

# Volunteers at the

# Heart of the Field



By

**Ali Al-Rasheed**



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## **Introduction**

### **Title and Significance**

The book is titled "Volunteers at the Heart of the Field" to commemorate Qatar Charity's enabling of more than 100 of Qatar's most famous figures and young people to visit the fields of humanitarian action (sites of crises, disasters and impoverished societies) over the last five years, through a series of campaigns, initiatives, events, media programs and regular humanitarian convoys in order to integrate them in voluntary, non-traditional field activities. This also encourages creativity in raising awareness of and advocating humanitarian causes, and promotes relief and development projects through investment in the development of information technologies and social networks.

### **Nature of the Book**

The book adopts a documentary, analytical style that presents Qatar Charity's programs and initiatives to include volunteers and influencers in the field of humanitarian work with a synopsis about each of them. It also highlights the added value, impact and implications of this experience for the participating volunteers as well as the charity project and the community through interviews with 20 participants. They are community stars and young people who have made field visits to our projects, and they represent a wide range of activities and social groups:

The selected sample of volunteers have participated in all types of initiatives, programs and convoys. They also represent diversity in age groups (ranging from 16 to 53 years olds); diversity in gender (among them are males and females); and they are outstanding figures who come from different walks of life: media figures, athletes, active social networks stars, poets, writers, preachers as well as secondary school and university students.

### **Who will benefit from the book?**

We expect that this book will benefit the following entities:

- Charitable institutions and humanitarian organizations, especially those that encourage volunteering, marketing, innovation and publicizing their activities in the media.
- Volunteering and youth organizations that can inspire innovative ideas which attract celebrities, influencers and young people.
- Volunteers (who can get exposed to and observe the experiences of their peers) and people who want to volunteer (to benefit from actual volunteers in this field).
- Community stars and influential characters (so that they get to know a useful area for the Muslim nation where they can contribute with their fame).
- University students and research centers.

### **Prospects for the book**

In Qatar Charity, we will seek, with Allah's help, to use the interviews presented in this book to produce visuals, e.g. video clips, and develop its idea into a radio or television program. We will also publish subsequent parts to document and benefit from the experiences of other people who have made field visits while participating in the initiatives, programs and events that we have referred to.

### **And success comes from Allah.**

## **Social influencers and the importance of visiting humanitarian fieldworks**

Voluntary work is defined as "citizens' participation in the development and service of the community with their opinions, work, funding, etc. without expecting any financial reward in return."

Volunteers, especially the youth, people of expertise, community stars and celebrities (people in the media, sportspeople, artists, intellectuals and social activists) as well as social media influencers, are an important treasure for humanitarian and charity work. However, this great treasure has not yet been invested to the full for the sake of voluntary work in the Arab and Muslim worlds despite its tremendous potential.

Volunteers' participation (with their efforts or experience) is estimated by the value of the time they spend in charity work which spares large sums of money. Celebrities play an important role in spreading the culture of charity work and raising awareness of humanitarian causes and the challenges that impede development in some communities like poverty, ignorance, diseases, unemployment, etc. They also contribute financial and moral support to the promotion of relief and development projects, relying on their charisma and popularity.

The ability of charity organizations to implement humanitarian projects and offer high quality caring services to make a difference in people's lives is not the only measurement of their success in their missions; in fact, attracting volunteers and celebrities has become one of their essential roles. Therefore, charities should integrate these personalities in their activities, prepare motivating programs and initiatives for them, and benefit from their talents, skills, expertise and communicative and marketing potential which can multiply the funding of their activities.

Attracting volunteers is so effective, for it helps fill the gap in some skills that are needed in the community. It also helps volunteering institutions to identify the community's needs and, in turn, let the community know about the services and activities offered by these institutions.

One type of voluntary work is "emergency volunteering" which plays an essential role in revival efforts following natural disasters and delivering aid in sites of crises and wars.

The United Nations cooperates with public figures who are held in respect in their communities to engage in humanitarian action. Such personalities are selected to be "UN Goodwill Ambassadors" which are honorary posts assigned by different UN organizations. These are not political or diplomatic posts like those held by official ambassadors who represent their nations in other countries. Rather, UN Goodwill ambassadors are meant to support all types of causes that are of concern to the United Nations, be they social, humanitarian, economic, health-related, or food-related issues. The point is that celebrities' fame helps to raise awareness of and gain support of these causes, and their appointment can be at the international, regional or national levels. A number of those ambassadors have visited sites of disasters and crises, provided assistance to afflicted and displaced people and refugees, and supported humanitarian campaigns. Among the UN Goodwill ambassadors that have been selected are Karpov, the Russian chess champion, and Messi, the international football player.

Visiting humanitarian and development fieldworks is of added value to volunteers, especially community stars and influential personalities, where the results are reflected on the volunteers themselves, the society, as well as on humanitarian action and its noble missions, especially if they are part of programs, projects and initiatives implemented by charity organizations. The most important aspects of this added value are as follows:

- 1.** Participants in these field visits acquire additional skills and experiences related to humanitarian work, i.e. providing emergency relief, since they are conducted to areas of disasters or crises, or places that suffer from poverty, poor infrastructure or scarcity of the basic services.
- 2.** Field visits give participants a greater ability to raise awareness of humanitarian issues, because volunteers' first-hand experiences with people's suffering hones their ability of effective description when they promote humanitarian projects, especially when using social networking sites where they can post photos and trigger followers' comments and direct interaction with their activities.
- 3.** Field visits generate a greater sense of responsibility towards those afflicted by wars, disasters, poverty, etc. and motivate greater relief efforts.

In fact, organizing field visits as a part of competitive events would open up new opportunities for creativity in amassing support and raising awareness of humanitarian issues and projects among the participating celebrities and influencers.

## **Qatar Charity's programs and initiatives to integrate volunteers and influencers in the field of humanitarian action**

Seeking to spread the culture of voluntary work and to raise people's awareness of its importance to development, Qatar Charity is keen on including young people, influential figures and community stars in its voluntary activities to avail this area of their energy. It has made wide strides ahead in this connection by offering them the opportunity to have first-hand experiences in the sites of disasters, crises and areas that suffer from poverty all over the world. In this way, those personalities can use their talents, abilities and fame to support humanitarian and developmental work, and to propagate charity projects in the community in a creative and competitive atmosphere. "So for this let the competitors compete" (The Qur'an: 83, 26).

Between 2012 and 2017, Qatar Charity intensified its efforts to attract more than a hundred Qatari youths, celebrities (in the fields of media, sports, education, Islamic activism and community service) as well as social media influencers and involved them in humanitarian fieldwork visits across the globe in cooperation with its various field offices outside Qatar and its relief teams that are known for their prompt humanitarian intervention. Moreover, QC has also supported Qatari youth initiatives whose activities included propagating and implementing charity projects outside Qatar.

Apart from the occasional visits QC organizes when founding or launching new charity projects, and when distributing immediate aids in different parts of the world where some celebrities have volunteered, the Organization also holds awareness-raising initiatives, competitions as well as TV and radio programs that host volunteering youths and influential people mainly. Field visits were an essential part of these events which aimed at discovering the needs of the beneficiaries and poor communities in the first place, as well as monitoring aid distribution and humanitarian projects implementation.

These visits leave remarkable impacts on the participants, the humanitarian work itself and the society at large. Among the most important such events Qatar Charity sponsored during this period (2012-2017) was the "Challenge for Life Campaign" whose goal was to draw attention to the famine in west Africa; the "Al-Mutanafesoun Competition" in its first two editions; as well as the two TV programs "Safari for Charity" (Safari Al-Khair) and "One Heart" which are reality TV series where the participants are engaged in charity and entertainment adventures which reveal to the viewers the conditions of the afflicted and poor communities that receive the aids. The list also includes "Al-Mutanafesoun" radio series as well as the QC Social Media Network visits.

Participants in these field visits included male and female volunteers as well as secondary and university students. Not only that, some volunteers brought their adult children with them to enhance their philanthropic values. Those included community stars such as media people, athletes, preachers, businesspeople and social media influencers. Following is a list of QC activities that involved such famous and influential celebrities.

### **1- The "Challenge for Life Campaign"**

Before the famine that was anticipated to hit west Africa as a result of a drought which was predicted to overtake the area in 2012, Qatar Charity had launched an untraditional, preemptive campaign to raise people's awareness of the threats that endangered the lives of 10 million people who suffered severe shortages in food, medicine and potable water at the time, and to gather aids and establish projects for their relief.

#### **The campaign included the following:**

- i- Fahd Al-Bu'ainain, a volunteering youth, visited Niger to collect information about the famine and drought there.
- ii- The two Qatari young men Fahd Al-Bu'ainain and Talal Abdul-Aziz (both mountain climbers) climbed the Kilimanjaro Mountain in Tanzania to the top which is the highest mountain peak in Africa (5696 meters high), and the fourth highest peak in the world. The aim was to draw people's attention around the world and to ring a bell to raise people's awareness of this famine and its humanitarian complications on mass media and social networking sites.
- iii- A campaign to collect donations for the people stricken by this famine.

## **2- Al-Mutanafesoun (the Contestants) Competition**

It was organized twice by Qatar Charity in 2013 and 2014 to collect donations for humanitarian projects around the world. It is based on competitions among Qatari celebrities and youths in order to collect the planned amount of money. With its unique social setting, the competition sought to raise funds in an untraditional method, creating an enthusiastic atmosphere that boosted vivid awareness of charity work.

