

Hi XXX,

I wanted to let you know that **Ibtihaj Muhammad**, the fencer renowned for being the first American woman to wear a hijab while competing in the Olympics, has partnered with [Qatar Foundation \[https://www.qf.org.qa/\]](https://www.qf.org.qa/) (QF)'s Creating Pathways Program.

Following the 2022 World Cup, QF saw an opportunity to harness the local excitement around sport and the value it can bring to society, especially for women and girls in Qatar.

As a result, the Foundation launched the **Creating Pathways Program**, focused on identifying, supporting, and training high-potential female athletes in Qatar in five key sports – including fencing – as part of the national focus to increase and improve participation for women and girls' sports. Through the partnership, Ibtihaj will be working with local partners in key areas of mentoring and coaching, ensuring high-quality training, and generating interest in fencing among young girls.

I've included a press release below with additional details. Please let me know if you would be interested in connecting with Ibtihaj or the organizers involved with the Creating Pathways Program. I can also share photos from the launch event.

Best,

XXX

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U.S. Olympic Medalist Ibtihaj Muhammad Partners with Qatar Foundation to Develop Girls' Sports

Fencing to become part of Creating Pathways Program launched at Education City Stadium alongside top Qatar Fencing Federation players

Doha, Qatar, 5 February, 2025:

American sabre fencer, author, entrepreneur and Olympic medalist Ibtihaj Muhammad has joined forces with Qatar Foundation to develop fencing sporting talent among Qatari girls.

A state-led non-profit organization based in the Qatari capital Doha, Qatar Foundation is focused on education, scientific research, and community development.

As part of the Foundation's FIFA World Cup Qatar™ legacy program, the organization is developing pathways and pipelines aimed at encouraging more women and girls to play, and compete in, a variety of sports through an initiative called the Creating Pathways Program. A key component of this initiative is identifying role models for young girls from Qatar and the region to relate and look up to.

Recognized as one of the TIME 100 Most Influential People in the World, Muhammad plays a key role in the broader global conversation on equality and the significance of sport.

“While there were times when being visibly Muslim in a predominantly white sport was challenging, my faith gave me strength and purpose. I wanted to change perceptions and show that Muslim women can be strong, athletic, and competitive while maintaining their religious principles,” Muhammad said.

“I hope that the program will become a space that empowers our girls to believe in themselves and their abilities. I envision creating a pipeline of female athletes who will go on to compete internationally, coach others, and become leaders in their communities. Beyond just developing athletic skills, I want this program to empower girls to dream big and pursue their passions fearlessly.”

Muhammad explained that her ultimate goal is to help create a more inclusive sporting world where no girl feels limited by her background, religion, or appearance.

In September 2024, Qatar Foundation launched The [Creating Pathways Program](https://educationcity.qa/feed/creating-pathways) [https://educationcity.qa/feed/creating-pathways] to encourage sports for girls aged 12-16, driving home to young people the importance of exercise, nutrition, and overall wellbeing.

Fencing is the third elite sport to be launched under the Program, following the announcement of track and field and volleyball programs last year. The fencing track will be delivered by the Qatar Fencing Federation in partnership with Qatar Foundation (QF).

During a launch event at Education City Stadium, a FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ venue, Muhammad and Tunisian Olympic medalist Inès Boubakri, who is also the Head Coach at Qatar Fencing Federation, refereed a series of exhibition fencing matches featuring top female players from the Qatar Fencing Federation.

The Olympic champions shared their expertise with hundreds of enthusiastic participants, commentating on the matches and explaining the rules, the point system, and other key aspects of the sport.

“At Qatar Foundation, we believe that empowering women and girls through sports is key to unlocking their full potential,” Liz McColgan, Director of Athletics Programs, Qatar Foundation, said. “We believe that sports are essential for women's physical, mental, and social well-being, helping to build confidence, improve health, and foster community.

“Sports teach valuable life skills like teamwork, leadership, discipline, and goal-setting, empowering women to excel in both athletics and life. And by fostering inclusive opportunities in sports, we not only build stronger, more confident individuals but also cultivate leaders who will inspire change and drive progress in every aspect of society.”

Fencing has historic roots in the Arab world, with evidence of sword fights dating back as far as 1190 BC in Ancient Egypt. Originally a form of military training, fencing started to evolve into a sport in the 14th or 15th Century.

After the exhibition match, Muhammad and Boubakri joined hundreds of women at a female-only sports and fitness event in the Education City Stadium, which, over the coming two years, will be transformed into a hub for women and girls' sports at the professional and amateur level, as part of post-tournament plans for the continuing sustainable use of the venue.

To find out more about sports activities and initiatives for women and girls in Education City, visit <https://educationcity.qa/events>

Creating Pathways Program

The Creating Pathways Program is an initiative by Qatar Foundation, launched in September 2024 as part of QF's FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ legacy, designed to empower individuals, foster talent, and cultivate sustainable pathways for success across diverse fields within the discipline of sports.

The Creative Pathways Program will offer five elite sports within it – track and field; volleyball; fencing; tennis; and basketball, and will target high-potential Qatari girls who are already on their sporting journeys, later expanding to after-school and community-based sports initiatives for all young women.

More information about the Creating Pathways Program can be found here:

<https://educationcity.qa/feed/creating-pathways>

Qatar Foundation – 30 Years of Unlocking Human Potential

Qatar Foundation (QF) is a non-profit organization which, for 30 years, has supported the sustainable human, social, and economic development of Qatar through entities, programs, and initiatives focused on education, science and research, and community development.

QF was founded in 1995 by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Father Amir of Qatar, and Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation, who shared the vision of providing quality education for everyone in Qatar. In the three decades since, this vision has evolved into a globally unique, multidisciplinary ecosystem of knowledge – offering opportunities for lifelong learning, fostering innovation, and empowering people to be socially engaged citizens and drivers of positive change.

This diverse but interconnected ecosystem comprises a world-class education landscape spanning the full spectrum of learning from pre-school to post-doctoral level; research, innovation, and policy centers addressing some of the world's greatest challenges facing the world; alongside community facilities for people of all ages to seek knowledge, embrace active lifestyles, and expand their horizons within QF's Education City, spanning 12 square kilometers in Doha, Qatar.

With its efforts concentrated on generating impact in five key areas – progressive education, sustainability, Artificial Intelligence, precision health, and social progress – QF remains committed, as it has been for the past 30 years, to investing in Qatar and its people, and contributing to shaping a better world for all.

For a complete list of QF's initiatives and projects, please visit: www.qf.org.qa

To stay up to date on our social media activities, follow our accounts on: [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [X](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

For any media inquiries, please contact: pressoffice@qf.org.qa

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