Sheikha Bodour bint Sultan Al Qasimi

Born in Sharjah, the UAE in 1978, Sheikha Bodour bint Sultan Al Qasimi has been recognised for her social, economic and cultural contributions to UAE by the Emirates Women Award and honoured as a Hot Forty young leader, paving the way for a prosperous future for the UAE’s children. She holds a BA (Hons) from Cambridge, an MSc in Medical Anthropology from University College London, and has successfully completed publishing courses from both Yale and Columbia.

Sheikha Bodour is an avid advocate of the importance of books and literacy in the development of individuals of all ages and society as a whole, is involved in a number of publishing-related ventures and initiatives, and was named Personality of the Year at the Emirates Airline Festival of Literature 2013 in addition to being named Personality of the Year in support of education during the Sharjah Award for Educational Excellence 2013.

In 2007 she founded Kalimat, the first publishing house dedicated to the production of quality original Arabic children’s titles. To date, Kalimat has published over 140 Arabic children’s books, and has sold translation and publishing rights to a number of its books to industry acclaimed international publisher and has received numerous awards, including being named Sharjah International Book Fair’s Publisher of the Year in 2012.

In 2013, Kalimat expanded to become Kalimat Publishing Group – the regional frontrunner in the field of Arabic children’s publishing comprised of Kalimat Publishing House and the newly formed Horouf Educational Publishing, an educational imprint that aims to pioneer a fresh, fun, future oriented approach to Arabic Education. With a central focus on improving children’s Arabic language capabilities Horouf Educational Publishing works to provide innovative learning solutions to support teaching in the Arabic language at schools, starting from preschool levels, through the provision of specially designed educational materials in Arabic.

Sheikha Bodour is the Founder and former President of the Emirates Publishers Association (EPA), which is responsible for representing UAE publishers locally and internationally, developing the country’s publishing industry, and participating in domestic and overseas exhibitions and conferences. In 2012, her efforts gained the EPA full membership of the International Publishers Association (IPA).
In addition, Sheikha Bodour is the Patron of the UAE Board on Books for Young People (UAEBBY), the national section of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY), which is a non-profit organization that represents an international network of people from all over the world who are committed to bringing books and children together. Sheikha Bodour is also the Director of Knowledge without Borders, an initiative launched by the Ruler of Sharjah with the aim of establishing a library in every house in the Emirate.

In 2013, Sheikha Bodour was honoured with Watani Emarat Humanitarian Work Award and received the Imprint of Literature for her outstanding role in development of books and reading in the UAE. In 2012, Sheikha Bodour Al Qasimi was presented with the Emirates Women of the Year Award in honour of her commitment to, and involvement in, developing the book and publishing sector, as well as children’s culture and culture in general in the UAE and the region. In 2011, Sheikha Bodour won the British Council Award for the most successful young publishing entrepreneur.

Recently, in recognition of her vision to make reading accessible to all, as well as for her role as communication facilitator with wide-ranging international organisations and institutions to help support and enrich the cultural exposure of children and individuals with special needs – in particular the blind – Sheikha Bodour participated in the Diplomatic Conference of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in Marrakesh, Morocco, during which the historical treaty to make books available to the visually impaired was signed.

As part of Sheikha Bodour’s legacy, and in support of the agreement, Kalimat has already provided a number of publishing companies with the rights to translate some of its books into braille.

Away from publishing Sheikha Bodour Al Qasimi stands as Vice President of the Sharjah Ladies Club, a combination leisure facility and community body committed to the intellectual and social development of Sharjah’s women and children.