

mada

digital
access
for all



Message from the Minister of Transport and Communications

Qatar has made remarkable progress towards achieving the Qatar National Vision 2030, which promotes sustainable development at economic, social, and humanitarian levels, as well as the optimal employment of ICT by promoting inclusive digital access. Persons with disabilities have had valuable participation in this renaissance through their collaboration and intensification of efforts to achieve the common good of the country. This group is of particular importance and they exude the characteristics that qualify them to stand at the forefront of development leadership unified with their peers of thinkers, creators, innovators, and distinguished individuals. Therefore, empowering them through ICT accessibility is one of the Ministry's top priorities, so they can effectively contribute to the development process. As a pioneer in this field, Mada Center leads the development process through its determined efforts and ambitious strategy that aims to unlock potential and achieve an inclusive digital education and community.

Both the strategies of the Ministry and Mada are closely linked with the national strategy for all local, regional, and international strategic institutions and partners to achieve the goals of the Qatar National Vision 2030.

His Excellency Mr. Jassim Bin Saif Al Sulaiti
Minister of Transport and Communications



CEO Message

At Mada Center, we strongly believe in the importance of ensuring the rights of persons with disabilities and the elderly in digital access to ICT. Our objectives are consistent and integrated with the Qatar National Vision 2030 focusing on the key sector of education which we strive to ensure equal opportunities, empower a comprehensive education system at all levels and support lifelong learning through ICT. This is in conjunction with the community and culture sector, through which Mada's strategy aims to provide an equal basis for persons with disabilities (PWDs) and elderly to take part in cultural life through ICT, and offers better opportunities for PWDs to unlock their creative, artistic, and intellectual potential.

We are working to achieve our strategic objectives by building strategic partnerships both locally and internationally, and by offering quality services and activities targeting our strategic partners and others to advance our role as a strategic enabler in the field of ICT accessibility, through capability building and innovation, digital access accreditation, raising awareness, research, and policy advocacy.

As a center of excellence in global digital access in the Arabic language, we are proud to have provided our beloved country, Qatar, with the means to be among the most advanced countries in this field, as Qatar ranked fifth globally in the field of implementing digital access rights within the DARE Index issued by the Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs (G3ICT).

Mada will further its achievements by adhering to its new strategy to support specialists in the field of digital accessibility through tailored training, platforms and programs in compliance with international standards to raise the quality of services provided to PWDs and the elderly to enable them to live independently and ensure their active participation in the development process in all fields.

Maha Al-Mansouri

CEO - Mada Center

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Mada Center is a private institution, which was founded in 2010 as an initiative which aims to promote digital inclusion and the establishment of a technology-based community that meets the needs of persons with functional limitations (PFLs) – persons with disabilities (PWDs) and the elderly in Qatar. Today, Mada is the world’s center of excellence in digital access in Arabic.

Mada works through strategic partnerships to enable the education sector to ensure inclusive education and the Community and Culture sector to become more comprehensive through information and communication technology. This is attained by building partners’ capabilities and supporting the development and accreditation of digital platforms in accordance with international standards of digital access. Mada raises awareness, provides consulting services, and increases the number of assistive technology solutions in Arabic through the Mada Innovation Program to further equal opportunities for PWDs and the elderly in the digital community.

Digital Accessibility Rights Evaluation Index

Continuing the path of success and achievement, Mada Center launched the 2019-2021 Strategy to achieve inclusive ICT accessibility under the slogan “Digital Access for All”; resulting in remarkable achievements that made Qatar a regional and global center in digital access for people with disabilities and the elderly. This strategy complements Mada’s previous accomplishments, which contributed to Qatar ranking fifth in the world according to the Digital Access Rights Evaluation Index (DARE Index) issued by the Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs (G3ICT), whose results reflect the State of Qatar’s commitment towards the rights of persons with disabilities and others in digital access to ICT.

Vision

“Enhancing ICT accessibility in Qatar and beyond”.