There were two visits in this competition: in the first one, participants went to a certain area and estimated its immediate needs. In the second, they made a follow-up on and implemented the projects that had been suggested during the first visit.

There were 15 participants in the first edition of the competition, and 18 in the second where they visited Syrian refugees in Jordan and on the Syrian-Turkish borders.

### **Funds raised by the competitors**

They raised four million Riyals in the first campaign, and 12 million in the second campaign.

## **3- The "Safari for Charity" (Safari Al-Khair) TV program**

The "Safari for Charity" series, produced by Qatar Charity, is a reality TV show that aims at implementing different developmental projects in several poor countries. The competing teams try to design projects to suit the humanitarian needs of these afflicted societies which qualifies and trains Qatari youths to work in the humanitarian and developmental field.

There have been four editions of this program that were broadcast on a daily basis during the month of Ramadan between 2014 and 2017.

### **Countries where the program was filmed**

First edition:	Burkina Faso
Second edition:	Indonesia
Third edition:	The Balkans
Fourth edition:	Ghana
Broadcaster:	Qatar TV

**Participants:**

The approximate number of participants in each edition of the program ranges from 8 to 14 persons divided into two teams.

**4- The "One Heart" TV program**

This is a very exciting TV show produced by Qatar Charity that was broadcast in the month of Ramadan from 2014 until 2017. The program is based on the idea that a group of Qatari youths who are distinguished in the fields of Islamic preaching, media, sports, entertainment and poetry conduct some charity and entertainment adventures filmed in the very sites of humanitarian action to acquaint the viewers with the difficult conditions of the inhabitants of these areas, especially the most unprivileged groups. The program also aimed at mobilizing support to fund humanitarian projects for them. Four editions of this program have been produced so far.

Countries where the program was filmed

First edition: Socotra Island, Yemen

Second edition: Sudan

Third edition: the Turkish-Syrian borders

Fourth edition: Kyrgyzstan

Broadcasters: Al-Rayyan TV and Qatar TV

**Participants**

Approximate number of participants in each edition of the program: 12 individuals divided to three teams.

## **5. Qatar Charity Network for Social Communication**

Qatar Charity Network for Social Communication was established early in 2016 to cope with the accelerating development in social networking sites and the great expansion in their use and to benefit from their promotional potentials and impact that exceeded that of traditional media. QC social network aims to increase social solidarity, highlight the humanitarian efforts exerted by the different segments of society including both men and women. It also aims to invest in the skills of social media influencers to raise awareness of humanitarian action and promote its campaigns and projects. This network has about 35 members who made several field visits to Bangladesh and Sudan.

## **6 – The "Al-Mutanafesoun" (contestants) radio program:**

Jointly produced by Qatar Charity and the Holy Quran Radio Station in Doha, The program is based on establishing positive competitiveness and innovation in the field of humanitarian action among the different social groups and institutions such as clubs, banks, government and private sectors, etc. in order to maximize participation and innovative contribution to humanitarian action as part of their corporate social responsibility. The first edition of the program focused on investing in the sense of taking the initiative among college students in Qatar, and employing their social networking skills to promote and support humanitarian and voluntary work.

### **Participants in the first edition:**

The first edition of the program continued from 2016 to 2017, with the participation of more than 20 students from universities in Qatar as well as students from the Aspire Academy and the Leaders' Academy (High school).

### **Countries visited in the first edition:**

Mauritania, Indonesia, Sudan, Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco and Bangladesh.

The second edition of the program began in October, 2017.



## **NB**

1. A number of these community stars and influencers visited more than one fieldwork of humanitarian action under the umbrella of the initiatives and programs referred to earlier.
2. In addition to the above-mentioned initiatives, programs and events, a number of celebrities and influencers took part in special field visits to provide relief in affected areas such as assistance for drought-stricken Somalia and for the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh this year (2017) and over the past years. Others have made field visits organized by other youth initiatives supported by Qatar Charity.



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# **Volunteers**

# Fahd Mohammad Al-Bu'ainain

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**Age:**

33 years old

**Education:**

Master's in Media and Marketing Management

Interests and skills: mountain sports and free diving

**Volunteering:**

participated in the "Empower" Youth Conference for 2014 and 2015 organized by Reach Out to Asia (ROTA), plus volunteering with Qatar Charity and other institutions.

**Countries visited with Qatar Charity:****• Niger - March 2012:**

To collect information about the famine in West Africa at the time.

**• Tanzania – Climbing Mount Kilimanjour in 2012:**

This visit was part of a humanitarian campaign by Qatar Charity to draw the world's attention to the food crisis that threatened the lives of millions of people in West Africa, and to mobilize support to alleviate the crisis caused by drought.

**• Yemen 2014:**

Visited children who benefited from the Qatari Program for Open Heart Surgeries.

## **The importance of field visits**

These visits have changed my old view of implementing charity projects. Since my childhood, I have perceived this as the job of charity organizations and their staff, while the role of community members was just limited to providing financial and in-kind donations. However, after participating with QC, it became clear to me that volunteers and community stars can effectively contribute to project implementation, field visits, raising awareness of disasters and delivering aids to affected people.

Volunteers' opinions of the tremendous role of charities in relief and development projects that alleviate the suffering of the poor and disadvantaged people across the world are more effective in promotion campaigns because they are neutral and objective. This is because they see their efforts first hand in their field visits.

## **Impact of the visits**

On a personal level, direct contact with the poor and seeing their suffering left a great impact on myself, and changed my view of life. This is because I found out that many people do not even have the basics of life that we enjoy and take for granted, e.g. water, shelter and means of transport. We only appreciate things when we lose them. These visits also have an important societal impact because volunteers can expand the outreach of charity organizations that cannot be otherwise expanded, and so they help to attract more social support and attention for humanitarian campaigns and charitable projects.

## **Heart-touching situations**

1. During my visits to the Yemeni children who had underwent open heart surgeries or those who were preparing to have them in 2014, I was moved very much when I discovered that inability to afford a 4000-riyal surgery prevented children from enjoying their lives or playing because of their poverty. This is because any movement (beyond normal walking) may prevent Oxygen from reaching to the child's heart or brain. A 14-year-old boy who had done that operation told me after recovery that before the operation, he used to spend his free time sitting behind the window bars in his home watching the kids playing football in the street without being able to play himself.

2. In my 2012 visit to Niger, I noticed that their schools were nothing but huts made from hay and tree branches that had to be built once or twice a year, especially after the rainy season because the rain sweeps them away. I also noticed that many children had to walk for 2 hours to their schools that can neither protect them from heat or cold, nor did they have enough food to eat. However, they adapted to all these difficult conditions.

3. A malnourished child in Niger was put in my hands, and people asked me to estimate his age. I told them I reckoned he was 8 months old. They told me the boy was 5 years old! I was astonished and realized that malnutrition may not lead necessarily to death, but it can impede the growth and size of a child.

### **One last word**

For young people: charity work is not limited to financial donations; your efforts, skills, specialization and talents can also make a big difference.

For charitable people: give away of your money to charity unconditionally and consult charity organizations' staff to know the priorities on the ground, for a certain area may need a water well more than a mosque, for example.

# Khaled Mohammad Abu Mouza

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**Age:**

53 years old

**Education:**

Bachelor Degree in Agricultural Engineering, Washington State University.

**Interests and skills:**

Delivering educational courses and workshops, public speaking and volunteering and community service.

**Volunteering:**

Multiple voluntary contributions and activities with various humanitarian and volunteering institutions in Qatar.

**Countries visited with Qatar Charity:****• Visiting Syrian refugees in Jordan**

and Za'tari camp in 2012 while shooting "Al-Mutanafesoun (Contestants)" Competition, Part 1.

**• Visiting Syrian refugees on the Turkish-Syrian borders in 2013:**

humanitarian projects while shooting "Al-Mutanafesoun (Contestants)" Competition, Part 2.

**• Four field visits:**

hile filming the "One Heart" television program which is produced by Qatar Charity to:

a) Socotra Island, Yemen: 2014

b) Sudan: 2015

c) Turkish-Syrian borders (Syrian refugees): 2016

d) Kyrgyzstan: 2017

## **The importance of field visits**

In these visits, I saw with my own eyes the tremendous size of charitable projects funded by Qatari citizens, and I also saw their humanitarian and developmental results. They also enabled me and my team to assess and prioritize the needs of the beneficiaries.

## **Impact of the visits**

After returning from these field visits, I usually share what I have seen with the Qatari society in the gatherings I take part in and the lectures and speeches I give. These visits made my words more credible and influential especially when I speak about people to garner support and establish relief projects for them.

## **Heart-touching situations**

1. In the south of Turkey and near an apricot-processing factory run by a Syrian businessman where all the workers were Syrian, I saw a little Syrian child selling coffee. A member of the "One Heart" program team asked for a cup of coffee and wanted to pay twice as much as the price of the cup. However, the boy categorically rejected that offer and we had to take another cup for the remaining change! When our visit came to an end, another person in our team wanted to give the boy 20 Turkish liras, but he refused again. This incident moved me greatly because that young boy's sense of dignity and pride was much more stronger than his poverty and need. I realized that it was a matter of upbringing.

