018, <https://www.nationalreview.com/2018/03/qatar-educational-foundation-spreads-islamist-propaganda-to-us-schools/>.

¹⁰⁰ Qatar Living, “One Month into the Blockade: Qatar Residents Speak Out,” Facebook, July 6, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=10155534820263817>; Andrew Kerr, “‘Propagandistic’ Qatari-Funded Group Gave \$30 Million to American Public Schools,” *National Interest*, September 16, 2019, <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/propagandistic-qatari-funded-group-gave-30-million-american-public-schools-81046>.

¹⁰¹ Middle East Outreach Council, accessed March 1, 2026, <http://www.meoc.us>; “MEOC Announces the 2018 Middle East Book Awards,” Middle East Outreach Council, November 18, 2018, <http://www.meoc.us/news/meoc-announces-the-2018-middle-east-book-awards>.

Program).¹⁰² At the time of Cangemi’s joining, MEOC’s services included a member forum, an annual book award, and several national outreach projects.¹⁰³

Cangemi left the MEOC board in February 2024, in the same week that he told Aslan’s successor at UT Austin that QFI was “transitioning” to focus on Arabic language programming.¹⁰⁴ During his time on the MEOC board, QFI was also an institutional member of MEOC, which was unusual in that it appeared to be the only grantmaking foundation in the roster of institutional members.¹⁰⁵ In the more than six years that he served on the MEOC board, Cangemi was president for four of them, double the term to which he had been elected.¹⁰⁶ QFI appears to have become critical to MEOC’s very survival as an organization. In the 2022 fiscal year, as reported in its 2022 board meeting, MEOC had \$102,228 in total income, \$100,000 of which came from a QFI grant (and the balance from membership dues). Of its total expenditure of \$49,703.50, \$47,117.10 went to “QFI-MEOC workshop expenses” and \$1,509.53 to marketing and shipping expenses for MEOC’s annual book awards, with a small remainder allotted for administrative overhead.¹⁰⁷ Essentially, MEOC’s operating budget was comprised almost exclusively of QFI-related revenue and expenses in 2022.

MEOC dramatically shifted its focus during Cangemi’s tenure as MEOC’s president. By the November 2019 board meeting closing out the first of his four years as president, Cangemi stated that MEOC should focus on national conference presence and the board distributed MEOC’s 2019 presentations at the NCSS annual conference, discussing Cangemi’s goal for “more robust” new presence there as well as at other national conferences.¹⁰⁸ As with QFI’s strategy for the Teacher Leadership Program, MEOC stacked the NCSS conference with presenters on the Middle East under Cangemi’s leadership. In sharp contrast to MEOC’s two

¹⁰² “2017 Business Meeting Minutes,” Middle East Outreach Council, November 19, 2017, <http://www.meoc.us/meeting-minutes/november-19-2017>.

¹⁰³ “MEOC Announces the 2018 Middle East Book Awards,” Middle East Outreach Council, November 18, 2018, <http://www.meoc.us/news/meoc-announces-the-2018-middle-east-book-awards>.

¹⁰⁴ C. Cangemi, email message to A. Levin, February 2, 2024, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/22.238979.pdf>.

¹⁰⁵ “Institutional Members,” Middle East Outreach Council, accessed March 1, 2026, <http://www.meoc.us/institutional-members.html>.

¹⁰⁶ Cangemi was installed as president at the November 2018 board meeting. Although Kathryn Aslan of UT Austin was president-elect as of the November 2019 board meeting, she was not installed as president until November 2022. “2018 Business Meeting Minutes,” Middle East Outreach Council, November 16, 2018, <http://www.meoc.us/meeting-minutes/2018-business-meeting>; “2019 Business Meeting Minutes,” Middle East Outreach Council, November 15, 2019, <http://www.meoc.us/meeting-minutes/2019-business-meeting>.

¹⁰⁷ “2022 Business Meeting Minutes,” Middle East Outreach Council, November 14, 2022, <http://www.meoc.us/meeting-minutes/2022-business-meeting>.

¹⁰⁸ “2019 Business Meeting Minutes,” Middle East Outreach Council, November 15, 2019, <http://www.meoc.us/meeting-minutes/2019-business-meeting>.

presentations at the 2017 NCSS conference,¹⁰⁹ the 2019 version of MEOC under Cangemi's leadership was responsible for 25 separate presentations at the annual conference.¹¹⁰ Moreover, despite MEOC's own marketing materials stating that its members are "dedicated to disseminating apolitical and nonpartisan information, resources and activities" to "non-specialists at the K-12 and college levels,"¹¹¹ its presenter topics included "AI (Arab-Israeli): There's Nothing Artificial about This Conflict," "Controversial Crossroads: Religion and Politics in the Middle East," and "Deciphering Middle Eastern Conflicts through Engaging Maps."¹¹²

Cangemi's first year as president also ushered in a focus on increasing MEOC's previously stagnant membership, its connections with educators, and its brand recognition.¹¹³ Each new potential member connecting with MEOC was automatically connected with QFI, as Cangemi took control of the organization's membership apparatus.¹¹⁴ Middle East program outreach coordinators promoted MEOC membership through [advertisements](#) that directed inquiries to Cangemi and also [funneled](#) specific membership inquiries to him, all at his QFI email address.¹¹⁵ Simultaneously, Cangemi used his "forum@meoc" listserv to promote QFI-sponsored programs that were not directly connected to MEOC to MEOC's members, such as the [Brown University Choices Program](#).¹¹⁶ And while he also [promoted](#) the Teacher Leadership Program to the MEOC working group,¹¹⁷ Cangemi ultimately [merged](#) MEOC into the Teacher Leadership Program, with part of the program being run in conjunction with both the University of Texas and MEOC in 2023.¹¹⁸

¹⁰⁹ "2017 Business Meeting Minutes," Middle East Outreach Council, November 19, 2017, <http://www.meoc.us/meeting-minutes/november-19-2017>.

¹¹⁰ "Explore the Middle East at NCSS," Middle East Outreach Council, November 16, 2019, <http://www.meoc.us/news/explore-the-middle-east-at-ncss>.

¹¹¹ Middle East Outreach Council, accessed March 1, 2026, <http://www.meoc.us>; "MEOC Announces the 2018 Middle East Book Awards," Middle East Outreach Council, November 18, 2018, <http://www.meoc.us/news/meoc-announces-the-2018-middle-east-book-awards>.

¹¹² "Explore the Middle East at NCSS," Middle East Outreach Council, November 16, 2019, <http://www.meoc.us/news/explore-the-middle-east-at-ncss>.

¹¹³ "2019 Business Meeting Minutes," Middle East Outreach Council, November 15, 2019, <http://www.meoc.us/meeting-minutes/2019-business-meeting>.

¹¹⁴ Middle East Outreach Council, "Are you a higher education professional at a Middle East Center? Nominate yourself for the Middle East Outreach Council Board of Directors election!," Facebook, April 28, 2023, https://www.facebook.com/MiddleEastOutreachCouncil/videos/meeoc-board-elections-arw-coming/1172484136775438/?locale=en_GB ("Email nominations must be sent to Craig Cangemi (ccangemi@qfi.org) by May 15th!").

¹¹⁵ E. Harver, email message to nteachmideast listserv, September 20, 2018, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/23.238980.pdf>; K. Aslan, email message to M. Rehman, July 24, 2023, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/22.238979.pdf> ("my colleague Craig Cangemi (copied on this email) would be happy to discuss board membership with you").

¹¹⁶ C. Cangemi, email message to forum@meoc.us with attached flyer, June 5, 2019, <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Choices-Wyoming-workshop.pdf>.

¹¹⁷ C. Cangemi, email message to MEOC working group list, February 14, 2018, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/13.238970.pdf>.