Mission

“Unlock the potential of persons with functional limitations (PFLs), persons with disabilities (PWDs) and the elderly – through enabling ICT accessibility capabilities and platforms”.

Launch of Mada Center Strategy 2019-2021

To reinforce the Qatar National Vision 2030, Mada Center launched the strategy 2019-2021 under the slogan “Digital Access for All” in the presence of His Excellency Mr. Jassim Bin Saif Al Sulaiti, Minister of Transport and Communications. The strategy focused on the policy of inclusiveness in the field of ICT accessibility, which has yielded outstanding successes, most importantly the development of Qatar’s strategy for universal inclusive digital access and the contribution to making Qatar a regional and global leader in the field of digital access for persons with disabilities and the elderly.



Through the strategy 2019-2021, Mada seeks to enhance the ICT accessibility of persons with functional limitations (persons with disabilities and the elderly) fully integrating them into society, and furthermore involving them in the development process; raising awareness of their needs and the need to build beneficial capabilities and potential. Mada has also worked to establish several local and global strategic partnerships in the field of ICT accessibility. The Center has prioritized empowering the education sector by guaranteeing an inclusive digital educational system, supporting equal opportunities, and continuous learning through ICT. Moreover, Mada has focused on empowering the community and culture sector by providing an equal base for people with functional limitations to participate in cultural life through ICT and allowing opportunities for persons with disabilities to unlock their creative potential. The center continuously works to adopt digital platforms in accordance with international standards and best practices in the field of access as well as raising awareness and increasing the number of solutions in the Arabic language through the Mada Innovation Program.

Priority Strategic Sectors

Education

Within the framework of Mada Center's goal to promote ICT accessibility to unlock the potential of all persons with disabilities and the elderly through Capability Building, support for developing accessible digital platforms for education, raising awareness, and training, Mada works to empower the education sector to ensure an inclusive digital educational system, and sustainable learning through accessible ICT according to the latest trends in technology and innovation that serve the target groups in the field of education.

Mada's policies and programs aim to increase awareness of the importance of inclusive digital education, improve vocational education and training, and secure digital access to educational and vocational guidance programs for its strategic partners. These programs were prepared by Mada Center's experts who endeavour to achieve the highest standards of inclusion and digital integration using international best practices.

Mada's efforts have resulted in the signing of several strategic partnerships and agreements with a number of strategic partners and high-level state entities working in the education and culture sectors, with the aim of empowering the education sector to ensure a inclusive digital education system at all levels and continuous learning through ICT. These partnerships were signed at a the conference and IT exhibition "QITCOM".

In this regard, Mada signed 7 partnership agreements, the most prominent of which was the strategic partnership with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) and the MoEHE's Education and Training Development Center, in the filed of education and ICT accessibility. Moreover, to enhance awareness of the importance of inclusive digital education, Mada continued to hold several strategic partnerships with leading members of Qatar Foundation, represented by Hamad Bin Khalifa University and Carnegie Mellon University as well as Pre-university Education. Mada also signed key partnerships agreements with the Qatar Career Development Center and Qatar Community College.



The most recent active participation of Mada was at the Doha International Conference on Disability and Development, held on 7 and 8 December 2019 under the patronage of Her Highness Sheikha Moza Bint Nasser. Mada participated in a working paper that highlighted the benefit of using information technology in educating persons with disabilities and effective ways to support them.



The Strategic Partner Ministry of Education and Higher Education

Education Conference 2019

Within the framework of Mada Center's vision to improve ICT accessibility in Qatar and the world and implement its strategy to enable the education sector to offer inclusive education through ICT accessibility Partnerships, Mada participated in the Education Conference 2019. The center sponsored a training course on inclusive digital education and provided necessary consultations to the organizing team to make the conference website and its application accessible, in addition to providing them with the international digital access standards recommended in this regard.