2. In Kyrgyzstan, we visited the house of three orphans and their mother. It was a very modest home composed of one room which was more of a hut than a house. Four individuals of the team entered the room to check the conditions of the family, and the rest waited outside due to the small size of the house!

We were touched by these miserable conditions, so we decided to build a bigger house for this family, especially that the mother owned a piece of land. When we told her, she burst into tears immediately and prayed for us. Then she asked the interpreter a few minutes later if we were really going to build her a new house and he reassured her. As we were leaving, the woman asked the same question again because it was a surprise for her and she could not believe it! Thank God, we monitored the building of the house until it was completed before the month of Ramadan that year and before broadcasting our program on the TV (that is, less than a month and a half after our visit).

## **One last word**

### **To young people and community stars:**

Blessed are they if they seize these opportunities to be keys to goodness and locks to evils just as our noble Prophet Muhammad says in a Hadith: "There are people who are keys to what is good and locks to what is evil. There are also others who are keys to what is evil and locks to what is good. How happy and blessed are those to whom Allah has given the keys of good! Woe to those to whom Allah has given the keys of evil!"

### **To donors and charitable people:**

True happiness is not in taking, but in giving, and he who does not believe, let him get involved in charity and voluntary work to feel himself this immeasurable pleasure and joy when he brings comfort and joy to the heart of a poor or a needy person.

# Adel Khamis

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**Age:**

52 years.

**Education:**

Bachelor of Physical Education

**Interests and skills:**

A former football player in the Qatari national team and a player for Al-Gharafa Club.

**Volunteering:**

Contributions with Qatar Charity.

**Countries visited with Qatar Charity:**

Through his participation in the television program "Safari Al-Khair" produced by Qatar Charity, Khamis visited the following countries:

- **Indonesia 2015**
- **The Balkans (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Kosovo): 2016**
- **Ghana: 2017**
- **Visit to Syrian refugees on the Turkish-Syrian borders: 2016**
- **Launching Qatar Charity Projects in Sudan: 2017**

## **The importance of field visits**

These visits brought me closer to humanitarian work, integrated me into it, and increased my voluntary experience. When I started these visits, I expected the job would be difficult, but after some time of direct contact with afflicted people, I came to love this work and even yearn for it, and I now find great joy in volunteering.

Participation in a program like "Safari Al-Khair" is so important because it promotes volunteerism and humanitarian action, raises awareness of its importance and encourages young people to get involved in it.

## **Impact of the visits**

Volunteering has become a part of me just as football used to be an integral part of Adel Khamis for a long time earlier in his life.

I could sense happiness and admiration on the part of my family, friends and my fans for my involvement in charity work, which I knew from their watching "Safari Al-Khair" television program or through direct communication with me. Their reactions were so encouraging and willing to participate in charity work themselves and to support humanitarian projects.

## **Heart-touching situations**

1. One of the painful and joyous situations at the same time is that I participated this year, 2017, in inaugurating two water purification plants on the River Nile in Sudan, an important project that provides potable water to 60 thousand people who were previously deprived of this blessing.

My team and I noticed that people's joy was indescribable, because it seems that pure water was a distant dream for them. Now pure water is available for them after a long period of suffering from kidney diseases caused by drinking water directly from the Nile River without any purification.

2. As winter approaches, I remember the refugee Syrian families we visited on the Turkish-Syrian border in the winter, and how they were deprived of suitable shelters that provided comfort and warmth! Those families lived in tents that did not protect them from cold or rain. Many families were stacked in houses whose openings were closed with logs of wood because they had no window panes, and the chilly wind was whistling through them!

## **One last word**

### **To young people:**

I hope that they will benefit from the opportunities of volunteering and integrate into them, and I want charity organizations to raise awareness of its importance and provide programs to accommodate these young people.

### **To community stars:**

You have a great responsibility to convey the conditions you see in the fieldwork to the donors, charitable people and the public in general since Allah has made you so popular among your fans and followers.

**"We make the future sustainable when we invest in the poor, not when we insist on their suffering."**

**Bill Gates**





# Sheikh Hamad bin Fahd Al-Thani



**Age:**

49 years.

**Interests and skills:**

Islamic preaching and activism.

**Volunteering:**

Many Islamic and charitable activities.

**Countries visited with Qatar Charity:**

- While participating in the "Safari Al-Khair" television program" produced by Qatar Charity, he visited the following countries:
- The first visit was to Kokos, Albania where Kosovan displaced citizens stayed.
- Second visit to Somalia in 2017 to distribute aids to drought-affected people.
- Third visit to Cox-Bazar on the Bangladeshi-Myanmar border in relief of the Rohingya refugees, 2017.

## **The importance of field visits**

In field visits, you discover the real needs of people, which makes you more aware of the humanitarian situation, and more able to prioritize these needs.

## **Impact of the visits**

Experiencing people's suffering first hand impacts those who visit them and motivates them to do more for the sake of afflicted people and those in need in the future. It pushes volunteers to exert more effort and time to implement humanitarian projects for them through participating in other visits. Moreover, humanitarian fieldwork grants you joy that can be felt only by those whom Allah has favored with helping the poor and relieving those in need. For example, I intend to visit the Rohingya refugees and build places for them to pray in Bangladesh. Many of my acquaintances and followers have been touched by my descriptions of the suffering of disadvantaged people in Somalia as well as the Rohingya, so they have decided to support the implementation of humanitarian projects for them. This highlights the positive role of influential figures, especially when conducting field visits.

## **Heart-touching situations**

In my visit to Somalia, I was greatly touched when I saw people leaving their villages because of famine that resulted from drought and scanty rainfall. I asked some of them about the distance they traveled in search of better living conditions, and I was told that it was about 300 kilometers, and that some of their relatives had perished in this long and arduous journey. We hope that charitable people will fund digging water wells for them in all areas to provide safe drinking water for them to put an end to this massive displacement when rain is scarce.

As for the Rohingya refugees who had left Myanmar for Bangladesh, their situation was extremely difficult and their suffering was indescribable: they had no shelter, no food or clothing! They need every penny and minute of people's effort and help. Our visit to them has shown us their tremendous suffering which was aggravated by the muddy land, especially that they had nothing to shelter them from rain, not to mention the highly humid and hot weather they live in. In short, they need anything and everything.

## **One last word**

### **To volunteers and influencers:**

The role of volunteers is so important because they provide psychological support for the afflicted people they visit. This is because they feel better and safer when they visit them. Volunteers should relate their sufferings to the donors in order to help them be readier and more willing to donate their money to relieve the suffering of afflicted people with the sole purpose of pleasing Allah Almighty alone.

### **To charitable people and donors:**

We ask Allah to accept your charitable deeds, and to reward you in this life and in the Hereafter, just as Allah promises in the Qur'an: "Whatever good you store up for yourselves will be improved and increased for you."

# Abdul-Rahman Al-Harmy

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**Age:**

45 years old

**Education:**

PhD in Education.

**Interests and skills:**

Preparing and presenting radio and television programs, educational activities, training and development.

**Volunteering:**

Volunteering with charities, social initiatives and youth clubs in Qatar.

**Countries visited with Qatar Charity:**

- **Burkina Faso:** With the "Safari Al-Khair" television program produced by Qatar Charity, first edition, 2014.
- **Indonesia:** with "Al-Mutanafasoun" (the Contestants) radio program produced by Qatar Charity (first edition, 2016-2017)

## **The importance of field visits**

1. These visits are educationally important for all people, especially those who live in security, peace and welfare for several reasons:

- They give us the chance to appreciate the blessings that Allah has given us as individuals, families and societies, and this motivates us to thank Allah for them and feel grateful for them.
- They change our view of life, especially for the new generations. I know how much these field visits have changed the lives, convictions and mindset of some secondary and university students.
- They help us understand the essence of charitable work which is not simply a donation that we make. In fact, charity work emanates from the feeling of responsibility towards other fellow Muslims and a sense of solidarity with them because of their suffering.

2. Field visits give media, sports and social networking celebrities the opportunity to compete and achieve stardom in a new field (charitable and humanitarian work) and to invest in their fame and skills to support humanitarian projects and initiatives.

3. They change the stereotypical image that charitable work is confined to sheiks, preachers and charity organizations' staff, and clarify that all social groups can participate and make their contributions in this area.

## **Impact of the visits**

On a personal level, I now feel more grateful for the blessings that Allah has bestowed upon us. So, I do not throw away the leftovers in my plate or the last drops of water in my bottle because I can still see those who need a small meal to keep them alive, and those who do not have drinking water available for them, or need to travel a long distance to get it. I also now have more appreciation for the basic services and facilities that are available for us and for our children such as schools and hospitals which are not available for others, or available only in name! For instance, I have seen roofless schools, tiny wooden blackboards, the teacher's seat in the class is a rock, etc. in the poor countries we have visited!

## **Heart-touching situations**

1- During our visit to Burkina Faso in one of "Safari Al-Khair" episodes, we entered an old woman's dilapidated house which constituted one room and told her that we were going to rebuild it for her. She said that many people had visited her before and said the same but did nothing. This is a big lesson for charity and humanitarian volunteers: they should not make promises they cannot achieve in order not to upset prospective beneficiaries.