¹¹⁸ "Teacher Leadership Program," QFI, n.d., <https://www.qfi.org/events-list/teacher-leadership-program/>, also available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/25.238982.pdf> (stating that workshop 5

Cangemi's presidency also saw a vast expansion of MEOC's book awards, which QFI first began sponsoring in 2017, before he became a MEOC board member.¹¹⁹ MEOC's aforementioned 2019 board meeting included another "robust discussion" on increasing the visibility of the book awards and QFI's grant program inviting teachers to apply for award-winning books, which by that point had distributed 2,500 books.¹²⁰ The board discussed the idea of engaging schools of education to capture pre-service teachers in order to "integrate award-winning books into the curriculum" that these budding teachers would develop for their first classrooms.¹²¹ The MEOC board considered how QFI's grant was designed to have an impact in classrooms, suggesting that, in return for the QFI grant, "teachers write about how they have used the books in the classroom."¹²² As in other areas of MEOC's operations, Cangemi inserted himself directly. By 2021, he and fellow MEOC board member Kathryn Aslan (UT Austin's public outreach coordinator) supervised the book awards, while MEOC board member Emma Harver (Duke-UNC CMES's public outreach coordinator) co-chaired them.¹²³

An analysis of QFI's MEOC Educator Book Awards,¹²⁴ in particular its grants to provide educators with copies of award-winning books, confirms that QFI perpetually expanded the reach of the grant and continued to require and review lesson plans by teachers based on the books. In 2017, Cangemi distributed the grant announcement to the MEOC working group list.¹²⁵ While the grant was described as a partnership between QFI and MEOC, applicants were required to apply for the grant on QFI's portal and to submit the required lesson plans to QFI and MEOC for review, after which the applicants would upload their lesson plans to QFI's portal and QFI's Al Masdar open resource website.¹²⁶ The grant announcements shared by

of the program would be held in New Orleans "in conjunction with the Middle East Outreach Council and the University of Texas" on January 27–29, 2023).

¹¹⁹ "2017 Business Meeting Minutes," Middle East Outreach Council, November 19, 2017, <http://www.meoc.us/meeting-minutes/november-19-2017>.

¹²⁰ "2019 Business Meeting Minutes," Middle East Outreach Council, November 15, 2019, <http://www.meoc.us/meeting-minutes/2019-business-meeting>.

¹²¹ Ibid. It appears that MEOC already had experience with pre-service educators through an earlier collaboration that included Howard University's School of Education. "Global Fables, Folklore and Fantasy in Children's & Youth Literature," Howard University, n.d., archived June 9, 2021, at https://web.archive.org/web/20210609092138/http://d31hzhk6di2h5.cloudfront.net/20190212/df/00/b0/91/480a794eac01c87732075f8c/Global_Fables__Folklore_and_Fantasy_in_Children_s__Youth_Literature.pdf.

¹²² "2019 Business Meeting Minutes," Middle East Outreach Council, November 15, 2019, <http://www.meoc.us/meeting-minutes/2019-business-meeting>.

¹²³ "2021 Business Meeting Minutes," Middle East Outreach Council, November 17, 2021, <http://www.meoc.us/meeting-minutes/2021-annual-meeting>.

¹²⁴ "MEOC Educator Book Awards," Qatar Foundation International, n.d., archived May 6, 2021, at <https://web.archive.org/web/20210506224728/https://www.qfi.org/opportunities/meoc-educator-book-awards/>.

¹²⁵ C. Cangemi, email message to "MEOC List," November 29, 2017, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/26.238983.pdf>.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

Middle East public outreach coordinators on their listservs reveal the changes that were made to increase educator capture, evolving from a [description](#) in January 2018 that listed the opportunity for teachers to receive three award-winning books to use in their classrooms to a [description](#) in November 2018 that also referred to “a mixed set for school librarians.”¹²⁷

This systematic expansion of QFI’s book award grant not only funneled more educators to QFI but also helped disseminate books that were handpicked and distributed with QFI’s help to reinforce narratives that aligned with Qatari viewpoints. For example, two books that received MEOC book award designations—*Young Palestinians Speak: Living under Occupation* and *Ida in the Middle*—have been exposed for promoting the viewpoint that Palestinians are the sole victims and Israelis the sole victimizers, for portraying Israeli security practices as deliberate persecution, for oversimplifying the term “occupation,” and for using grossly misleading and fictitious maps.¹²⁸ Schools presented with these books via QFI book award grants presumably thought that they were receiving books that were educationally valuable and had been independently selected. In practice, they were likely unaware that the organization paying for the distribution of the books also controlled the organization that was in charge of the awards themselves. It is worth noting that the operations of MEOC during Cangemi’s presidency appear to have been purposefully shielded from educators and the public at large. MEOC’s own website indicates that the minutes from its annual business meetings in 2018, 2019, 2021, and 2022 (presumably there was no meeting during the 2020 Covid pandemic) were only uploaded to MEOC’s website in November 2024,¹²⁹ after Cangemi had left MEOC’s board. In addition, there are no minutes for 2023 and 2024.

Arabic Teachers Councils

QFI’s involvement in starting and sustaining Arabic Teachers Councils (ATCs) across the country was a key component in expanding the use of QFI curriculum content and QFI-owned databases by teachers throughout the country.¹³⁰ These

¹²⁷ L. Adeli, email message to Middle East Outreach listserv, January 2, 2018, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/27.238984.pdf>; L. Adeli, email message to Middle East Outreach listserv, November 19, 2018, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/28.238985.pdf>.

¹²⁸ Marjorie Gann, “Young Palestinians Speak: Living under Occupation,” Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting and Analysis, December 20, 2023, <https://www.camera.org/article/young-palestinians-speak-living-under-occupation/>; “Middle East Book Award Winners,” Middle East Outreach Council, n.d., accessed March 1, 2026 http://www.meoc.us/uploads/1/1/9/3/119372299/book_awards_2023.pdf.

¹²⁹ “Annual MEOC Business Meeting Minutes,” Middle East Outreach Council, n.d., accessed March 1, 2026 <http://www.meoc.us/meeting-minutes>.

¹³⁰ “Arabic Teacher Councils,” Qatar Foundation International, n.d., archived April 15, 2021, at <https://web.archive.org/web/20210415024137/https://www.qfi.org/opportunities/arabic-teacher-councils/> (listing support for CATC hosted by the University of Chicago; Greater New York ATC hosted by Choate Rosemary Hall; Michigan ATC hosted by GEE-Riverside; New England ATC hosted by the Five

ATCs, many of which are registered neither as a business nor as a nonprofit organization, help mask the details surrounding QFI's specific level of involvement in and funding of these councils. For example, the Chicago Arabic Teachers Council (CATC) describes itself as "hosted at the University of Chicago's Center for Middle Eastern Studies in partnership with Qatar Foundation International."¹³¹ Through CATC, teachers were told that they had access to a wealth of QFI-run sites and databases with ready-made lesson plans, activities, and resources for their classrooms. CATC advertises that teachers can use QFI Arab World Resource kits (the link to which has now been scrubbed from the web), which "introduce teachers and students to the history and geography of the Arab world" and can be used "as stand-alone activities" or "integrate[d] ... into their existing curriculum."¹³² CATC also leads teachers directly to QFI's website, linking them to QFI's Teacher Resources (which have also been scrubbed from QFI's current website) and advertising that "QFI works with teachers and education experts to create and share classroom-ready lesson plans, activities, and interactive tools for teaching about the Arabic language and the history and culture of the Arab world."¹³³ Finally, CATC's resource list links its teachers to Al Masdar, which CATC describes as an "online open-education resource library ... featur[ing] a wealth of materials and resources for educators including lesson plans, units, authentic materials and more."¹³⁴

Partnerships with reputable universities lend an air of credibility to teachers councils such as CATC and also lend an air of authority to the teacher resources that they offer through those universities. In reality, the structure does not provide any true oversight, with the university merely serving as the host for an ATC that has no legal existence in its own right and operates in a flexible manner to promote shared interests. But this lack of structure and flexibility comes with limitations. Among other things, such ATCs cannot legally hold a bank account or fundraise in their own name, making the largesse of a sponsor like QFI critical and diminishing the likelihood that any ATC would properly vet its fiscal sponsor or even question any of the content in the sponsor's resources that it is promoting.