Prior to the conference, Mada held a workshop for the organizers to train them on how to organize accessible events. Furthermore, the center provided support to establish and allocate a comprehensive customer service office. The conference also included organizing and conducting interactive training workshops by Mada Center experts and distinguished users in the education sector, it targeted teachers and educational professionals to develop their skills and increase their knowledge outcomes in the field of access to educational content through ICT. Moreover, to support all students, especially those with disabilities. With 233 trainees, the workshop was one of the most prominent and included: an accessible curriculum workshop, a workshop on the digital access characteristics, the Clicker 7 (global learning program), and the Tawasol (communication) Symbols workshop.



Number of attendees

Summer Camp

In addition to promoting inclusive digital education, Mada participated in several summer camp activities through which two accessible games stations were launched in cooperation with the Department of Schools Affairs in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. The summer camp activities aimed to integrate students with disabilities in educational and recreational activities across 14 summer centers (7 for boys - 7 for girls) opened between July 14 and August 8, 2019. Among these centers, two centers for students with disabilities were opened as an initiative in the country for government school students. In these stations, the center provided accessible educational games including Minecraft Education games and a variety of others. The activities were held at Al-Gharafa Club for Boys and Al-Resala School for Girls. Nine volunteers participated and raised awareness about the importance of digital access for people with disabilities.

This initiative has empowered strategic partners in the education sector to ensure a more inclusive education through ICT. The main objectives of this initiative focused on involving students with disabilities in games, accessible activities and programs, as well as support with reading, writing, mathematics, and history. In addition to this the program instilled global knowledge and principals through the STEM educational system.



Participants in the Summer Camp





Community and Culture

To achieve Mada's strategy 2019-2021 which aims at supporting the equal participation in the cultur and harnessing all potentials to achieve the maximum societal benefit in the field of ICT accessibiliy, Mada has succeeded in enabling an equal base for persons with disabilities to participate in cultural life according to Arab identity through ICT. The Center also has remarkable achievements in providing full support to users, offering opportunities for persons with disabilities and the elderly, furthermore, providing them with the latest technological developments in the Arabic language to facilitate the independent use of their creative, artistic, and intellectual potentials.



strategic partnerships in the culture and society sector

Within the scope of expanding partnerships, Mada signed 4 additional agreements through its participation in QITCOM 2019. These partnerships were with Qatar National Library (QNL), Qatar Rail, Qatar Central Bank (QCB), and Qatar Museums. Additionally, a scope of work in the ICT accessibility field was signed with Qatar Leadership Center (QLC).



These agreements and partnerships play a significant role in ensuring equal opportunities for persons with disabilities and the elderly, with a view to empower them to naturally participate in cultural life and to independently employ their creative, artistic, and intellectual abilities through ICT. They serve to achieve universal inclusive ICT accessibility to reach strategic goals and ensure that they meet the requirements of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Moreover, they effectively contribute to the Qatar National Vision 2030 and the key elements that reinforce the economy, as it has emphasized in its pillars the importance of knowledge economy, sustainable development, and innovation.