Anyways, the team completed the construction of her house and it was made of bricks and cement, and the door was made of iron just like the houses of privileged people there. As we were seeing her off in her new house, the interpreter asked her if she had anything to tell the program's team after fulfilling their promise. The old woman said that she did not have anything to reward them, but she prayed Allah to deliver them safely to their home!

I did not appreciate that supplication except on our way back from Burkina Faso to Niger where the situation was unstable and we felt a real, unprecedented panic. We were also asked not to make any movement while in the vehicles all the way back, and we felt safe only when the plane landed in Niger. Only then, I remembered that old woman's supplication for us, and the blessings of charitable work which granted us protection and safety from danger.

2. In Burkina Faso as well, we distributed biscuits to some children to make them happy. Biscuits are very rare there because people do not even have the basics of life. Anyways, our stock of biscuits had run out when one late child came to take one. We were in a very awkward situation, but we were spared much embarrassment when the child who took the last piece of biscuit shared his piece with that latecomer by dividing it into two halves despite its great value for him! This was a great lesson and an example of altruism and caring about others in spite of need and poverty.

## **One last word**

### **To schools:**

I call on them to organize field visits to involve their students in cooperation with charity organizations. This is very important from an educational point of view, and will improve their behavior and skills. I know that some schools have done this already, and sensed a great change inside the students.

### **To community stars:**

Remember that your popularity among people is a blessing from Allah, so invest in this blessing to guide people to and support humanitarian and charity work. Do this as a way of thanking Allah for the blessings He gave you.

### **To charitable people:**

I say to wealthy people: compel yourself to do good and do not compete with others who only care about amassing money without helping others. Brothers, be generous and share of the money that you have today, for you may not have it tomorrow; benefit yourselves of your wealth at the spiritual level, for if you forget people in need today, you will also be forgotten when you are in need tomorrow.

# Ahmad Abdullah

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**Age:**

39 years old

**Education:**

Bachelor of Information Management

**Interests and skills:**

Artist, media figure and an activist on social networks.

**Volunteering:**

- A co-founder of "Weyak (With You)" Mental Health Association,
- Volunteering with the Qatari Red Crescent Association,
- A co-founder of the media branch of Zehab Initiative launched by Qatar Charity.

**Countries visited with Qatar Charity:**

- **Bangladesh:** March 2016, visiting orphanages and charity projects implemented by Qatar Charity Social Network.
- **Sudan:** November 2016, while shooting the first edition of "Al-Mutanafesoun" (contestants) radio program produced by Qatar Charity.
- **Somalia:** April 2017 with Qatar Charity Relief Convoys to deliver aids to drought-affected people.

## **The importance of field visits**

I admit that I have restored my humanity in these visits which played an important role in changing my personality and this, in turn, was reflected on my followers on social networks. They interacted with my visits and expressed willingness to participate in similar trips in support of humanitarian efforts. I think that such visits give more influence and popularity to social networks influencers, provided that their followers can feel their sincerity in supporting the mission and efforts of humanitarian action.

## **Impact of the visits**

I noticed from my interactions in the work field that people react in two different ways to suffering: the first fights adverse conditions and struggles to provide his needs and achieve a better life. The second type of people insist on their suffering because they get used to receiving charity, and surrender to their painful reality. So, I have learned that no matter how severe your conditions are, do not surrender; you have to face them with strength and hope and change will come after that.

Thanks to field visits last year and the current year, I can sense a radical change in my life, for I have become calmer, more focused and objective in judging things around me.

## **Heart-touching situations**

1. We were on our way back from a humanitarian mission in Bangladesh and the journey took three hours. The road was so rugged that we became dizzy every now and then and we had to stop every hour to take some rest. We were surprised to find a rice farm at a distance during one of these rests. I was happy to see it because it denoted that some people were working and doing something productive despite difficulty. However, the important lesson that I learnt from this trip is that you become stronger in facing your own challenges and more thankful to Allah when you discover that others' sufferings are much greater and more difficult than yours.

2. One painful scene that I never forget is of a destitute woman suffering from hemiplegia. She was moving with extreme difficulty, carrying her child and asking for help. Life becomes really miserable when poverty and illness come together in one person

## **One last word**

### **To young people:**

I advise them to step up gradually in volunteering, so that field visits to the sites of crises and disasters come at a later stage. This is because starting with field visits can expose them to strong shocks that may dissuade them from embarking on other visits later due to their inability to endure the severity of suffering they see.

### **To social media influencers:**

I call on them to be faithful in propagating the message of humanitarian action and renounce showing off and the crave for fame which may turn people off from charitable work altogether. I also advise them to reflect the suffering they see realistically and honestly without any exaggeration under the pretext of winning people's sympathy for the afflicted. Followers and viewers are smart and exaggerations can be counterproductive.

**"Let your words be kind, and your face smiling, and people will love you more than the one who gives them provisions."**

**Luqman the Wise**



# Mohammad Yousuf Al-Hurr

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**Age:**

20 years old

**Education:**

Student at the school of Engineering, Texas A & M University, Qatar.

**Interests and skills:**

Reading

**Volunteering:**

He volunteered during school days with Qatar Charity

**Countries visited with Qatar Charity:****. Sudan 2016:**

while filming the first edition of "Al-Mutanafesoun" radio program produced by Qatar Charity.

**. Indonesia 2017:**

while filming the first edition of "Al-Mutanafesoun" radio program produced by Qatar Charity.

## **The importance of field visits**

Field visits represent an added value for many considerations:

1. Ensuring that charitable projects are implemented and that humanitarian aids really reach people who need them.
2. Knowing the difference these projects make on the ground as well as their developmental impact on the beneficiaries.
3. They give inner peace and joy which surpass any fatigue and tiredness you may feel, especially when you see a smile glowing on the faces of the needy and afflicted people, and when they pray for you.
4. Learning a new meaning for life and another understanding of our mission in it.
5. They create greater motivation to donate, give and share with others of your money, effort and time. They also guide you to new ways of good and philanthropic deeds and trigger new visits at later times.

## **Impact of the visits**

Previously, I would not donate anything to charity unless I came across people who raise funds or found a charity on my way. However, after these field visits, I would take the initiative and search for charities to donate. I also now allocate a sum of money on a monthly basis for charity.

## **Heart-touching situations**

1. In Sudan, I was so moved by a worker who was washing the boards students wrote on. He drank from the unclean water he was using to quench his thirst perhaps because of the scarcity and unaffordable price of potable water!
2. In Sudan also, we were on a mission to renovate a health center which was an activity in "Al-Mutanafesoun" program. There was a very simple sunshade which sheltered the guard's family. Actually, it was their home! The guard was on vacation for a few days, but his family were there, and we decided to help him and build a small home for him. In a few days, the guard returned to find his family in a house rather than the simple shade. It was a happy surprise that he did not expect and this is an example that Allah provides for people beyond their expectations.

## **One last word**

### **For the youth:**

Those who have not visited humanitarian fieldworks have missed a lot of good and ample experience.

### **For social media influencers:**

"Trading with Allah (donating to charity) never loses." I am sure that if you visit humanitarian work fields, you will double your donations after you discover their impact on the ground.

# Aqil Saleh Al-Janahi

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**Age:**

48 years old

**Education:**

High School

**Interests and skills:**

Singing and preparing and presenting radio and television programs

**Volunteering:**

Many activities with charities, youth associations and clubs.

**Countries visited with Qatar Charity:**

Participating in the television program, "One Heart", produced by Qatar Charity he visited the following countries:

- **Socotra Island**, Yemen: 2014
- **Sudan**: 2015
- **Syrian refugees on the Turkish- Syrian borders**: 2016
- **Kyrgyzstan**: 2017

## **The importance of field visits**

After my participation in these visits, I can confidently say that when charity organizations like Qatar Charity involve media personalities, community figures and social media influencers in their field visits, they achieve better results because these figures can depict real suffering on the ground and raise awareness of humanitarian issues. Moreover, their presence at the heart of crises gives charities greater credibility thanks to their increased positive influence on their followers who become more motivated to support charitable projects.

## **Impact of the visits**

1. On a personal level, these visits helped me develop greater appreciation of the blessings granted to us by Allah, especially we live in a safe, secure and prosperous country like Qatar. My gratitude multiplies when I visit areas that lack even the simplest basics of life.
2. Field visits develop deep sympathy for disadvantaged people who suffer a lot and encourage us to offer material and spiritual support for them during and after the visits. They push us to dedicate time and effort to relieve them, or guide others to donate by raising awareness of their suffering through engaging talented people who influence their followers and audiences on social media and communication platforms. This has become an important part of my personality, thinking and lifestyle.

## **Heart-touching situations**

1. What I noticed from my visit to the Syrian refugees was that they had a great sense of pride and dignity so much that they would not ask for help and would be too embarrassed to do that. The reason for this is that the majority of them were well-off before the crisis that has been on for the last 7 years. That is why we would not ask them about their needs in order not to hurt their feelings. Rather, we would ask those around them and then try to offer the best that suited their situation (which could be financial aids, food and in-kind aid, home rentals, financing small income-generating projects, etc.)

2. During our visit to Sudan, I was impressed by the warm reception, welcoming smiles, and hospitality of all people there, even the poor ones. We were helped by an old lady there who guided us to destitute families in a remote village. She would tell us about them with great care and interest for their welfare. What was really amazing is that we discovered at the end of our mission that she was equally poor and in need, but she never asked anything for herself because she had a strong sense of dignity and self-respect. But, of course, we offered her some help when we discovered that.

