



Press Release

Third Doha Giffoni Youth Media Summit strengthens ‘Planet-Y’ with 5 projects to drive inclusive growth of youth talent

Doha, Qatar; December 3, 2015: Conflicts, economic inequality and physical or mental challenges limit the involvement of a large section of youth in film and other cultural pursuits. The third Ajyal Youth Film Festival, presented by the Doha Film Institute, underlined efforts to address this by taking Planet-Y, a path-breaking initiative launched in 2014, to its next level.

Planet-Y was conceptualised at the first Doha Giffoni Youth Media Summit, hosted by the Doha Film Institute in partnership with Italy’s Giffoni Experience, in Doha last year. The project was unveiled at the second Summit held in Giffoni, Italy, in July 2015.

Now, at its third edition at the Ajyal Youth Film Festival, Planet-Y has assumed tangible shape with the roll-out of five projects: One Platform, Many Voices – the Planet-Y Video Channel, a speciality media channel by and for youth; The Magic Box – An Educational Radio Station for Syrian Children; Content is King – a Youth Production Programme; Nomadic – a Festival Cooperation and Exchange Programme; and Film Fun in Bed – a Hospital Outreach Programme.

Discussions on Neuro-Communication – How to speak the language of the brain; and The Digital World – how to speak the language of youth, were also held. Over 40 delegates from across the world took part in the Summit with the common goal of engaging youth and enriching their lives.

Fatma Al Remeihi, Festival Director and CEO of the Doha Film Institute, said: “Planet-Y emerged from the need to identify a collective, industry-wide strategy to tackle the myriad challenges in the media sphere. Through our workshops, we aimed to combine the experiences and wisdom of the Summit participants to create concrete takeaways and action plans. The deliberations of Planet-Y have the power to shape the lives of children, and subsequently our own. Because in helping others we make our own lives meaningful.”

Doha Giffoni Youth Media Summit aims to make the Planet-Y projects beneficial for youth, said Al Remeihi. “We will follow up on each project and keep them growing. Next July at Giffoni, we will report back on the progress that was made. Many of these projects will take time, but I already see the collaborations coming out of the Summit now as a victory for Planet-Y.”

Claudio Gubitosi, Director and Founder of Giffoni Experience, said that young people are the first victims of conflict, and through the Doha Giffoni Youth Media Summit’s Planet-Y, the creative community is taking tangible action to address the problems faced by youth globally.

Describing himself and the mission of the Summit as to be ‘producers of happiness and well-being,’ Gubitosi said the time has come to act, not just think and pay lip-service to bright ideas that can bring positive change. “We have to stand together to find practical solutions through a culture of dialogue and knowledge exchange. Planet-Y will help keep up with the ongoing cultural, social, economic and political evolution of younger generations,” said Gubitosi.

Children in Conflict Areas

In addition to the five projects under Planet Y, the Doha Giffoni Youth Media Summit discussed the challenges faced by ‘Children in Conflict Areas,’ and how they can be empowered to share their stories.



“Children in Conflict Areas’ emphasised on giving voice to less fortunate youth. We want to focus on ways of including children who are not able to attend events such as Ajyal—because of conflicts, economic inequality, or physical and mental challenges. In the context of the global refugee crisis, now, more than ever, it is the time for inclusivity,” said Al Remaihi.

The discussion was an emotional experience for the participants with heart-touching visuals and stories of the Syrian refugee crisis taking centre stage. Presenting searing stories from the refugee camps, Mohammed Abu Asaker, Public Information & Communications Officer of UNHCR, choked on words as he narrated the story of a man who refuses to go home until late into night for fear of facing his children.

He reiterated the gravity of the refugee situation with the number of displaced people increasing to 42,500 per day now compared to 10,900 in 2010, the result of 15 wars that the world witnessed or continue to rage since the past five years. Adding that children pay the price for this, with 51% of all displaced people being below the age of 18, he said the crisis is unprecedented and the worst since the World War II.

Essa Al Mannai, Executive Director, Reach Out to Asia, explained the work of the organisation in making a tangible difference, including adult literacy trainings, youth leadership programmes and those designed to benefit students and teachers. Recounting a programme that ROTA conducted four years ago and how it transformed a participant’s life, Al Mannai said that it is such positive stories that keep him inspired. He added that international human aid to promote education is critical.

Matthew Cassel, an independent multimedia journalist and filmmaker, who embarked on a personal journey at the age of 20 from Chicago to the Middle East, narrated how he works to engage children in Gaza creatively, encouraging them to take photographs. It also led to a touring exhibition of their works in the US, which was a defining experience for the young people.

Farooq Burney, Director of Al Fakhoora Education Above All, presented a human portrait of the refugees stating “they all had a similar life as you or me, and all they have today is hope for a bright future led by education.” Charlotte Giese, Specialist Advisor for Children & Youth at Danish Film Institute in Denmark, explained the work being undertaken among several underprivileged communities and the use of film as a medium to promote self-expression by young people.

The session, moderated by Firdoze Bulbulia, an award-winning producer, director and trainer, underscored the importance of encouraging children in conflict areas to tell their own stories. The Q&A session was equally engaging with participants discussing the importance of promoting the psycho-social welfare of the refugees.

Abu Asaker shared the story of how ten children were asked to make a simple statement, ‘I am a good boy.’ Nine of them expressed it with great difficulty and a good deal of coaxing while one simply couldn’t state it. “They have been living the camps for five years and they are so wounded from inside. It will take a lot of work to help them.”

The session concluded with a call to all of humanity to make a difference – in whichever way they can, as volunteers or through assistance, with Essa Al Mannai reminding the audience a quote by Booker Prize winning author Arundhati Roy: “To never get used to the unspeakable violence and the vulgar disparity of life around you...To try and understand. To never look away. And never, never to forget.”



For more information on the movie timings and the Ajjal Youth Film Festival, log onto www.dohafilminstitute.com.

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About Doha Film Institute:

Doha Film Institute is an independent, not-for-profit cultural organisation. It supports the growth of the local film community through cultivating film appreciation, enhancing industry knowledge and contributing to the development of sustainable creative industries in Qatar. The Institute's platforms include funding and production of local, regional and international films; skills-sharing and mentorship programmes; film screenings; the Ajjal Youth Film Festival; and Qumra. With culture, community, learning and entertainment at its foundation, the Institute is committed to supporting Qatar's 2030 vision for the development of a knowledge-based economy.

Doha Film Institute

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