QFI's Catchall Grants

True to Cangemi's aforementioned statement to the public outreach coordinator at Duke-UNC CMES that QFI wanted to scale up, 2017 marked a significant shift in

College Arabic Language Initiative; Southern California ATC hosted by Occidental College; and Washington, DC, ATC hosted by George Washington University).

¹³¹ Chicago Arabic Teachers Council, accessed March 1, 2026, <https://voices.uchicago.edu/catc/>.

¹³² Aidan Kaplan, "Resources for Arabic Teachers," Chicago Arabic Teachers Council, March 19, 2020, <https://voices.uchicago.edu/catc/resources-for-arabic-teachers/>.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

QFI's grantmaking to educators. The organization introduced generous general grants that would wrap teachers all around the country into its network and provide it with a view into what was being taught about the Middle East in classrooms across the United States.

Instead of merely funding individual programs for a few hundred or a few thousand dollars at a time, QFI launched its Teacher Professional Development Grants in 2017 for teachers in the social sciences, arts, and humanities, offering up to \$2,000 per teacher to register for, travel to, and attend workshops, conference, institutes, and other educational courses on the "Arab world" (QFI's preferred term for the Middle East).¹³⁵ Grantees were required to demonstrate an intention to provide classroom instruction on the Arab world and share with QFI a classroom activity or resource developed as a result of the funded professional activity.¹³⁶ Cangemi's contacts at the NRCs heavily **pushed** these grants to teachers as generous catchall grants that covered a variety of offerings, from simple workshops to enticing **international trips**.¹³⁷ For teachers on modest salaries, these grants not only offered substantial backing for professional development but also gave them significant financial support for travel. For QFI, the grants served as an important assessment tool to understand how teachers were teaching about the Middle East. This enabled the organization to continuously adjust its strategies to promote the kind of content that it wanted to be taught.

QFI also promoted broad-based Classroom Resource Enrichment Grants (CREGs), which were awarded throughout the academic year to provide educators with the supplemental funding for resources, tools, or activities to further education on Arabic language or the "Arab world."¹³⁸ The CREGs were **advertised** on public outreach listservs, where they lured educators into the QFI network with the

¹³⁵ "Teacher Professional Development Grants," Qatar Foundation International, n.d., archived May 6, 2021, at <https://web.archive.org/web/20210506215312/https://www.qfi.org/opportunities/teacher-professional-development-grants/>.

¹³⁶ "Teacher Professional Development Grants," Qatar Foundation International, n.d., archived September 23, 2023, at https://web.archive.org/web/20230923133756/https://www.qfi.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Teacher-Professional-Development-Grants_2022_ENG.pdf; "Teacher Professional Development Grants," Qatar Foundation International, n.d., archived January 17, 2021, at <https://web.archive.org/web/20210117124230/https://www.qfi.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Covid19-TPD-Request-for-Proposals-09-2020.pdf>.

¹³⁷ E. Harver, email message to nteachmideast listserv, April 4, 2017, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/29.238986.pdf>; E. Harver, email message to nteachmideast listserv, November 7, 2017, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/29a.238987.pdf>; see also "More Teacher Travel Opportunities," Global Exploration for Educators Organization, n.d., accessed March 1, 2026, <https://geeo.org/other-travel-opportunities/> (advertising that teachers could use QFI Teacher Professional Development Grants to fund GEEQ Middle East trips).

¹³⁸ "Classroom Resource Enrichment Grants," Qatar Foundation International, n.d., archived May 6, 2021, at <https://web.archive.org/web/20210506212818/https://www.qfi.org/opportunities/classroom-resource-enrichment-grants/>.

prospect durable resources that could “serve the classroom for multiple years.”¹³⁹ Like the Teacher Professional Development Grants, the CREGs were broad in scope and gave QFI valuable insight into classrooms and the ability to moderate the resources, tools, and activities for which teachers might otherwise not be able to obtain funding. In his Congressional testimony in response to the aforementioned news reports about a map on which Israel had been replaced with Palestine in a QFI-funded Arabic-language classroom at PS 261 in Brooklyn, the New York City Schools Chancellor asserted that the teacher in question had paid for the materials with her own money.¹⁴⁰ However, New York City Department of Education documents contain [emails](#) in which a QFI representative discussed the teacher’s request that QFI reimburse her directly for classroom materials rather than having to run the reimbursement through the relevant office of the New York City schools department that administered grant funds.¹⁴¹ While the emails do not mention the specific classroom materials to be funded, geography materials would fall under the scope of QFI’s CREGs.¹⁴² The emails show that QFI’s representative suggested to school administrators that if they were not able to allow for the carveout of a portion of the payments directly to the teacher under the original grant, QFI had two types of grants available to teachers for both classroom materials and professional development that could be utilized for the resources.¹⁴³ Ultimately, there were concerns whether such direct grant payments to teachers would be regarded as a conflict of interest under the school’s policy,¹⁴⁴ but the discussion indicates that, from QFI’s perspective, it was willing to fund the classroom materials regardless of who ultimately received the funding for the materials.

QFI’s Integration into Programs that Aligned Teachers and Students with Palestinian-Centered Grievances

On the prior iteration of its website, QFI informed educators, schools, and other potential partner organizations that “our role is not to advocate for any particular country, religion, or political viewpoint.”¹⁴⁵ In reality, however, it partnered in or otherwise sponsored programs and materials that were aligned with Qatari ideology,

¹³⁹ E. Harver, email message to ncteachmidwest listserv, April 4, 2017, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/29.238986.pdf>.

¹⁴⁰ Frannie Block, “NYC Schools Chief: Qataris Write the Check,” *The Free Press*, May 12, 2024, <https://www.thefp.com/p/nyc-schools-chief-qataris-write-the-check>.

¹⁴¹ QFI Program Associate, email message to J. Rana and E. Davis, September 16, 2019, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/30.238988.pdf>.

¹⁴² “Classroom Resource Enrichment Grants,” Qatar Foundation International, n.d., archived May 6, 2021, at <https://web.archive.org/web/20210506212818/https://www.qfi.org/opportunities/classroom-resource-enrichment-grants/>.

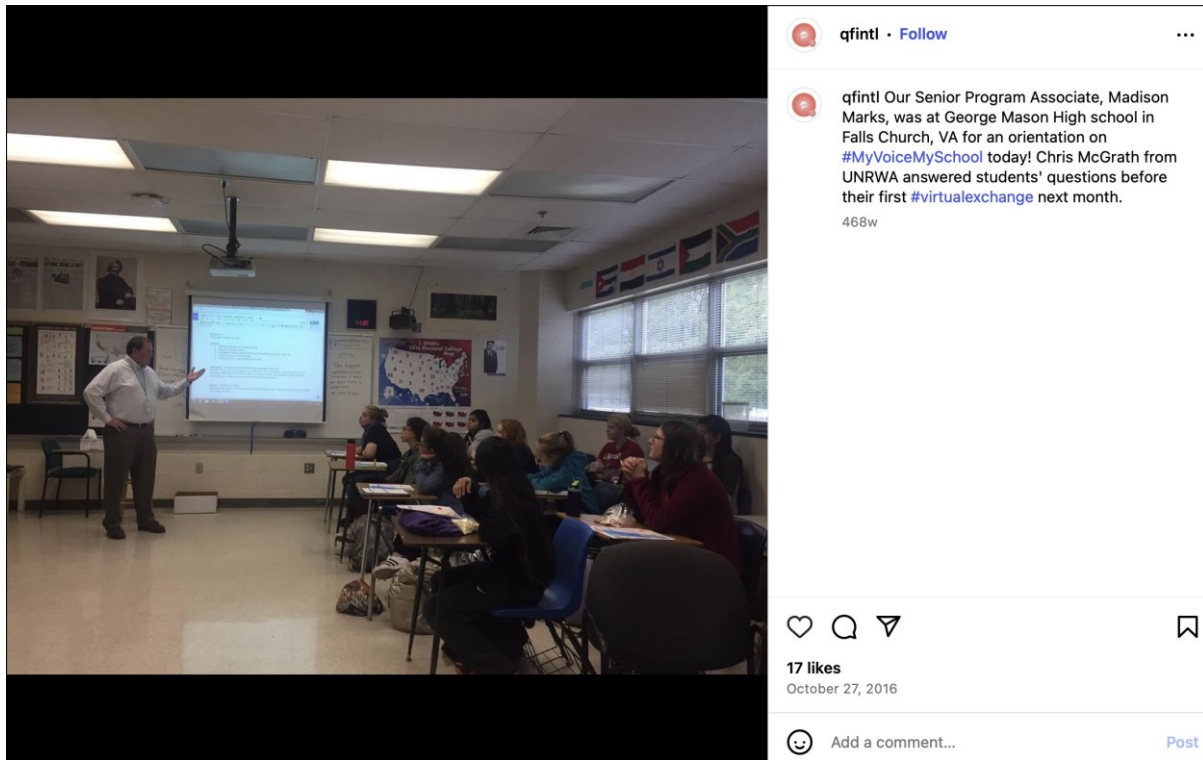
¹⁴³ QFI Program Associate, email message to J. Rana and E. Davis, September 23, 2019.