## **One last word**

### **To community stars and influencers:**

You should observe Allah's right in the stardom and popularity that Allah favored you with; so you should invest in these blessings and use them to support charity work and serving others.

### **To charitable people:**

Well, I cannot praise the people of Qatar because I may seem a fanatic, but I swear that whenever I talked about a charity project or a humanitarian case that needed donation, I would find Qataris keen on helping and donating without hesitation. Allah has blessed this quality in them by keeping their lives peaceful and affluent. I believe they will always remain generous and will fill the world with goodness and welfare .

### **To the youth:**

I believe that engagement with relief convoys and voluntary trips is so important for young people, because through these activities, they gain a lot of experience and skills. These activities also hone their positive behavior and change their outlook on life positively. I hope families and schools will cooperate with charities to organize trips of this kind for their children and students to benefit from the great educational potential on them.

# Mohsen Fahd Al-Hajeri

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**Age:**

44 years old

**Education:**

Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering

**Interests and skills:**

Literary Writing.

**Volunteering:**

Various contributions in clubs, youth centers, cultural institutions, and charities.

**Countries visited with Qatar Charity:**

- **Visiting Syrian refugees in Jordan**, including Al-Za'tari Camp as part of "Al-Mutanafesoun 1" in 2012.
- **Visiting Syrian refugees on the Turkish-Syrian border** as part of "Al-Mutanafesoun 1" in 2013.

## **The importance of field visits**

There can be a severe shortage of information and awareness without direct interaction with afflicted people. So, I believe that reaching out to the sites of crises and disasters even in very short visits provides more accurate knowledge of people's suffering compared to just hearing or reading about it. It also places more responsibility on the visitor to raise awareness of their causes, and to explain their real needs (it is a trust and an ethical responsibility). Field visits attract greater attention to the necessity of supporting people in need. Moreover, the second visit to the same area to implement or launch humanitarian projects gives the volunteer a great feeling of joy because he can now see the difference he makes in the lives of the targeted beneficiaries and the happiness he creates in their hearts. This feeling is later communicated to the donors to feel the results of their donations after the visitor sees it with his eyes and this often motivates them to give and donate more and more.

## **Impact of the visits**

Personally, these visits developed in me a greater sense of responsibility towards the problems, tragedies and challenges that face Muslims all over the world.

When I accompanied my family (my wife and children) in one of the visits, I noticed that they developed more appreciation for the blessings that Allah had given us because they simply held a practical comparison between their lives and the lives of afflicted people there.

I realized that the difficulties and challenges of poverty, ignorance and diseases that face many Muslim peoples require much greater humanitarian and developmental interventions, because there is a wide gap between the size of the current aids and the actual needs.

## **Heart-touching situations**

There are no specific situations, but impressive observations like the hope that glittered in the eyes of Syrian refugee children: Despite their difficult conditions in the camps, they continued to study, play and smile. I learned from them the meaning of steadfastness, love of life and optimism that tomorrow will be better.

I felt that those children's eyes spoke long and sad stories in spite of their young age. I wish I had the opportunity, since I am a writer, to write their stories with all their pains and hopes and transmit them to the young Muslim generations.

## **One last word**

### **To the public:**

You should think of making such field visits. If you cannot, you should support these humanitarian projects with donations and raising awareness of their importance. Just make sure you have a contribution to it.

### **To young people:**

You have a greater duty towards serving your communities and advancing your nation through volunteering, because you enjoy stronger wills and more time compared to other age groups.

### **To celebrities stars and influencers:**

You have a greater responsibility than others because of your fame, popularity and fans' interest in following you. So I recommend investing this influence or investing part of it to serve humanity and humanitarian work.

**"Generosity does not deplete money  
before its time, Nor does stinginess  
increase your wealth!"**

**Ali Al-Tantawi**



# Naser Mubarak Al-Khleify

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**Age:**

53 years old

**Education:**

Secondary School and Diploma in Business Administration

**Interests and skills:**

Diving, hunting and presenting TV shows.

**Volunteering:**

With schools when he was a student, with the Qatari Red Crescent Organization, the Qatar Foundation for Elderly People Care and the Qatar Orphans Foundation (Dreama).

**Countries visited with Qatar Charity:**

- **Visiting Syrian refugees in Jordan** and Al-Za'tari Camp in 2012 while shooting "Al-Mutanafesoun 1" Comptition.
- **Visiting Syrian refugees on the Turkish-Syrian border** in 2013 to launch humanitarian projects sponsored by "Al-Mutanafesoun 2".
- Three field visits sponsored by the "**One Heart**" TV program produced by Qatar Charity to:
  - A- **Socotra Island**, Yemen (2014)
  - B- **Sudan** (2015)
  - C- **Syrian refugees on the Turkish-Syrian borders** (2016).

## **The importance of field visits**

For media personalities and influential people, these visits increase their popularity among fans and followers when they see them devoting their time for important voluntary activities in far places that require strenuous efforts. The fans may take them as role models and follow their example doing similar volunteering work and supporting charitable projects..

## **Impact of the visits**

Living close to poor and afflicted people to help them makes you feel that you play an important role in life and that you are full of human kindness. It softens the heart, rids the soul of miserliness and selfishness, and elevates it spiritually. You enjoy this feeling when you pass your hand over the head of an orphan in kindness, provide the needs of a poor person or relieve the suffering of a person in distress. In the work field, there are hidden joys that can be felt only by those who work there.

In addition, these visits maximize the impact of media figures and activists on social networking sites because they get influenced by these first-hand experiences and, in turn, influence others, especially when they convey the real suffering of people live from real scenes in the field via their reports, tweets, articles and interviews.

## **Heart-touching situations**

1. During our visit to the fish market in the Yemeni island of Socotra, I saw a 9-year-old child standing close to the place where the retailers cleaned the fish. He would fumble in the fish remains and waste (e.g. the heads) thrown away and collect them in a plastic bag. I approached him and asked him about what he was doing, and I learned that he was an orphan who was trying to secure some food for his seven sisters and mother, and that they were leading a difficult life. Thank God, the "One Heart" team bought him some fish that day and provided orphan subsidies for him and his sisters.

2. During our visit to Sudan, our attention was caught by a blind man walking down the street with his young son. The "One Heart" program team stopped him and asked him where he was going and he told us that he was going to the mosque to teach the Holy Qur'an to the children of this area in return for some food stuff and in-kind items. However, they were insufficient for him and his family. When we asked him about the best way to help him, he said he wanted a small car to bring potable water for people in his neighborhood in return for a fee. Thank God, we provided the car (which was worth \$1000) for him, and we hope that it secured a decent income for him and his family.



## **One last word**

### **For young people:**

Hurry up to do charitable deeds and provide the needs of poor people as much as you can, and seize the chance to volunteer and participate with your effort and time at this early age.

### **For celebrities and influencers:**

Just as you are loved by people who follow you on social media and means of mass communication, you should also participate in charitable work so that Allah will love you and honor you. Devote your fame and part of your time for this noble purpose.

# Mohammad Atiq Al-Kawari

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**Age:**

52 years old

**Education:**

Diploma in Management

**Interests and skills:**

Athlete, former player and coach of the Qatar national volleyball team.

**Volunteering:**

With Qatar Charity only.

**Countries visited with Qatar Charity:**

- **Republic of Ghana:** As part of the fourth edition of the "Safari Al-Khair" television program produced by Qatar Charity, 2017.

## **The importance of field visits**

There is a big difference between hearing about charity work from other people or watching a TV report about it on the one hand, and experiencing it first hand on the other. These visits give you the opportunity to immerse yourself in humanitarian action with all its abundant blessings and great rewards. You also discover the intensity of the suffering of poor, needy and afflicted people, their needs, as well as the impact of the aids and humanitarian projects on their lives no matter how small or few they are.

## **Impact of the visits**

My visit to Ghana helped me appreciate the blessings that we relish in: the abundant food we have; the ample time we enjoy; and the houses that shelter us. Before that, I would take them for granted, but now, I can value them more after I had seen their scarcity with the people we saw in these field visits. If the visiting volunteer is a celebrity or an influencer, the impact of the visit is greater because his followers and audience also get involved.

## **Heart-touching situations**

1. We met a young man who had embraced Islam at the age of 12, and we asked him if he wanted anything. He said he only wished to have an Islamic garb to pray in it. His wishes were not material like many people in his age (modern smart phones, traveling, etc.)

2. We visited a man in distress because there was a possibility of being expelled from his rented home as he had been insolvent for a whole year. The total value of the annual rent was just 480 riyals (that is, the rent was only 40 riyals a month). I was amazed by the fact that he could have been displaced for inability to pay such a small amount of money, and I realized that we might belittle a small sum of money that can mean a lot for others and can even make a big difference in their life. Therefore, one should never despise any good deed, however small it may seem.

## **One last word**

### **For young people:**

Try field visits because they may benefit you more than the beneficiaries themselves. These benefits are beyond count, and I bet.