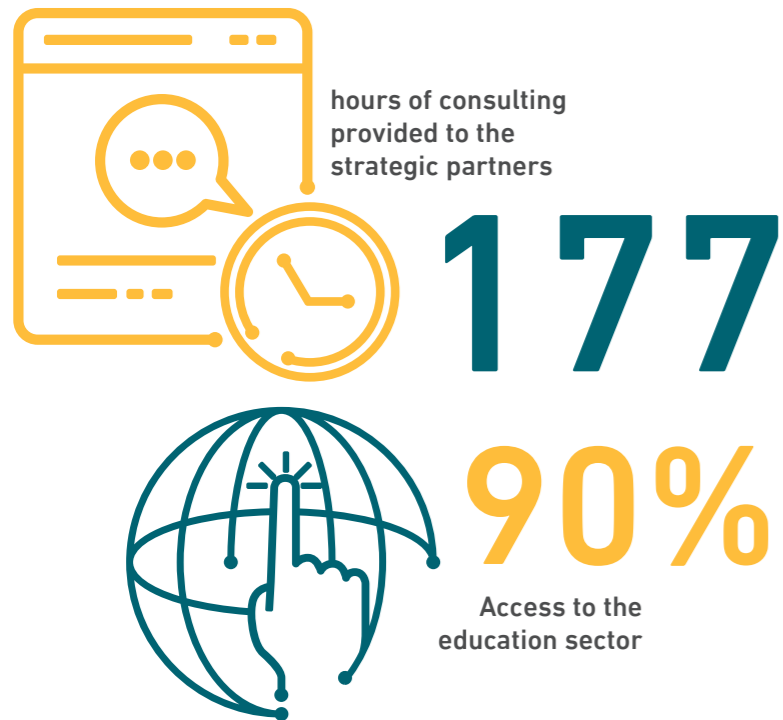
Mada's Services

Mada is an expert in providing consulting and advisory services in digital access, training and capability building in accordance with international best practices and in compliance with the latest international standards in the field of inclusive ICT accessibility.

Mada's services cover:

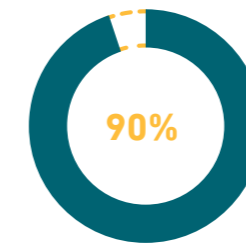
Advisory Services

Mada experts offer specialized consultations in the area of ICT accessibility, policies, plans, and research in digital access in accordance with international standards and best practices. Mada's experts held 91 consultative sessions with specialized teams from Mada's strategic partners, informing them of the latest developments in the field of digital access, advising them on how to apply best standards and policies, especially in inclusive digital education, culture, and society.

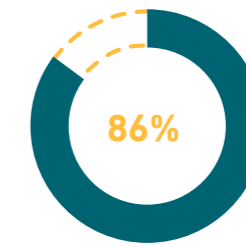


Digital Accessibility Services

Mada services for digital access have had an extensive impact on the lives of people with disabilities and the elderly from using technology in public places to websites, mobile applications, electronic documents, devices/kiosks, and ATMs. This is achieved through an inclusive process that paves the way to attain better access without obstacles. In this framework, Mada has provided a range of several digital access services concerning these kiosks, websites, applications, and digital content, and as a result, Mada gave accreditation to the Shura Council and the Museum of Arab Art's website and both the "Shawrini" (Consult me) and "Sa'idni" (Help me) applications.



Access to the education sector



Access to culture and society sector



Evaluations for the usability and accessibility of contents **95**



Websites were subjected to digital access assessment **36**



Websites planning for digital access **11**



Websites obtained Mada accreditation for accessibility **4**



Digital applications underwent digital access assessment **3**

Digital applications obtained Mada accreditation for accessibility **2**

Capability Building

Mada has worked to activate strategic partnerships by providing the services needed to build the capabilities of its partners in the field of access to information and communications technology through training, empowerment, and the establishment of assistive technology stations to support people with disabilities.



 **149**
Training hours provided for Capability Building

513
Trainees in the Capability Building program



 **29**
Capability Building and teacher training workshops



Mada Center also provided an opportunity to obtain a global Assistive Technology Certification (ATP) from the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA) in Arabic, to realize the center's policy and goals in building capabilities and competencies in the field of ICT in the Arabic language in the region.

Mada usually grants an ATP Certificate for competency accreditation in analyzing the needs of persons with disabilities and helping them to choose the appropriate assistive technology tools, by providing the necessary training and support to use such tools.

Open Training Program

Based on Mada's vision and mission, an open training program that endeavors to expand partners' knowledge of ICT accessibility to integrate and empower persons with disabilities and the elderly in society was prepared and implemented according to international standards and best practices. In 2019, Mada offered 29 specialized training workshops to 513 trainees over 149 training hours in three main areas: ICT accessibility, global policies, and best practices in the field of ICT accessibility and assistive technology.