¹⁴⁴ J. Rana, email messages to QFI Program Associate and E. Davis, September 23, 2019.

¹⁴⁵ “Frequently Asked Questions,” Qatar Foundation International, n.d., archived April 15, 2021, at <https://web.archive.org/web/20210415020337/https://www.qfi.org/about-qfi/faq/>.

in particular those that advocated for Palestinians and cast Israel as an oppressor, a killer of the innocent, and an illegitimate state. These programs covered advocacy projects, curriculum materials, and professional development workshops.

Figure 10: Social media post of QFI participating in UNRWA virtual exchange program



UNRWA's My Voice-My School Program

QFI partnered with My Voice-My School, an UNRWA-run program that describes itself as “rooted in advocacy” for Palestinian refugee students. The program provides virtual classroom exchanges and “online digital media and bespoke teaching materials.”¹⁴⁶ However, My Voice-My School comprised much more than a few video conferences with Palestinian students. With QFI’s assistance, it grew into a social justice project focusing on Palestinian “solidarity” that required students and teachers to plan and put into action local and global advocacy strategies in connection with other participating classrooms. As shown in Figure 10, QFI and UNRWA representatives met with students whose schools participated in the program.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ “My School-My Voice: Overview,” Encounter Edu, n.d., accessed March 1, 2026, <https://encounteredu.com/education-programmes/unrwa>; “My School-My Voice: Program Partners,” Encounter Edu, n.d., accessed March 1, 2026, <https://encounteredu.com/education-programmes/unrwa/program-partners>; see also “Amid Global Refugee Crisis, Students in Europe, the USA, Syria, Lebanon and Gaza Build Solidarity beyond Borders,” UNRWA, November 9, 2016, <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/press-releases/amid-global-refugee-crisis-students-europe-usa-syria-lebanon-and-gaza-build>.

¹⁴⁷ QFI (@qfintl), “Our Senior Program Associate...,” Instagram, October 27, 2016, <https://www.instagram.com/p/BME5B1mBjAx/>.

Evidence of hatred toward Jews, calls for the murder of Jews, the glorification of terrorism, and the demonization of Israel that has long emanated from teachers and teaching materials in UNRWA schools has been well documented.¹⁴⁸ The same applies to the use of UNRWA schools to hide entrances to Hamas’s tunnels, the ties of certain UNRWA staff to terror groups, and their participation in the October 7 massacre.¹⁴⁹ Even without knowing precisely what the QFI and UNRWA representatives and the Palestinian students involved in this virtual exchange program communicated to American high school students about Palestinians and Israel, it is clear that QFI’s ability to promote this program on behalf of UNRWA was staggeringly effective and likely cost QFI little to nothing. QFI leveraged its influence with its existing NRC partners to promote an activist program that had no real connection to Title VI–sanctioned subject areas. Nevertheless, Duke-UNC CMES readily obliged, allowing QFI to craft the message that would be distributed to the listserv network of educators without expressing any skepticism as to whether the program fell under the scope of public outreach programming or whether it expressed a particularly unbalanced viewpoint. The first time that QFI reached out was in 2016, when a QFI program associate [emailed](#) a listserv of Middle East outreach coordinators a description of the program for eighth and ninth grade social studies classrooms “to discuss the importance of educational advocacy.”¹⁵⁰ Duke-UNC CMES outreach coordinator Emma Harver then included the post in her next [distribution](#) to North Carolina educators about Middle East educational opportunities.¹⁵¹

By 2017, QFI [presented](#) an expanded opportunity to Harver that she [posted](#) to her public outreach listserv.¹⁵² As shown in Figure 11, the project was not just meant to

¹⁴⁸ *UNRWA Education: Reform or Regression? A Review of UNRWA Teachers and Schools concerning Incitement to Hate and Violence* (UN Watch, March 2023), <https://unwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2023-Report-UNRWA.pdf>; *UNRWA’s Teachers of Hate* (UN Watch, June 2022), <https://unwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/2022-Report-UNRWAs-Teachers-of-Hate.pdf>; see also “The Case against UNRWA: Written Testimony by Hillel C. Neuer, Executive Director of United Nations Watch,” submitted to hearing on “UNRWA Exposed: Examining the Agency’s Mission and Failures,” House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Oversight and Accountability and the Subcommittee on Global Health, Human Rights, and International Organizations, January 30, 2024, <https://www.congress.gov/118/meeting/house/116769/witnesses/HMTG-118-FA17-Wstate-NeuerH-20240130.pdf>.

¹⁴⁹ “NYT: Documents Show Top Administrators at UNRWA Schools Were Hamas Fighters,” *Times of Israel*, December 9, 2024, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/top-administrators-at-unrwa-schools-were-hamas-fighters-documents-show-nyt/>; “New Report Exposes UNRWA Educators’ Deep Links to Terror Groups,” *New York Post*, November 15, 2024, <https://nypost.com/2024/11/15/world-news/new-report-exposes-unrwa-educators-deep-links-to-terror-groups/>; “NYT: Records Seized by Israel Show Hamas Presence in U.N. Schools,” Embassy of Israel—Ankara, November 12, 2024, <https://embassies.gov.il/ankara/en/news/records-seized-israel-show-hamas-presence-un-schools>.

¹⁵⁰ M. Marks, email message to MEOC, June 4, 2016, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/31.238989.pdf>.

¹⁵¹ E. Harver, email message to nteachmideast listserv, June 10, 2016, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/32.238990.pdf>.

¹⁵² C. Cangemi, email message to E. Harver, April 14, 2017, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/33.238991.pdf>; E. Harver, email message to nteachmideast listserv, April 27, 2017, <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/34.238992.pdf>.

encompass a virtual visit but also included online media and curriculum materials to develop “solidarity” across borders with Palestinian students in UNRWA-operated schools.

Figure 11: QFI’s description of the My Voice-My School program for distribution to educators

Qatar Foundation International in partnership with Digital Explorer and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) are currently soliciting applications of interest from 8th and 9th grade social studies teachers in the U.S. who would like to participate in the My Voice-My School program in 2017-2018. This program will connect U.S. students with Palestinian students in UNRWA-operated schools in the Middle East (Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Gaza, and the West Bank). Through the use of these video conversations, online digital media and specifically designed curriculum materials, students participating will benefit from a sense of solidarity across borders and develop skills needed to advocate for their own education and future.

QFI’s application for the program indicated that the project would create a network of student activists and that it would extend over the course of twelve weeks (equating to one-third of the school’s instructional weeks). It would include a requirement for advocacy projects that brought together students from different participating classes in Skype conferences to brainstorm about advocacy for quality education on a local and global basis, put their plan into concrete action in their communities, keep in touch online with other students, and assess the results of their efforts.¹⁵³ QFI would include curriculum and implementing recommendations. Thus, the UNRWA-backed program, with no established network of communication with American teachers, was able to access American classrooms by virtue of being promoted by QFI, which was able to lean on its NRC network and the malleability of its Title VI outreach coordinator. In retrospect, the fact that the program connected students and teachers to each other around the theme of Palestinian solidarity provided a ripe training ground for the post-October 7 world.

