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# Upholding ethos in education

MY VIEW -  
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**QATAR** University held its Annual Research Forum and Exhibition in Doha last week. It was aimed at sharing with the larger community what has been going on in the campus covering live research demonstrations, poster presentations, sharing of graduate experiences as well as international seminars and panel discussions. The two-day event themed Research Transformation through the Fourth Industrial Revolution: Challenges and Social Innovations was well organised.

Qatar always does this in style and puts education on a high pedestal. Well known for its World Innovation Summit for Education, Qatar has been at the forefront in moving the global agenda on education beyond its shores. It is a shining example in the region if not internationally.

Education Conference 2019 with the theme, Education Makes a Difference, was also being held at the same time. It also focused on issues and the concept of identity, its preservation and how to defend it, since these are being attacked around the world.

This made my involvement as a panellist with other colleagues from Jordan, Italy and two student researchers from Qatar, moderated by a Qatari academic, more unique and exciting.

We deliberated on the topic of Sustainable International Research Collaboration (SIRC) – a mundane topic if not for the lively moderated session that highlighted several gaps in the aforementioned theme which has been bandied around but still suffers from some fuzziness intellectually speaking. Worst still, technologically which tends to skip the more complex social and human issues. Because of that I felt that the topic needs to be given a fresh treatment and some new insights to narrow the gaps by humanising it.

First off, given the current lacuna, there must be close collaboration among the parties involved. Close in the sense to forge a democratic and equitable partnership in the search for a common solution taking into account the needs, values and context of the parties involved.

Local relevancy is just as important as the global ones. So far the former is always marginalised in preference to the latter especially when a dominant (western-centric) partner is involved. This is no longer acceptable moving forward.

This approach must now be redefined as “responsible” research. The qualifier encompasses various elements including “public engagement”, “open access” and “ethics and governance” to

name a few. Each enhances the meaning and depth of “collaboration” as previously mentioned where the public and community are equal partners to be engaged throughout the research process.

In this way, all parties are kept informed, participative and consulted making for “open access” which is peer-reviewed. This will further strengthen the notion of collaborative partnership across the board for the mutual benefit of all.

Last but not least is the question of “ethics and governance” that are deemed essential to ensure that the collaboration is kept transparent and thus readily accessible to a wider audience. Notably when the work is publicly funded for the public good.

This then makes the aspects of “internationalisation” more relevant in the context of research that is both responsible and collaborative. In this way the outcomes and impact in creating peaceful, harmonious and just solutions is more likely to be achieved for the benefit of humanity in the developmental sense of the word.

As such it automatically renders the notion of “ranking” to be incompatible, if not contradictory, to the real understanding of “internationalisation for humanity” as conceived above. Only when understood in this way the whole collaborative exercise becomes truly “sustainable” as envisaged by SIRC devoid of its conventional mundane excess baggage.

More than that, it allows for a more creative interpretation towards a human-centric focus in line with the overarching SDGs inclusive of people, planet, prosperity, partnership and peace.

The last can be broken into two vital human aspects – dignity and justice, that have been missing from the discourse on the Fourth Industrial Revolution. This overlaps with the issues and concept of identity that are being made vulnerable today. Qatar might just be the place where education finds its ethos again.