Mada's Activities

Mada activities were launched from the core of its work plan aimed at achieving strategic goals through designing services, programs, and activities targeting its strategic partners, to upgrade its role as an enabler in the field of ICT accessibility. The activities that Mada focuses on are innovation, research and publications, raising awareness, and policy awareness.



Innovation Mada's Innovation Program

The Innovation Program is an outstanding achievement, which aims to encourage innovators to invent Arabic solutions that augment the lives of persons with disabilities and the elderly in Qatar and the Arab world. The program aimed to establish a market for the private sector in Qatar, to meet the needs of the Arab world, increase awareness in the field of advanced technology among creators, promote inclusive digital access, and develop creativity. As of 2019, Mada had provided support for 30 technological solutions through the innovation program; to meet the needs of persons with disabilities and the elderly. Mada's Innovation Program provided support through funding opportunities, resources, and expertise. The program offered grants for innovative products or services for individuals and entities through:

1.

Entrepreneurs Grants

The objective of this grant is to provide opportunities for individuals and emerging institutions interested in technology and innovation that have provided products or services in the field of digital access and assistive technology, with a view to empower them and help them succeed and enter the local and Arab market.

2.

Localization

Mada collaborated with institutions concerned with persons with disabilities to define their needs for assistive technology and digital access solutions in the Arabic language compatible with the Qatari culture. Mada has supported startups and localized devices and technology solutions in the Arabic language through Mada's Innovation Program, seeking to improve digital accessibility for persons with disabilities at the local, regional, and international levels. These solutions included: Arabization of the first electronic device/ kiosk for government services accessible to persons with disabilities and the elderly, this project came within the agreement between Mada and the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA).

3.

Competitions

Mada has worked in coordination with local, regional, and international agencies to add paths related to ICT accessibility and AT through organizing competitions that provide opportunities for innovators and software developers to obtain funding for their products or services. They can benefit from these awards in developing their innovations to achieve the greatest advantages possible. In this regard, Mada participated in several events in which the center provided awards in cooperation with its partners, including the Mada - ALECSO Prize for Persons with Disabilities applications, Programming Camp (Code Camp), and the Mada - Seed Stars Award.



Mada - ALECSO 2019 Prize for Persons with Disabilities

It included 481 applicants and 2 qualified people, the award went to **Sabreen Ibrahim** from **Tunisia** who won through her application **Class Quiz**, which is a set of digital interactive exercises that enable children with disabilities to learn anywhere and anytime if they are unable to attend classes due to difficulties, movement restrictions, or health reasons such as treatment and others.

Programming Camp (Code Camp) - QITCOM 2019

The completion included 560 applicants, 203 participants, and 47 teams that presented creative ideas and innovations on the creativity stage at QITCOM. The winning team was **"Beyond Barriers"** for the **"Madad"** application, a smart bracelet that converts voice commands into sign language.



Mada Seedstars ICT accessibility Award 2019

A global award for startups in the field of ICT accessibility, which has been operating for less than 4 years. The award was supervised by Mada and Seed Stars, through which an innovation or innovative idea, product, or service is nominated in the field of digital access. The competition included 116 applicants, 4 regional qualifiers, and 2 international qualifiers, in April 2020, one winner will be announced.

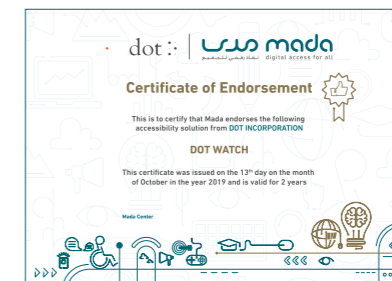


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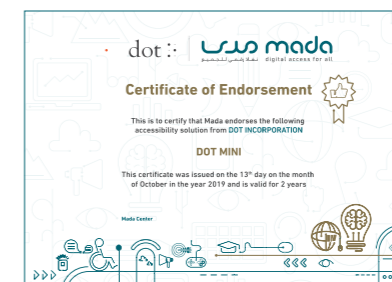
Endorsement

The program targeted international and local companies that have existing solutions in the field of ICT and AT that are ready for the market and require accreditation and support to reach a wider market in Qatar and the Arab region. The certification is subject to strict standards based on technical and end-user reviews.