Once a school started participating in the program, QFI could use simple social media tools to expose teachers and students to additional content authored by others that cast Israel in a negative light. For example, following a visit from program representatives, teachers and students who were inclined (or invited) to check out their photo on QFI’s Instagram account could click on the [#MyVoice-MySchool](#) hashtag, which would take them to a page aggregating all posts on the project, including the one pictured above. This “project page” also included multiple posts by UNRWA. For example, those preceding the 2016 post include images from 2014 of Gazan children sheltering in UNRWA schools, accompanied by messages such as “235,000 UNRWA students in Gaza do not know when they will go back to school” and comments from followers such as “I pray they find peace and

¹⁵³ “Call for Classrooms to Participate in 2017–2018 Virtual Exchange Program,” Qatar Foundation International, n.d., attached to C Cangemi, email message to E. Harver, April 14, 2017, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/33.238991.pdf>.

the occupation and apartheid from Israel is lifted” and “there is no proof of human shields being used in Gaza but plenty of proofs and testimonies by ex IDF soldiers that Israel does use Palestinians as human shields.”¹⁵⁴ It was a perfect setup to ensure that students were exposed to anti-Israel messaging and narratives of “occupation” and “apartheid,” not to mention the alleged bloodlust of the Israeli Defense Forces, that they would be encouraged to repeat during their college years.

Brown University’s Choices Program

At Brown University, QFI leveraged the reach and credibility of an elite university that distributed curriculum content nationwide to promote Qatari viewpoints on Israel. Specifically, it partnered with the Choices Program, a K-12 licensed curriculum program that at its peak reached over 8,000 schools and a million US students. In March 2024, a report by the Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy (ISGAP) exposed the questionable ownership structure of the program and tracked how two Choices Program units on the Middle East had systematically shifted the narrative over a decade, erasing historical Jewish and Christian ties to the land, normalizing terror groups, and delegitimizing Israel by removing primary sources, altering maps, and failing to offer students the ability to consider the full historical and diplomatic context, including the recent success of the Abraham Accords.¹⁵⁵ Brown University grossly misrepresented the nature of its relationship with QFI, which not only sponsored grants to place these curriculum units in the hands of more teachers but also sponsored teacher workshops on these units at which the university allowed QFI’s Cangemi to teach K-12 educators and distribute QFI materials to them.¹⁵⁶ Videos of professional education workshops on QFI-sponsored Choices Program units were later hosted not on Brown’s website but on QFI’s.¹⁵⁷ In his role as MEOC president, Cangemi also distributed promotional material for the QFI/Choices Program workshops via his national MEOC members listserv.¹⁵⁸

A month after the publication of ISGAP’s report, Brown stated that it would be discontinuing its role as the “host” of the Choices Program—an interesting choice of

¹⁵⁴ UNRWA, “Today should have been the start of the #school year in #Gaza,” Instagram, August 24, 2014, <https://www.instagram.com/p/sFedHGx4DU/>.

¹⁵⁵ *Foreign Influence and Anti-Israel Bias in K-12 Classrooms: An Investigation of Brown University’s Choices Program* (ISGAP, 2025), https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/K12_Report_Final_20250310.pdf.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.; “Qatar Foundation International and the Choices Program at Brown University’s Curriculum Award Program,” flyer, n.d., archived September 30, 2020, at <https://web.archive.org/web/20200930211546/https://www.qfi.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/QFI-Brown-Spring-2020-Program-Announcement-.pdf>.

¹⁵⁸ *Foreign Influence and Anti-Israel Bias in K-12 Classrooms: An Investigation of Brown University’s Choices Program* (ISGAP, 2025), https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/K12_Report_Final_20250310.pdf; C. Cangemi, email message to forum@meoc.us with attached flyer, June 5, 2019, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Choices-Wyoming-workshop.pdf>.

words that underscores the program’s opaque ownership and oversight structures. The official explanation was that the program was somehow no longer financially viable for Brown, even though the university had long claimed that it was self-funding and did not appear to have consolidated the Choices Program’s finances with its own.¹⁵⁹ To date, Brown has failed to reveal the ownership structure of the Choices Program, to identify the unnamed “third party” that ran the digital editions of the now-shuttered Choices Program and to whom subscribing schools permitted data access, and to illuminate the affiliate relationships behind the millions of dollars of custodial account liability listed in Brown’s tax returns year after year for revenue that it collected “as fiscal agent for ... affiliated programs.”¹⁶⁰ In addition, through its lobbyists, Brown has opposed the soc-called DETERRENT Act,¹⁶¹ which, if adopted, would significantly increase the reporting requirements for universities receiving foreign gifts and investment.

¹⁵⁹ Francis J. Doyle III, “Update on the Choices Program,” Office of the Provost, Brown University, April 11, 2025, <https://www.brown.edu/about/administration/provost/communications/update-choices-program>.

¹⁶⁰ *Foreign Influence and Anti-Israel Bias in K-12 Classrooms: An Investigation of Brown University’s Choices Program* (ISGAP, 2025), https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/K12_Report_Final_20250310.pdf.

¹⁶¹ Roma Shah, “Brown is Opposing a Bill Seeking to Restrict Foreign Donations,” *Brown Daily Herald*, October 23, 2025, <https://www.browndailyherald.com/article/2025/10/brown-is-opposing-a-bill-seeking-to-restrict-foreign-donations>; Lobbying Report of Brown University, 2025, Q3, October 22, 2025, <https://lda.senate.gov/filings/public/filing/fd30938c-5a57-44b9-b714-74cfbf3c39af/print/>; Lobbying Report of Brown University, 2025, Q2, July 21, 2025, <https://lda.senate.gov/filings/public/filing/ca3f6ae7-9ed2-48c8-b10f-e91e7511fea2/print/>; Lobbying Report of Brown University, 2025, Q1, Amendment, June 6, 2025, <https://lda.senate.gov/filings/public/filing/26e19d4d-68c0-43a4-8665-028dfae67dff/print/>; Lobbying Report of Brown University, 2025, Q1, Amendment, May 7, 2025, <https://lda.senate.gov/filings/public/filing/5add5c49-6559-4677-b789-1ab4eb2d107f/print/>; Lobbying Report of Brown University, 2025, Q1, April 21, 2025, <https://lda.senate.gov/filings/public/filing/6d733237-e06a-4699-b77c-aa741f15ba55/print/>; Lobbying Report of Brown University, 2024, Q3, October 21, 2024, <https://lda.senate.gov/filings/public/filing/56ed4a78-5b68-4f8b-b44a-10e6087e666c/print/>; Lobbying Report of Brown University, 2024, Q2, July 22, 2024, <https://lda.senate.gov/filings/public/filing/c705d880-5ca5-414f-8b30-3f24f5fb564a/print/>; Lobbying Report of Brown University, 2024, Q1, April 22, 2024, <https://lda.senate.gov/filings/public/filing/444eefee-be5b-458e-8659-d86f9e6b389c/print/>; Lobbying Report of Brown University, 2023, Q4, January 22, 2024, <https://lda.senate.gov/filings/public/filing/b0a32571-f043-4c1d-82e0-bef77e60275e/print/>.

The Strategic Deception behind QFI's Institutional Capture

QFI's Creation of an Echo Chamber to Reinforce Its Own Narratives

QFI's strategy of institutional capture was designed to influence and control the supply chain for educational resources on the Middle East while simultaneously spiking demand for the very resources it controlled. Educators were systematically drawn into networks sponsored, designed, or controlled by QFI. These networks reinforced the same narratives over and over again and enabled QFI to continuously monitor the impact of its strategies and make adjustments to increase its impact. By stacking national conferences with its own disciples and content that specifically centered on the geopolitics of the Middle East, and more specifically on Israel-Palestine, QFI was able to generate a heightened sense among educators that their classrooms urgently required such instruction. The artificial demand that QFI was able to create was fed by the supply it controlled. This vicious cycle helped create an echo chamber that ultimately allowed legitimate pedagogy to be stripped away and replaced by a more insidious agenda.