### **For celebrities and influencers:**

Just as you entertain and bring happiness to the hearts of many of your followers and fans in stadiums, and entertainment programs on the TV, I hope you will also devote part of your time to bring joy to the hearts of the weak, the needy, and people in distress. And just as you devote part of your time to tourism so that you and your families get some fun and recreation, you should also visit humanitarian work fields where you will find peace of mind and joy. There is an old maxim which says: "The proof of the pudding is in the eating."

### **For charitable people:**

May Allah increase your likes. Continue to make donations, for poverty and crises are always increasing, and Allah never wastes the reward of those who do good.

# Abdul-Rahman Al-Deheimi

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**Age:**

16 years old

**Education:**

High School Student, Aspire Academy, Qatar

**Volunteering:**

Visited Syrian refugees and orphans in Jordan with the RAF Foundation. He also travelled to Djibouti with a youth volunteer initiative.

**Countries visited with Qatar Charity:**

- **Bangladesh, 2017:** While filming the first edition of "Al-Mutanafesoun" radio program produced by Qatar Charity.

## **The importance of field visits**

They revealed to us the tremendous suffering of people caused by poverty. For example, before visiting Bangladesh, I had thought that the infrastructure, basic services and the standard of living there was similar to those in Pakistan and India, but it turned out to be even worse.

Field visits also give us a better understanding of the humanitarian issues we are advocating and mobilizing support for. I noticed that very clearly when I talked in the radio about the projects that were going to be implemented by our team in "Al-Mutanafesoun" program before and after the visit. The photos and videos that we shot in the work field and then displayed after our return helped us a lot in that regard because they engaged other colleagues and clearly raised more funds to support our project.

## **Impact of the visits**

The visit left its impression on me in that I now have more appreciation of the blessings that Allah gave us, and I am now planning to study alternative energy engineering in order to take part in preserving the resources and wealth of my country (Qatar).

This visit has also had its implications in my personal life in that I now make regular donations (weekly or monthly), however small sometimes, because I have seen how humanitarian projects make a big difference in people's lives. I have also decided to participate in more humanitarian field visits whenever possible. In this way, I will be able to dedicate part of my life to serving other people which is one of the best deeds recommended and rewarded by Allah the Almighty.

## **Heart-touching situations**

Since our team funded cataract surgeries that enabled patients to regain their eyesight, I had one of the most joyous experiences in my life when I was involved with one patient that I was following his case, especially when he removed the blindfold from over his eyes and saw light again. He was absolutely happy because he became able to go back to work and support his family.



## **One last word**

### **For young people:**

What you will see in a field visit is not like what you have heard, and I strongly urge you to visit the humanitarian work fields to see the great benefits for you and for the beneficiaries alike.

### **For charitable people:**

May Allah reward you and increase your likes! I hope that you will continue to donate and give more. I am quite sure that the charitable and philanthropic deeds of the people of Qatar are one of the main factors that maintain their security, peace and welfare, and protect them from evil and conspiracies of their enemies.

**"Generosity does not deplete money  
before its time, Nor does stinginess  
increase your wealth!"**

**Hatem Al-Ta'iy**



# Muhammad Sa'doun Al-Kawari

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**Age:**

34 years old

**Education:**

M.A. in Television Journalism, Goldsmiths, University of London |  
Executive Business Management MS, HEC Paris

**Interests and skills:**

A broadcaster and sports commentator.

**Volunteering:**

- 2012 -2013: Contributing to the launch and presentation of the “Al-Mutanafesoun” contest program sponsored by Qatar Charity.
- Late in 2013: Contributing to the launch of the “Rofaqaa” Initiative organized by Qatar Charity to support orphans.
- 2014 – Present: launching and presenting the four editions of the “One Heart” TV Program produced by Qatar Charity.
- Qatar Charity Ambassador
- Delivering free media courses at Qatar University, the Sultanate of Oman, and elsewhere..

**Countries visited with Qatar Charity:**

- **Jordan and Southern Turkey (2012- 2013):** meeting Syrian refugees as part of the “Al-Mutanafesoun” program, organized by Qatar Charity.
- **Yemen** (Socotra Island), the Sudan, Southern Turkey, and Kyrgyzstan (2014- 2017): during the filming of the four editions of the “One Heart” TV show, produced by Qatar Charity.

## **The importance of field visits**

I believe that humanitarian field visits change one's view of life and shape his personality. They also give accurate evaluations of humanitarian situations that are based on facts, rather than guessing or relying on the media or other sources of information.

Through such visits, volunteers can gain a better understanding of the needs of poor and afflicted people, especially in relation to development projects. For instance, you can realize that education and health services are more urgently needed by people in distress than building mosques, digging wells, or offering relief.

I advise those who wish to engage in charitable activities to be keen on paying field visits, since they will add much experience to them, raise their awareness of humanitarian issues, and enable them to make others aware of these issues.

## **Impact of the visits**

At the personal level, they have had a huge impact on my personality; I have started to focus more on the blessings that Allah gave to me, and to support humanitarian work and raise others' awareness of it.

At the social level, they have made the Qatari people better aware of disasters and crises in other parts of the world and also made them more sympathetic for the suffering of people in distress, including Arabs, Muslims, and all human beings.

We have launched our "One Heart" TV program, and most of the events are filmed in real scenes. So, I believe it is a unique experience and a valuable contribution to media resources featuring humanitarian work. Reality television has attracted a huge number of fans and has become a major public influencer. Based on real-life situations, the message communicated by reality TV shows spreads more widely and effectively.

Although reality TV shows have been used only for entertainment and money generating purposes, our show serves noble charitable aims. The "One Heart" documentary and the "Al-Mutanafesoun" program reflect that charitable work needs to be creative, to challenge norms, and to invest in the massive advancement in technology and social media to disseminate the culture of charitable work on a wider scale and raise awareness of, market, and better support charity programs.

## **Heart-touching situations**

1. In Kyrgyzstan, primary school children had to go to school walking for some kilometers, from one village to another. They had to walk on their journey to and from the school, in a weather that is as cold as -20°.
2. One of the distressing things that we found in southern Turkey was that many Syrian refugees who had university and postgraduate qualifications (including engineers, teachers, etc...) turned to accept humiliating conditions like working as cowherds and other jobs, only to survive.

## **One last word**

### **For young people**

I call upon young people to take part in field visits to change their view of life and enjoy volunteering.

### **For social influencers**

Being famous without a message in life is worthless. So, you should invest in the things you are fortunate to have, including fame, to support and develop unprivileged communities.





**Age:**

33 years old

**Education:**

high school

**Interests and skills:**

A professional football player

**Volunteering:**

A founder and member of many charitable as well as humanitarian initiatives and campaigns, including:

- "We Feel For You", an initiative to support workers in Qatar;
- "A glance of faithfulness", an initiative for Syrian refugees;
- An ambassador of Qatar Charity for humanitarian work.

**Countries visited with Qatar Charity:**

Over the period from 2012 to 2017, Lami went on a large number of humanitarian visits, the most remarkable of which are:

- Numerous visits to Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Jordan and Southern Turkey. Some of those visits were made in the framework of the "Al-Mutanafesoun" program, and some others were made as part of voluntary initiatives supported by Qatar Charity.
- Aid visits to Kenya and Somalia to face draught and famine;
- Aid visits to Indonesia and Malaysia, as part of the Al-Mutanafesoun program produced by Qatar Charity;
- Yemen (Socotra Island), the Sudan, Southern Turkey and Kyrgyzstan;
- Visits made during the production of the "One Heart" TV program;
- Two visits to Bangladesh to offer aid to the Rohingya victims.

## **The importance of field visits**

On the personal level, I learned many things; you should put yourself in others' shoes and you can make a difference, even if you think otherwise. I came to believe that our volunteering is certainly needed by somebody, somewhere in a specific point of time. That is why we visited those sites to offer help.

One of the lessons I learnt is to appreciate everything you have, no matter how little it might be. For instance, eat only the amount of food you need. In a restaurant, don't ask for leftovers to be thrown away, but, rather, take them home to another meal at another time or for another person. Likewise, volunteering polishes our attitude and makes us humble and wise.

According to Dr. Abdul-Rahman Al-Sumait, the greatest happiness in this world is to make others happy. This is the biggest favour you can do for people, as emphasized in Prophet Muhammad's hadiths (sayings). You can't imagine how happy and joyful afflicted people feel when we visit them.

## **Impact of the visits**

In these visits, I realized that the most important asset in life is not being famous or having a lot of money, fancy cars, luxurious clothes or other material possessions. Being involved in a humanitarian cause makes you feel happier and more satisfied.

If you are in such a position that you care for suffering people, then you have one of the biggest blessings in life and you should be grateful for that. You should thank Allah for guiding you to such an opportunity that others might not have.

Field visits also have an impact on spreading the culture of humanitarian action. When influencers go to an afflicted area, charitable activities, e.g. relief and development, gain much creditability, donors and the public are positively affected, and humanitarian efforts are brought into the spotlight.

Social influencers going on field visits should understand that they are ambassadors committed to a humanitarian cause and having a remarkable role to play.

## **Heart-touching situations**

1. Working on the “One Heart” TV program, we went to the Island of Socotra and met Umm Amer, a Yemeni old lady who had lost her eyesight for two years because of cataract. We decided to set up an eye clinic and, as a team leader, I followed her case closely. When I took her in our car to undergo the cataract surgery, she recognized my voice, and when I took her back home and again to the clinic the next day to take off the blindfold on her eyes, she felt like she was with her family.