The assistive technology devices that have been endorsed and supported::



Dot Watch
The world's first Braille smartwatch



Dot Mini
The first smart media device to serve people with visual impairments.



Bonocle
A device combining hardware and software solutions to provide an innovative product that enables people with visual impairments to access a wide range of digital content without any hindrance. It contains a braille cell that can be carried so that the cell is placed under the fingertips of the user, the device can communicate with various electronic devices such as smartphones, tablets, and laptops.



5.

Expertise

The program targeted innovators, startups, researchers, and students seeking expertise and advice according to global best practices and has utilized the opinions of users with disabilities, moreover, it helps to exchange experiences to promote and improve innovative solutions before moving to advanced stages.

6.

Focus Groups

Groups of ambitious innovators and notable researchers who have a wide range of interests in technology have been targeted, which has provided opportunities for exchanging ideas, information, and cooperation between innovators and researchers, furthermore, knowing the end-user needs that will contribute to enhancing access to information and communications technology.

**Mada Innovation Youth Club**

Mada recognizes youths to be a vital driving force in the creation of innovative solutions to meet the growing needs of today's PWD community. This initiative harnesses the talents of potential young innovators to shape the future of impactful ICT accessibility and Assistive Technology solutions. The Mada Innovation Youth Club offers a platform for the innovative youth to use state-of-the-art technology and methodologies to develop solutions that will impact real life challenges for PWDs and the elderly in Qatar and the region. Mada works continuously with young innovators providing mentorship and facilitating the presentation of ideas and solutions at conferences.

Innovators Workshop

Through the Innovation Forum Workshop, Mada highlighted the importance of research in the field of ICT accessibility. This forum opened intensive exchange of ideas between creators and researchers regarding the end-user needs and ICT accessibility experience in Qatar and the region. The workshop was comprised of innovators and researchers from various backgrounds and interests in society. It aimed to enhance the exchange of ideas and research methods between participants, and provide opportunities to discuss research topics related to accessibility, methodologies and potential challenges faced by experts, in addition to highlighting and discussing users' needs to ICT accessibility in Qatar and the region, thus, enhance communication and cooperation between solution developers in order to meet those needs. This workshop is part of the Center's commitment to making free resources available in Arabic to developers, innovators, and researchers in the field of technology and assistive technology, to facilitate and support the process of assistive technology innovations for people with disabilities and the elderly and develop an ecosystem for innovation in this field.

Focus Sessions

Mada prioritizes involving end-users of persons with disabilities, therefore, the Center has prepared interactive discussions between relevant groups of persons with disabilities, innovators, researchers, and specialists interested in the field of technology and digital access. These sessions afforded opportunities for the exchange of ideas, information, cooperation, and addressing the needs of end-users that contribute to enhancing ICT accessibility. Through these focus groups, Mada sought to support the needs of ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities in Qatar and the region, by exchanging experiences and research methods, discussing research topics related to digital accessibility, and increasing communication and cooperation between solution developers to serve the end-users whose participation is vital, especially in the accreditation and approval of all stages of related projects. Mada always seeks to prioritize the opinions of end-users with disabilities, listen to their basic needs, and work to meet them under global best practices and standards of access.

ICT Adoption Survey

To obtain accurate results in the field of digital access, Mada urged the main entities and institutions in the culture and education sectors in the State of Qatar to participate in a questionnaire on the mechanisms and policies of digital access. The results allowed the Center to determine the rate of ICT accessibility in the State of Qatar, which was aligned with the national digital access rate that measures the application of international standards by digital platforms in the country. This helped decision-makers to have a thorough understanding of the application of ICT accessibility in Qatar in key sectors, thus, they were able to know areas that need to be developed.