QFI's strategy was supported by the consumer-oriented behavior in our educational system that reflects an ever-growing appetite for customized educational resources in the field of social studies. While certain goals may be standardized, it is not typical for curriculum and lesson plans to be uniform. State and district level policies usually provide some guidance in this regard, but teachers are relatively free to create lessons for their classrooms and often rely on outside resources, curating materials and media to build the classroom curriculum.¹⁶² Indeed, it is a point on which many schools and teachers pride themselves. The same flexibility is visible at regional and national conferences for educators. It is therefore not surprising that QFI tweeted about its excitement at the prospect of connecting with 4,000 teachers at an NCSS conference in Washington, DC.¹⁶³

¹⁶² "Understanding the Root Causes of Antisemitism in K-12 Education," written testimony of Brandy Shufutinsky, Director, Education and National Security Program, Foundation for Defense of Democracies, before the House Committee on Education and Workforce, Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education, September 10, 2025, <https://www.fdd.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Shufutinsky-9.10.25-Testimony.pdf>.

¹⁶³ QFI (@QFIIntl), "For #NCSS16 ... We'll see 4k history & SS teachers in #DC for @NCSSNetwork! #ISpeakArabic," X, December 1, 2016, <https://x.com/QFIIntl/status/804369627488931840>.

QFI's Use of Organizational Opacity to Mask Its Funding, Conceal Its Activity, and Strategically Deceive the Education System

QFI was originally established in 2009 as a 501(c)(3) private foundation.¹⁶⁴ Unlike a public charity, which receives a large share of its support from the general public, such an entity is typically controlled by a family or a few individuals, with financial support coming from a small number of sources.¹⁶⁵ Indeed, the Qatar Foundation was the only source of contributions that QFI listed in its publicly filed tax returns for 2010 (\$2,962,765) and 2011 (\$7,232,066).¹⁶⁶ In 2012, QFI voluntarily terminated its private foundation status and transferred its remaining assets to the Qatar Foundation,¹⁶⁷ having reorganized as a Delaware LLC in 2011.¹⁶⁸

QFI's corporate structure suggests deliberate efforts to minimize transparency and accountability. While QFI may have preferred to be called a nonprofit, this is a misperception that it has helped create, given that it has not legally operated as a nonprofit organization since it terminated that status over a decade ago. As an LLC, it avoids the scrutiny of public financial disclosure requirements that apply to nonprofit organizations while marketing itself to educators as a nonprofit. In its 2020 investigation into institutional compliance with Section 117 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, the US Department of Education noted that, beginning around 2009, the flow of foreign money from instrumentalities of the Qatari government "rose massively" at the same time that higher education institutions were "accelerat[ing] and strengthen[ing] their financial and operational partnerships with foreign governments, including repressive regimes hostile to American policies and interests."¹⁶⁹ As apparent from the tax filings from the short time it spent as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, QFI received two-and-a-half times more

¹⁶⁴ "Qatar Foundation International, LLC," Influence Watch, n.d., accessed March 1, 2026, <https://www.influencewatch.org/for-profit/qatar-foundation-international-llc-qfi/>.

¹⁶⁵ "EO Operational Requirements: Private Foundations and Public Charities," IRS, n.d., accessed March 1, 2026, <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/eo-operational-requirements-private-foundations-and-public-charities>.

¹⁶⁶ Qatar Foundation International, Return of Private Foundation (Form 990-PF), 2009 (Schedule B, Part I), accessed March 1, 2026, available at https://pdf.guidestar.org/PDF_Images/2010/205/714/2010-205714317-0740bcd0-F.pdf; Qatar Foundation International, Return of Private Foundation (Form 990-PF), 2010 (Schedule B, Part I), accessed March 1, 2026, available at https://pdf.guidestar.org/PDF_Images/2011/205/714/2011-205714317-083b6ef6-F.pdf.

¹⁶⁷ Qatar Foundation International, Return of Private Foundation (Form 990-PF), 2011 (Statements 6, 7, and Certificate of Dissolution), accessed March 1, 2026, available at https://pdf.guidestar.org/PDF_Images/2012/205/714/2012-205714317-083b6edb-F.pdf.

¹⁶⁸ File no. 4994688, State of Delaware Department of State, Division of Corporations, n.d., available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Division-of-Corporations-Filing.pdf>.

¹⁶⁹ *Institutional Compliance with Section 117 of the Higher Education Act of 1965* (US Department of Education, October 2020), <https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/policy/highered/leg/institutional-compliance-section-117.pdf>.

funding from the Qatar Foundation in 2011 than it did in 2010. It can be assumed that, by the late 2010s, when QFI had successfully scaled up its mission, it likely received millions more in funding from the Qatar Foundation. This might have raised some alarm bells regarding the scope of its mission had QFI needed to continue to publicly disclose its tax returns. However, the lack of public insight into QFI's finances as an LLC has effectively insulated it from scrutiny, allowing QFI to scale up its impact in the United States with little to no transparency.

Moreover, QFI's transition from a 501(c)(3) foundation to an LLC appears to have been a strategic stepping stone for its next move. Qatari news reports from 2014 indicate that QFI moved its headquarters from Washington, DC, to Doha that year.¹⁷⁰ Those reports were largely ignored in the United States. However, if QFI had remained a 501(c)(3) entity, it would not have been able to move its headquarters—or at least not without attracting substantially more scrutiny.

QFI's various representations on its website about its structure are revealing. Today, QFI's homepage proclaims that QFI “operates independently from its headquarters in Washington, D.C.,” while its FAQs state that QFI is a member of the Qatar Foundation, that it operates independently, that it is not affiliated with any government, and that its operational headquarters are in Washington, DC.¹⁷¹ Only a few years ago, however, there was no such claim of “independence,” with QFI's website indicating that QFI is “fully owned and funded by” the Qatar Foundation,¹⁷² a description that is fully consistent with UNC's awareness that QFI funding is, in essence, “Gulf money.”¹⁷³ On the prior version of its website, QFI was more equivocal about its headquarters, merely stating that the organization is “located in Washington, D.C.,”¹⁷⁴ a description that tracks with how QFI **described itself** in its MOUs.¹⁷⁵ That QFI has presented itself as a US-based organization when engaging with American educators and policymakers, presumably to avoid FARA registration

¹⁷⁰ “QF International to Move Head Office from Washington to Doha,” *The Peninsula*, April 9, 2014, <https://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/09/04/2014/qf-international-to-move-head-office-from-washington-to-doha>; “Qatar Foundation International to Move HQ from Washington to Doha,” *The Peninsula*, April 10, 2014, <https://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/10/04/2014/qatar-foundation-international-to-move-hq-from-washington-to-doha>.

¹⁷¹ Qatar Foundation International, accessed March 1, 2026, <https://www.qfi.org>; “Frequently Asked Questions,” Qatar Foundation International, n.d., accessed March 1, 2026, <https://www.qfi.org/about/frequently-asked-questions/>.

¹⁷² “Frequently Asked Questions,” Qatar Foundation International, n.d., archived April 15, 2021, at <https://web.archive.org/web/20210415020337/https://www.qfi.org/about-qfi/faq/>.

¹⁷³ C. Kurzman, email message to S. Tamari and E. Harver, March 10, 2017, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/12.238969.pdf>.

¹⁷⁴ “About QFI,” Qatar Foundation International, n.d., archived April 15, 2021, at <https://web.archive.org/web/20210415020017/https://www.qfi.org/about-qfi/#vision>.

¹⁷⁵ Memorandum of Understanding between QFI and the Center for Middle East Studies at the University of Texas at Austin's Outreach Program, available at <https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/15.238972.pdf>.

requirements and bypass foreign funding disclosure requirements under Section 117 of the Higher Education Act, while strategically restructuring itself and relocating to Doha under the close eye of the Qatar Foundation, amounts to a fraud on the US education system and the American public.