What makes one feel delighted is that once I congratulated her for having her eyesight back, she turned to me and kneeled before me as a sign of gratitude. I told her that such success was the results of donors’ efforts. So, people in need might think they owe me while, in fact, I am the one who owes them. I am lucky for the opportunity to serve and please them. What is really heartbreaking is that a cataract surgery costs only \$200 and it is necessary for patients who do not wish to lose their eyesight either on the short or long terms. I still remember the moment when Umm Amer’s children and grandchildren were gathering around her after she restored her eyesight and how she felt so warm-hearted and excited.

## **One last word**

### **For young people:**

At the other end of the world, someone needs your support, compassion, and smile. It is these values that you should invest your time and effort in.

### **For social influencers**

The simplest way to express gratitude for the blessing of fame that Allah granted to you is to be your country’s ambassadors for charitable causes.

# Eman Saqr Al-Ka'bi

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**Age:**

37 years old

**Education:**

B.A. in Arabic Language

**Interests and skills:**

A TV presenter and social media activist

**Volunteering:**

A member of the “Ruhamaa”, “we feel for you”, and “Mafakher” initiatives, launched by the Girls Creativity Centers of the Ministry of Culture and Sports in Qatar.

**Countries visited with Qatar Charity:**

- **Bangladesh:** Working with the QC social network in 2016-2017, we explored the projects of Qatar Charity and met orphans.

## **The importance of field visits**

I can state clearly that my visit to Bangladesh has changed my view of life completely. It was the most impressive among all the visits I took part in, as I lived in close contact with orphans and people in need. I listened to their stories and felt how much suffering they were experiencing. Before that, I used only to hear of or see photos featuring those stories.

During my visit to Bangladesh, I came to understand the feelings and aspirations of distressed people, I liked the smile they strive to keep in spite of suffering, and admired how they cling to life regardless of hardships.

In that visit, I realized the impact of the charity programs funded by philanthropists in Qatar and carried out by a Qatari charity organization through its regional office in Bangladesh.

These visits allow the targeted groups and the world to see Qatar's leading role in providing relief programs and supporting the unprivileged groups of people.

Moreover, there are photos that serve as a record of the charitable initiatives taken by some Qatari people, including wells, healthcare centers, and orphanages. This form of documentation encourages the Qatari society in general, and donors in particular, to think of charitable action as credible and effective, and lends more authenticity to charitable action and its massive impact on donors and society in general.

## **Impact of the visits**

I was really impressed by what happened in the visit. Photos and videos taken during the visit also had an impact on all the people around me, including my family, children, followers on the social media, and people whom I meet in training workshops at schools.

I was always saying that we have to appreciate and maintain the blessings we have, since there are so many people in this world who happen to live in miserable conditions. A clear example is people who suffer to get the minimum essentials of life and children who lost their parents.

## **Heart-touching situations**

1. When we visited a school for orphan girls, we gave children some gifts and candies. However, some girls were too shy to accept our gifts, and even those who took them started to give them to their peers. Expressing their pleasure with our visit to Bangladesh, some girls gave us the gifts back.

2. During our visit to a school of orphan boys, we met a Bangladeshi man who was a good speaker of Arabic. As we were about to leave, we learnt that he used to come to that school and live in the dorm when he was a little boy. Then, he went to the university and, after that, he got an M.A in the Arabic language. To return the favour, he came back to the center to work as a teacher and a supervisor.

## **One last word**

### **For young people**

I feel proud that young Qatari people have recently started to take part in volunteering initiatives as well as charitable and humanitarian action, both in and outside Qatar. They have been contributing passionately and creatively to this field.

For those who have not yet taken up the challenge, I can assume that volunteering in charitable activities is a great addition to one's personality. It gives you self-confidence, makes you more capable of giving and doing creative things, and helps you discover your leadership potentials.

### **For celebrities and influencers**

The closer to less privileged people you become, the greater your impact on charitable and humanitarian work will be.

**"I have learnt that achieving happiness  
comes from making others happy"**

**Abdul-Rahman Al-Sumait**





# Naser Al Wabeer

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**Age:**

29 years old

**Education:**

B.Sc. of Communications Engineering

**Interests and skills:**

Poetry

**Volunteering:**

A member of Qatar Charity, and a volunteer in many QC programs, initiatives and visits.

**Countries visited with Qatar Charity:**

- **Jordan** – 2012: visiting Syrian refugees, as part of the first edition of the “Al-Mutanafesoun” Program
- **Yemen**, Socotra – 2014
- **Turkey**, Turkish-Syrian Borders – 2016: as part of the first and third editions of the “One Heart” TV show, produced by Qatar Charity
- Southern Turkey: visiting Syrian refugees and following up on the implementation and inauguration of Qatar Charity projects.

## **The importance of field visits**

I believe that helping people in difficult circumstances is a moral responsibility, regardless of religion, ethnicity and color.

It is among the most memorable experiences in my entire life to go to such locations where I have learned important lessons due to their special nature .

The involvement of celebrities and community stars in humanitarian visits is a big asset. It can attract people's attention to charitable and humanitarian action, either directly or indirectly, and, therefore, encourage them to support charitable projects and initiatives. After many visits, people expressed their wish to be with us to serve people in need. That is why we feel proud of our social heroes who are part of our team.

## **Impact of the visits**

Visiting Syrian refugee children and the Yemeni Island of Socotra and meeting people living in difficult conditions, I felt I should reconsider many aspects of my life. I live in a wealthy country and there are a lot of things that can be done. For instance, I can:

- Invest in the blessings that Allah granted me to please Him, and, at the same time, avoid wasting resources or spending them in an irresponsible way;
- Always think of people in need as they are entitled to a share in my money, time and efforts;
- Manage money in a balanced way, and taking emergencies into account because life is always changing.

## **Heart-touching situations**

1. On the Turkish-Syrian borders, I saw an old man crying. When I asked him why he cried, he said that he was crying not for personal reasons, but because some people felt disgruntled with their life. The man then cited the Prophet's hadith which reads: "Amazing is the life of the believer, for there is good in every affair of his and this is not the case with anyone else except in the case of the believer: for if a happy occasion happens to him, he thanks Allah, and this is good for him; and if a misfortune befalls him, he endures it patiently, and this is good for him."

## **One last word**

### **For young people**

I call upon whoever is able to volunteer to go ahead and visit locations where humanitarian activities are made. Such visits are an opportunity to refine one's soul and serve people. By doing this, a volunteer gets as much happiness and joy as the very people he is helping.

### **For social influencers**

Use your fame to help people, and provide a good model of charitable action because your fans watch what you do and emulate you.

### **For donors**

There may come a day when you won't have all the wealth that you have today. Giving is the best way to prepare for that day, since what you give for the sake of Allah comes back to you in great abundance.



**Age:**

24 years old

**Education:**

Higher Diploma in Information Systems

**Interests and skills:**

Media and theatre

**Volunteering:**

A member of Qatar Voluntary Center, Qatar Orphans Foundation (Dreema), Qatar National Program of Sustainable Development 2030, and the Volunteering Youth Forum.

**Countries visited with Qatar Charity:**

- **Kyrgyzstan:** During the first edition of the "Al-Mutanafesoun" program, produced by Qatar Charity 2016/2017.

## **The importance of field visits**

Although I have taken part in voluntary initiatives for many years, they were all inside Qatar. Visiting locations outside the country adds to the volunteer's experience and is absolutely different from locations inside the country.

Offering voluntary services in the country, we find that foods, drinks, means of transport, and other luxuries are available. Hence, volunteering is more comfortable and convenient inside Qatar. However, volunteering in poorer countries, you can go to areas which are stricken with poverty and other crises. So, the situation is harder. There are no restaurants where you can have food, no paved roads, and no appropriate infrastructure. To do your job successfully, you have to live with poor and afflicted people and to accept the situation. Looking closely at the suffering those people experience, you will develop a deeper understanding and sympathy for them.

In addition, you can tell real stories from the visits to your family, colleagues and all other people by sharing photos and videos shot in these visits. In this way, you raise public awareness of humanitarian work and their attention to the fact that they should be thankful for the many blessings they enjoy which are not available for people in distress. Accordingly, key moral and social goals will be achieved, with more support given to people in need and charitable projects better marketed.

## **Impact of the visits**

This visit had a deep impact on my life and my attitude towards people. It has taught me to be modest and to love the poor. I have developed passion to help others, at least with kind words that may be a source of inspiration. I have come to understand how we used to take luxuries in our life, e.g. houses and cars, for granted, while others do not have even the basic needs of life. When you help others, it means that you help yourself in the first place. If I have the opportunity to visit other locations in the future, I will never hesitate to do that.

## **Heart-touching situations**

1. It is heart-warming to see people happy. One time, we gave a poor family a cow with its calf (as part of our support of profitable projects), the family cried of happiness and invited us to a delicious meal, as a way to express how grateful they were.



2. One of our visits was to a district that had no access to basic services, e.g. health centers, schools, etc. People had to walk some kilometers to get to the nearest health center. Since the visit was intended to examine the possibility of establishing key facilities, I was really impressed by how jubilantly people reacted and I got to understand how important it is to help people in need and give them a glimmer of hope.

## **One last word**

### **For young people**

Help people with whatever resources you have: effort, time, money, etc. You may think that you have a little to give, but there are always people who need those “little” things: for them, they can be fortunes.

