

To ensure masks for all, Qatar community join hands

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that would do him justice, but when we asked if we could take his picture he rushed to get his sling, climbed up the palm tree and said “take it now.” -- A picture clicked by @alqamash/Instagram for Seam Tailoring

By Anisha Bijukumar / The Peninsula Online

Doha: Qatar has made it compulsory for everyone to wear masks while stepping out of their residence. With social collaborations and sustainability in their mind, various volunteer groups have set out to make masks that are reusable and made of repurposed materials.

Praising one such initiatives, H E Sheikha Hind bint Hamad Al Thani, Vice-Chairperson and CEO of Qatar Foundation wrote on her Instagram account, "Beautiful initiative by @seamtailoring. The way we reach out to the most vulnerable during this pandemic, says a lot about who we are as a community. #masksforallqatar"

A volunteer group, SeamTailoring, on their [Instagram account](#) highlighted some of the people they have helped like the date palm specialist Gul Mohammed, palm tree farmer Haaji and a farmer from the north of Qatar, Dambar. There are people who are working and helping to sustain the demands for various products even in these trying

times of pandemic and partial lockdown and SEAM has repurposed fabric and made face masks for them.

In an effort to reduce the waste in fabric industry, SEAM has been on a mission to collect offcuts from local brands and tailoring shops and sorting them by size, colour and composition and then making out face masks or at times storing them safely for future upcycling projects.



***A tie dye beach dress transformed into a mask by Seam Tailoring
(Pic: @alqamash/ Instagram)***

“We started distributing masks on May 10. We’ve been driving around different areas of the country, focusing on a different neighbourhood everyday. We’ve given out 70 masks a day, including today. We found a large number of people in need of those masks today, so we’re aiming to increase our production. Therefore, we will need more unwanted cotton clothes and material off-cuts as soon as possible,” Reem Al Sehlawi, founder of Seam Tailoring.

Those interested to support their cause can either:

1. Sponsor making face masks for QR 20 per mask and they will distribute them on sponsor’s behalf.
2. Donate unwanted clothes and bedsheets and they will repurpose them to make face masks.

“Our masks have been designed specifically to address a number of social and environmental issues but more importantly the safety of those who wear them, as such they are designed to be tight fitting with two tight woven cotton layers, and a non-woven polypropylene filtration layer that is removable. We are only using cotton or cotton combination fabrics (with a higher cotton ratio) in our masks to ensure the breathability and comfort of those wearing them,” Reem added.

Another grassroots virtual community of volunteers, Army of Masks, are sewing and providing DIY washable fabric masks in the country. They have tied up with Sustainable Qatar to meet the urgent need for face covering in the country. And towards this purpose a #ShareAThobe campaign has been launched recently. The volunteers are requesting for old thobes and dress shirts that can help make masks.

“Do you know that one thobe can make more than 20 masks? By sharing an old thobe, you can help protect more than 20 people and, at the same time, reduce the wastes generated from clothing,” Sustainable Qatar said on their Instagram account.

Army of Masks in Qatar is an initiative launched in partnership with the American Women's Association of Qatar and works along with Doha Stitches, a local sewing and crafting group.

“Realizing the need in Qatar, the Army of Masks provides masks for community groups upon request. Army of Masks’ volunteers worked diligently to develop a mask that offers reliable protection and found that tightly woven fabric, for instance from thobes,

men's dress shirts, and high quality sheets, appears efficient for containing droplets from breath," a statement on Sustainable Qatar website said.

Those willing to donate thobes can fill the [form on their website](#) and they will arrange for collection.