The Gregorian Question: Qatar's First Asset in US Education

To understand the depth of QFI's infiltration of the US education system, it is important to analyze the starting point of Qatar's influence on US education and the role that lofty ambitions of philanthropy can play in the long-term degradation of the security of these structures. In 2002, then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan wrote a [letter](#) to the then Emir of Qatar regarding a discussion they had recently had about Qatar's projects for higher education in the United States. In this letter, Annan recommended Vartan Gregorian, the president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York and a former president of Brown University as a person who could assist in this regard, noting that Gregorian had already agreed to help.¹⁷⁶ Seven weeks later, Qatar's ambassador to the United Nations [wrote](#) to the Secretary-General to set up an initial meeting between Gregorian and Sheikha Moza bint Nasser during her forthcoming visit to the United Nations.¹⁷⁷

Figure 12: Excerpt of Letter from UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan to Sheik Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani

I was inspired by the discussion we had during my recent brief visit to Doha on the topic of higher education. Accordingly, upon my return to New York, I sought the advice of Mr. Vartan Gregorian, President of the Carnegie Corporation, who has agreed to assist you on the proposed worthy projects. I attach his biographical information for your information.

Figure 13: Excerpt of Letter from Abdullah Bin Mohamed Bin Saud Al-Thani to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan

In this respect, I would also like to inform you that Her Highness Shaikha Moza Bint Nasser Al-Misnad, the Consort of His Highness The Amir, will be present in New York from 4-11 May 2002 at the head of the delegation of the State of Qatar to the United Nations General Assembly's 27th Special Session on Children, during which time she wishes to meet Mr. Vartan Gregorian, President of the Carnegie Corporation, to discuss means of cooperation with his corporation in the field of higher education.

We would be grateful to Your Excellency if your office could arrange a date for this meeting in coordination with Qatar's Permanent Mission to the United Nations.

¹⁷⁶ Letter from UN Secretary General Kofi A. Annan to Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, March 13, 2002, archived December 2, 2023, at <https://web.archive.org/web/20231202121224/https://search.archives.un.org/uploads/r/united-nations-archives/5/c/7/5c753dd1ffbf7aadec524129380381aec905f487c2f442030df25602c79ecd1e/S-1096-0164-01-00009.pdf>.

¹⁷⁷ Letter from Abudulla Bin Mohamed Bin Saud Al-Thani, May 1, 2002, archived December 2, 2023, at <https://web.archive.org/web/20231202012013/https://search.archives.un.org/uploads/r/united-nations-archives/9/6/0/96022d76f47afb60f818d884290f91a6d4b653b35348df10cfec5a843a55e7cf/S-1096-0164-01-00005.pdf>.

A mere six days before the Secretary-General wrote to the Sheikh to discuss this approach, Gregorian had published an essay entitled “Islam: A Mosaic, Not a Monolith,”¹⁷⁸ later published as a book, that sought to change Western perceptions of Islam. A veritable giant in Middle Eastern scholarship, academia, civic education, and philanthropy, Gregorian had not only built an expansive and influential network over many years but had also developed a deep understanding of the structures through which his many endeavors operated. It is easy to see why Gregorian was Annan’s choice as a potential leader for Qatar’s educational projects, and why such projects would have appealed to Gregorian, given their apparent alignment with his own long-standing scholarly, civic, and philanthropic goals.

By 2003, Gregorian had joined the board of trustees of the Doha-based Qatar Foundation,¹⁷⁹ where he served while simultaneously running the Carnegie Corporation.¹⁸⁰ In his role at the Qatar Foundation, he initially acted as a power broker between Qatar and certain US universities that had been targeted to become part of Doha’s “Education City.” By the end of 2003, the ribbon cutting of Cornell University’s Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar (now Weill Cornell Medicine–Qatar) marked the official launch of Qatar’s Education City, with Gregorian appearing at the event.¹⁸¹ He is also credited with fostering the relationship between Qatar and a friend on the board of trustees at Northwestern University, which subsequently opened a Qatar branch of its school of journalism.¹⁸² After QFI was launched as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit foundation, Gregorian also served on its board (along with Sanford Weill of Weill Cornell Medicine) until QFI dissolved its 501(c)(3) structure and reemerged an LLC.¹⁸³ By early 2012, Gregorian had also departed the board of the Qatar Foundation.¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁸ Vartan Gregorian, “Islam: A Mosaic, Not a Monolith,” *Report of the President* (Carnegie Corporation of New York, 2002), https://media.carnegie.org/filer_public/97/1f/971f4459-815d-4596-8184-53d0544132c9/ccny_essay_2002_islam.pdf.

¹⁷⁹ “Their Highnesses Attend Qatar Foundation Appreciation Celebration,” website of Moza bint Nasser, March 7, 2012, <https://www.mozabintnasser.qa/en-gb/news/their-highnesses-attend-qatar-foundation-appreciation-celebration>.

¹⁸⁰ “Vartan Gregorian: 1934–2021,” Carnegie Corporation of New York, April 16, 2021, <https://www.carnegie.org/news/articles/obituary-president-vartan-gregorian/>.

¹⁸¹ “Gala Ceremony Marks Launch of Education City,” *Weill Cornell Qatar Chronicle* 1, no. 4 (December 2003): 19, <https://qatar-weill.cornell.edu/Portals/0/Qatar%20Chronicle/Documents/2003/qatar-chronicle-winter-2003-en.pdf>.

¹⁸² Neetu Arnold, “Excerpt from *Outsourced to Qatar: A Case Study of Northwestern University-Qatar*,” *Academic Questions* 36, no. 4 (Winter 2023), <https://www.nas.org/academic-questions/36/4/excerpt-from-outsourced-to-qatar-a-case-study-of-northwestern-university-qatar>.

¹⁸³ Qatar Foundation International, Return of Private Foundation (Form 990-PF), 2009 (Schedule B, Part I), accessed March 1, 2026, available at <https://pdf.guidestar.org/PDF/Images/2010/205/714/2010-205714317-0740bcd0-F.pdf>; “Qatar Foundation International,” Return of Private Foundation (Form 990-PF), 2010, accessed March 1, 2026, available at <https://pdf.guidestar.org/PDF/Images/2011/205/714/2011-205714317-083b6ef6-F.pdf>; “Qatar Foundation International,” Return of Private Foundation (Form 990-PF), 2011 (Statements 6, 7, and Certificate of Dissolution), accessed March 1, 2026, available at <https://pdf.guidestar.org/PDF/Images/2012/205/714/2012-205714317-083b6edb-F.pdf>.

¹⁸⁴ “Their Highnesses Attend Qatar Foundation Appreciation Celebration,” website of Moza bint Nasser, March 7, 2012, <https://www.mozabintnasser.qa/en-gb/news/their-highnesses-attend-qatar-foundation-appreciation-celebration>.

It is unclear whether Gregorian's work for the Qatar Foundation came to a natural conclusion with the end of his work for QFI, whether he was reluctant to remain involved in Qatar's US education efforts after QFI's transition to an LLC shielded it from financial transparency, or whether he had grown uncomfortable with Qatar's hosting of Hamas's "political arm" and skeptical of its intentions in the region and the true mission behind its grantmaking largesse in the United States. A month before Gregorian and two other departing board members were honored at a March 2012 celebration in Qatar,¹⁸⁵ Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal had moved to Qatar.¹⁸⁶ A few months later, in December 2012, Meshaal appeared before crowds in Gaza, standing in front of a replica of a rocket, and declared: "We will never recognize the legitimacy of the Israeli occupation and therefore there is no legitimacy for Israel, no matter how long it will take we will free Jerusalem inch by inch, stone by stone. Israel has no right to be in Jerusalem."¹⁸⁷

That these developments and Meshaal's rejectionism of Israel's legitimacy would have been troubling to Gregorian can be inferred from his aforementioned essay. Far from "centering" Palestine, Gregorian recognized that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was merely one piece of an enormously complex Middle East and that Islamists had exploited the conflict to win public sympathy, undermine secular Arab regimes, and destroy confidence in the United Nations.¹⁸⁸ He recognized that the Muslim Brotherhood openly called for armed confrontation against Israel on behalf of Palestinians, that terror needed to be denounced and punished, that Muslims who denounced 9/11 as running counter to Muslim norms but nonetheless rationalized or even supported Hamas's suicide bombing against Israeli civilians as a form of legitimate "resistance" were being morally inconsistent, and that such so-called "martyrdom" was an "extraordinary abuse of Islam."¹⁸⁹ Gregorian called for a just solution that would guarantee Israel's long-term security and asserted that a two-state solution would therefore require a stable, peaceful Palestinian state.¹⁹⁰ One has to wonder whether QFI recruited Gregorian specifically for the purpose of subverting the very positions he represented.