### **For social influencers**

Actually, you have a bigger responsibility to raise public awareness of, and garner support for, humanitarian causes.

# Asmaa Al-Hammadi

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**Education:**

B.Sc. of Media, Qatar University

**Interests and skills:**

TV presenter and social media activist

**Volunteering:**

An ambassador of the Qatar Cancer Society and an ambassador of Mental Health Friends Association (WEYAK), supporting the campaigns, initiatives, and events led by both organizations.

Al-Hammadi has also delivered training workshops and courses at schools, and she welcomes all invitations to voluntary contributions made by ministries, institutions, and centers.

**Countries visited with Qatar Charity:****Bangladesh** (two visits) :

The first visit was in 2016 to see the orphanages and other projects set up by Qatar Charity.

The second visit was in 2017 to provide relief for the Rohingya refugees

## **The importance of field visits**

Visiting afflicted locations myself helped me develop a better understanding of the situation of affected people than if I just chose to follow their news on the mass media or social networks. It also offered me, and other volunteers, the opportunity to define the actual needs of people in distress and set priorities in humanitarian action. I liked the fact that field visits organized by Qatar Charity are done at multiple stages. Volunteers go on a first visit to examine the situation and take an account of needs, especially in dealing with crises. After that, they conduct another visit to carry out actual projects and give aid.

What makes our visits socially important is that we invite celebrities and influencers to be part of the visits. This helps raise public awareness of humanitarian action and ensure public support for humanitarian and developmental projects. Celebrities and influencers share news about those projects with their fans and people in the society, both face-to-face and via the media and social networks.

## **Impact of the visits**

After the first visit, I became more content with whatever I have in my life, and abandoned excessiveness with regard to food, clothes, and luxury articles.

The second visit changed me completely. I felt that I needed to go through that experience to have a new vision of the world around me and pay more attention to my spiritual development. As a result, volunteering in humanitarian projects has become an essential part of my life.

## **Heart-touching situations**

1. I was an ambassador of “I am Snafi” and “A Gust of Wind”, a couple of programs launched by Qatar Charity to boost values and support the efforts of female students in two schools that subscribed to the programs. The students raised donations for the renovation of orphan schools in Bangladesh.

2. What is surprising is that the total sums of money collected during the specified period surpassed our targets. During my first visit to Bangladesh, I visited one of those schools. I took the plane from Doha to Dhaka, and it was an arduous long journey. I had to take a rough, rugged road to get to the location, but I forgot all about those hardships once I saw the orphan school with its bright colors after renovation. It is really a moment to remember and I hoped that the students who raised money for the orphans were there to experience those joyous moments.

3. One of the visits I took part in was to Cox's Bazar, a town in Bangladesh that stretches along the borderline and is a destination for Rohingya refugees fleeing from Myanmar. There, I saw a little kid with his mother, and I can tell how much sad he looked as he was looking at other refugees. For his despair, he had no toys to play with. I remembered my young nephew who had asked me to bring him a toy car on my journey back to my home country from Bangladesh! I cried and lost consciousness for some time, and when I recovered, I found the Rohingya children surrounding me and trying to calm me down. The kids offered me help and reassurance, although I am the one who was supposed to do that. I vowed to not spare any effort to help them during and after the visit. At the end, we enjoyed some time together when I entertained them.

## **One last word**

### **For social influencers**

I hope you decide to come on one of these humanitarian visits. The satisfaction and peace of mind you will feel after it cannot be described.

### **For young people**

When you take part in humanitarian visits, describe the situation as it is without exaggerating it, and do not give reign to showing the feelings of pain and pity.

### **For donors**

Your donations make a big difference. What you think of as a little contribution is actually a great help to poor and afflicted communities.

**"You only have life when you  
have faith, And your heart only  
beats when you continue to give"**

**Mikhael Na'ema**





# So'ud Al-Ma'adeed

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**Age:**

27 Years Old

**Education:**

Higher Diploma in Human Resources

**Interests and skills:**

Presenting TV shows and falconry

**Volunteering:**

He has taken part in many voluntary contributions and visited locations of humanitarian action with more than one charity organization.

**Countries visited with Qatar Charity:**

- **Niger 2016 :** Taking part in "Awayedna Nebader" (we always take the initiative), a campaign supervised by Qatar Charity to establish development projects.

## **The importance of field visits**

My first humanitarian visit was to Niger. I could not imagine that I would be that happy and serene and that I would benefit at the personal level except when I went through this experience in reality. Visiting locations of charitable action adds to a volunteer much more than it does to afflicted people.

During those visits, I was excited by the number of projects carried out and how the donations reach the beneficiaries. I realized that even a small donation, of QR 10 for instance, can make a difference in someone's life, educate a child, or help in the treatment of a sick person.

## **Impact of the visits**

Taking part in voluntary and charitable activities has completely changed my personality. I have grown more self-reflective and I have learned to focus more on the blessings that Allah has given me. When I came to meet those people in afflicted areas, I started to look at my problems as really minor in comparison with their suffering.

There are positive impacts for involving media celebrities and social influences in humanitarian visits and charitable activities. For instance, their fans become passionate about taking part in such visits and activities. After I come back home, many people tend to ask me about how to join voluntary initiatives and work for charitable organizations.

## **Heart-touching situations**

1. In Niger, I asked one of the children to bring me a glass of water to drink. He brought me water in a plastic bag, but what actually shocked me was that the water was brown, which means that they all drink unclean, contaminated water!
2. I met a carpenter who owned a carpentry workshop and used to work hard all the day from morning to evening. Though physically disabled, he was keen on providing for his family. I think the decision of that carpenter to work, despite his situation, should be considered by those who refuse hard work and are waiting for their dream jobs.

## **One last word**

### **For young people**

I usually consider these visits as life-changing journeys that help volunteers to purify their hearts and change their way of thinking.

### **For celebrities and social influencers**

I ask Allah to reward you. Your participation in charitable activities makes a difference, since you are the channel that makes the Qatari people know about humanitarian field visits and their value.

# Ali Monadi Al-Ka'bi

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**Age:**

27 Years Old

**Education:**

B.Sc. in Public Administration

**Interests and skills:**

Reading and IT

**Volunteering:**

A member of Qatar Charity

**Countries visited with Qatar Charity:**

- **Lebanon (2017):** visiting Syrian refugees as part of the first edition of the "Al-Mutanafesoun" program produced by Qatar Charity.

## **The importance of field visits**

Field visits give us the opportunity to know the actual needs of afflicted people. As volunteers, we have been committed to raising public awareness during the “Al-Mutanafesoun” program. Coming into close contact with people in hardships, volunteers develop a stronger confidence and faith in the importance of humanitarian action. Otherwise, they would not have the same impact on people and would not be able to effectively call on them to donate and support these projects if they hadn’t seen them with their own eyes.

Humanitarian field visits have also social benefits. People in Qatar tend to have absolute trust in their fellow Qataris who join those visits and come back to tell stories about the recipients of aids and charity activities.

## **Impact of the visits**

When you visit Syrian refugees, you will see how much suffering they go through. The Syrian people have a strong sense of dignity and they have a great civilization. Before the current crisis, they didn’t suffer from poverty or lack of resources. But now, unfortunately, millions of them are displaced and have little or no access to shelters, health care, and education. They struggle to secure basic essentials for survival. As you think of their distress, you will give your life a second careful thought and learn that it can turn upside down all of a sudden. This will help you appreciate the God-given blessings that you relish in, and use the resources you have wisely. You will also appreciate the sustainable development projects led by our government so that future generations can enjoy life as much as we do now. One way to be thankful for the blessings you have is to help people in need.

## **Heart-touching situations**

1. One of our visits was to a primary school for Syrian refugees. As part of the welcome party, a girl recited a sad poem about her home country that she was nostalgic to. What I found amazing was that other students were so deeply moved by the poem that they started to cry. I did not live a moment like that before.

2. People who go through distress or a crisis do not usually have education among their first priorities. However, the case with Syrian refugees is just the opposite; they have a strong passion for learning. During our visit to a school for Syrian children, I asked one child about his needs, and he replied in his beautiful Syrian accent and in a very innocent voice: “Uncle, we need to learn”. He did not ask for candy, toys, or other stuff that a child is usually interested in. His words increase our moral and humanitarian responsibility to offer education for that boy and his peers to protect them from homelessness and ignorance, prevent them from going astray, and empower them to rebuild their country in the future.

## **One last word**

### **For young people**

Young people are interested in travel, adventure, and tourism. So, I hope they consider doing what I may call “humanitarian tourism” in coordination with charity organizations. The benefits they will have from such an experience are countless.

### **For celebrities and influencers**

I totally support and appreciate your efforts, and I call upon you to continue working for humanitarian causes and to raise public awareness of the value of charitable action, and not pay any attention to negative voices.

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## **Volunteers at the Heart of the Field**

“ This book documents a journey of exploration and learning, following a group of Qatari socialites and social media influencers who reached out to impoverished communities affected by disasters and poverty. Promoting humanitarian activism and raising awareness about issues such as poverty, education and healthcare, the book showcases a myriad of methods to support charitable work through successful fundraising campaigns and reality TV over the course of 5 year”

**It is definitely a worth reading book that we all can learn from.**