TRSM TRAVELS TO QATAR TO RESEARCH THE IMPACT OF THE 2022 WORLD CUP

Gainesville, FL – Assistant Professor Dr. Kyriaki “Kiki” Kaplanidou, TRSM Department Chair Dr. Michael Sagas and Mr. Gerald Fritz (graduate research assistant) traveled to Qatar University in Doha, Qatar from December 10- December 17. The purpose of their trip was to fulfill the requirements of a recent grant award between UF and Qatar University’s Social and Economic Survey Research Institute (SESRI) designed to examine the impacts of the 2022 World Cup in the country of Qatar.

The grant was awarded in October 2013 and its duration is two years through October 2015. According to Dr. Kaplanidou, Director of Innovative Research Initiative in Sports Events (i-Rise) lab, “The primary aim of the research is to create a theory of change in the attitudes of the locals toward mega events and understand which factors influence resident support toward such events. The secondary aim of the research is looking at perceptions of Qatar and the Middle East and the power of the mega events to influence destination image perceptions.”

For the first phase of the grant, Dr. Kaplanidou, Dr. Sagas and Mr. Fritz conducted 24 interviews with stakeholder organizations and residents. Some of the stakeholder organizations involved the 2022 Supreme Committee for the World Cup, Qatar Olympic Committee, Qatar Football Association, Qatar Stars League, International Center of Sport Security, Aspire Academy, Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum, and the Organizing Committee for the Handball World Championship 2015.

This is the third trip to Qatar for Dr. Kaplanidou, but the first trip designed to fulfill the grant requirements. When asked about her trip to Qatar, Dr. Kaplanidou had this to share: “Mega events continue to play a catalytic role from a socio-cultural standpoint in a society with different cultural values than a Western society. What we observed in our interviews was a diverse number of initiatives and programs that are taking place to impact the local society in the next 10 years. The initiatives will also create a framework of impacts that the host country of Qatar can utilize to
leverage the opportunity of hosting the 2022 World Cup”.

The Department of Tourism, Recreation and Sport Management is committed to national and international excellence in the generation, dissemination, and communication of knowledge in tourism, recreation and sport management. The Department is also dedicated to excellence in the preparation and training of future industry and academic professionals, and providing relevant outreach to stakeholders.

If you would like more information about this topic, please contact Dr. Kyriaki Kaplanidou (Assistant Professor) at kkaplanidou@hhp.ufl.edu (352.294.1668) or Arielle Gousse (Marketing and Public Relations) at agousse@ufl.edu (352.392.3992).