To be sure, Gregorian's value to QFI and the Qatar Foundation went beyond creating powerful relationships that led US universities to establish branches in Doha and beyond using his personal connections to draw many leaders to the Qatar

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ "Khaled Meshaal Fast Facts," CNN, updated December 29, 2025, <https://www.cnn.com/2014/10/09/middleeast/khaled-meshaal-fast-facts>.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Vartan Gregorian, "Islam: A Mosaic, Not a Monolith," *Report of the President* (Carnegie Corporation of New York, 2002), https://media.carnegie.org/filer_public/97/1f/971f4459-815d-4596-8184-53d0544132c9/ccny_essay_2002_islam.pdf

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

Foundation’s World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE) in Doha,¹⁹¹ which helped cement Qatar’s credibility as a leader in education. His value also lay in the insights he could offer into the educational and civics initiatives with which he was involved, the structures and networks underpinning them, and the key organizations shaping them. For example, Gregorian would have had unique insight into Brown University’s Choices Program, which grew during his presidency of the university and continued expanding afterward,¹⁹² during his time with the Qatar Foundation and QFI. In addition, he could have provided significant insight into the many organizations and scholars connected to the Carnegie Corporation’s support of the NCSS’s successful Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, which evolved into the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards that have been adopted by many states and implemented in K-12 schools across the country.¹⁹³

There does not appear to be any record of Gregorian appearing alongside Sheikha Moza bint Nasser after the 2012 event in Qatar. When he passed away in 2021, the many organizations with which he had been connected published moving tributes to his humanity and contributions to society. In contrast, the Qatar Foundation tweeted only two sentences, paying terse tribute to his “value” to the organization.¹⁹⁴ Similarly, there appears to be no public record of Sheikha Moza, by whose side Gregorian appeared on many occasions,¹⁹⁵ referencing his passing at all.

¹⁹¹ *WISE 2011 Final Report* (Qatar Foundation, 2012), https://www.wise-qatar.org/app/uploads/2019/07/wise_2011_final_report.pdf.

¹⁹² “History of the Choices Program,” Choices Program, n.d., previously available at <https://www.choices.edu/about/history-choices-program/>.

¹⁹³ “The Civic Mission of Schools,” *Social Education* 69, no. 7 (2005): 414–6, <https://www.socialstudies.org/social-education/69/7/civic-mission-schools>; *The Civic Mission of Schools* (Carnegie Corporation of New York, 2003), <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED498891.pdf>; *Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools* (Carnegie Corporation of New York, December 2011), https://media.carnegie.org/filer_public/ab/dd/abdda62e-6e84-47a4-a043-348d2f2085ae/ccny_grantee_2011_guardian.pdf?_gl=1*6plevd*_gcl_au*MTA3MjI0NTc2NS4xNzYxMTMxNDQz; “A New Civic Mission for Schools,” *Carnegie Review* (Spring 2011), https://media.carnegie.org/filer_public/85/8b/858b7e5d-c538-42e2-ae78-24471dce73d7/ccny_creview_2011_civic.pdf; *The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards: Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K-12 Civics, Economics, Geography and History* (National Council for the Social Studies, 2013), available at https://www.resa.net/downloads/education-resources/social-studies/what_is_not_covered_in_the_c3_framework.pdf.

¹⁹⁴ Qatar Foundation (@QF), “We are very saddened to hear about the passing of Dr. Vartan Gregorian...,” X, April 17, 2021, <https://x.com/QF/status/138342154101350402>.

¹⁹⁵ “Gala Ceremony Marks Launch of Education City,” *Weill Cornell Qatar Chronicle* 1, no. 4 (December 2003): 19, <https://qatar-weill.cornell.edu/Portals/0/Qatar%20Chronicle/Documents/2003/qatar-chronicle-winter-2003-en.pdf>; “Her Highness Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser al-Missned to Give Keynote Address at Carnegie Mellon’s 109th Commencement, May 21,” *Carnegie Mellon Today*, May 9, 2006, https://www.cmu.edu/cmnews/extra/060515_commencement.html.

Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

Despite Qatar's recent claims that QFI plays a very limited role in Arabic language grantmaking, the organization has had a huge impact on US education on the Middle East over the past fifteen years, permeating curriculum development, teaching materials, website and database content, student engagement, professional development, and professional networks. This is compounded by a pattern of organizational deception that extends to QFI's relationships with federal authorities and educational institutions, exploiting gaps in foreign agent registration requirements and educational oversight mechanisms.

The present analysis of QFI's operations reveals a sophisticated foreign influence campaign that has successfully penetrated the US educational system where it is most permeable, concealed mostly behind Arabic language grantmaking largesse. Unfortunately, these systems were so ripe for infiltration that QFI recognized the potential for scalability at an early stage. As a result, Qatar's infiltration efforts have come at a low cost by Qatari standards. Its \$65.3 million investment, distributed strategically across 220 programs in twenty-four states, represents not benign support for language education but rather a calculated effort to shape American students' and teachers' understanding of the Middle East to match Qatari interests, undermining US democratic values along the way. It should be noted that the present analysis cannot be exhaustive, as the opacity with which QFI operates has prevented discovery of the full extent of its infiltration of the US educational system.

The educational harm emanating from programs tied to QFI cannot be understated. The damage to the educational system also devalues a foundational component of our democracy, which should be recognized as a hallmark strategy of regimes that seek to undermine the West. Immediate regulatory and legislative action must be taken to protect educational integrity and boost the resilience of US educational institutions to foreign manipulation.

The following short and long-term measures and reforms should be implemented:

Immediate oversight and enforcement actions

- Prohibit any further direct or indirect Qatari state or QFI funding of US primary and secondary schools, including teacher training programs, curriculum development initiatives, and educational partnerships, pending the completion of federal reviews and compliance assessments.
- Open a federal government investigation into QFI to determine its ownership structure, governance, foreign affiliations, and contractual relationships, its

grants and donations, and its curriculum and resource materials, digital platforms, and media and technology companies.

- Open a federal investigation into the National Resource Centers and other federally funded academic hubs through which QFI has built its network.
- Require QFI to register under the Foreign Agents Registration Act and eliminate existing gaps in FARA enforcement by reforming the educational exemption.

Transparency and disclosure requirements

- Require institutions of higher education subject to Section 117 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 to disclose all gifts from or contracts with QFI, including grants, in-kind contributions, sponsored programs, and affiliated entities since 2014.
- Reform Section 117 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 to require disclosure of foreign gifts, contracts, grants, offers, solicitations, memoranda of understanding, and in-kind contributions from a foreign source or foreign-affiliated entities when the value of any single transaction or the cumulative value of related transactions meets or exceeds the threshold dollar amount within a defined reporting period, consistent with and complementary to the DETERRENT Act.
- Require full disclosure of any QFI-linked funds or QFI-supported programs or materials already received by US universities, secondary schools, and K-12 educators, followed by comprehensive reviews of existing partnerships to assess educational value and potential risk.

Federal program reform and accountability

- Require that National Resource Centers funded under Title VI of the Higher Education Act of 1965 be subject to Freedom of Information Act provisions.
- Reform Title VI of the Higher Education Act of 1965 by implementing comprehensive oversight and disclosure requirements to provide visibility into the funding sources, content development processes, and origins of Title VI-funded programming.

Safeguards for educators, parents, and students

- Require transparency in the professional education of teachers, including disclosure of funding behind workshops and educator participation in externally funded programs.
- Require transparency by professional organizations and councils for educators regarding funding sources, sponsorship of conference content, and the adoption of ethical standards.

- Require transparency in the sale, dissemination, and modification of curriculum materials and the identity of any parties with access to school or student data.
- Grant parents and legal guardians of K-12 students access to the curricular resources used in their children's classrooms.
- Incentivize schools to periodically audit curriculum materials and external partnerships rather than relying on prior approvals.