Besides, the results will help contribute to achieving the Qatar Vision 2030 and support the country's efforts at the global level in fulfilling its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This agreement clearly defines the importance of access to digital content and the need to implement minimum international standards in this area, furthermore, to enhance access of persons with disabilities to new information and communication technologies and systems, including the Internet.



Research and Publications

Mada pays special attention to research and publications related to ICT accessibility and has endeavored to drive the advancement of leading industry practices at the global, regional, and local levels.

The Center has conducted researches to analyze the reality of digital access and developed resources and solutions for ICT accessibility in accordance with the latest trends, best international practices, programs, and policies.

In dedication to its efforts in this field, Mada implemented many types of research and technological projects under Mada Innovation Program to coincide with the International Day of Disability. These are in line with the SDGs 2030 and the center's strategy in providing technological solutions in the Arabic language and supporting resources in the field of assistive technology, furthermore, developing an ecosystem to achieve inclusivity in digital access for persons with disabilities and the elderly.



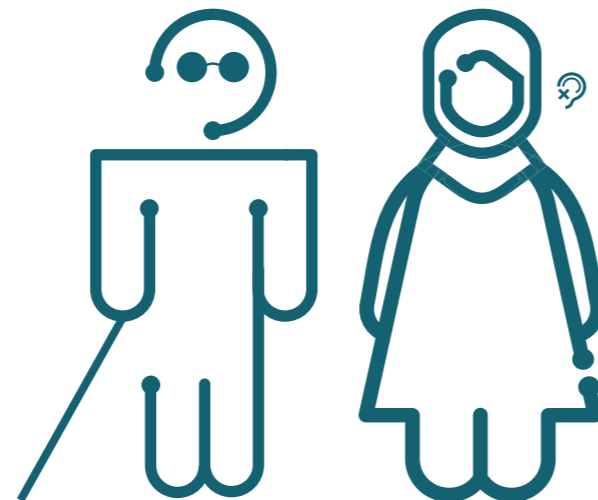
Research Projects

The research project “Phrase-based Platform for Sign Language” for Deaf communities

The “Arabic Sign Language Framework”, hopes to provide an integrated technological environment for the automated processing of Qatari and Arabic sign language through developing the first coding system for Arabic sign language in addition to an automated translation platform from Arabic into sign language. This project will benefit deaf people, sign language researchers, mobile software and application developers, as well as experts, teachers, students, and sign language interpreters in Qatar and the Arab world.

Software and mobile application developers will also benefit from the automated translation service from the Arabic language to the sign language encoding platform to develop applications and programs using virtual characters, to support digital content in Arabic sign language.

This project will provide the first video database containing a thousand sentences in Qatari and Arabic sign language recorded in videos and additional data to describe movements, facial expressions, and eye movement, allowing researchers, teachers, students, and sign language interpreters to search for Qatari and Arabic signs through a unified index that adopts an advanced coding system.



The research project “Unified Arabic Braille” for Blind communities

The aim of the “Unified Arabic Braille Project” is to develop the Arabic Braille Tablet to be used in assistive technology programs to introduce and integrate Braille. Furthermore, to develop the first eight-point Arabic computer Braille table to support Braille abbreviations in mathematics and science. This project will benefit blind and blind-deaf people, experts, teachers, students, software developers and assistive technology manufacturers in the State of Qatar and abroad.

The “Unified Arabic Braille” project will also provide the first programming library “Liblouis” that relies on the Arab Braille Table to develop writing and reading skills in Braille for blind and deaf-blind people. The program will create the first specialized website for the unified Arab Braille, which will contain detailed references on simple Arabic Braille and abbreviations, mathematics, science, and the eight-point Arabic computer Braille, in addition to simplified lessons to learn to read and write in Arabic Braille.



Model Disability Survey

Mada conducted the Model Disability Survey an internationally accredited survey by the World Health Organization. Mada's efforts in collaboration with the Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics highlighted the implementation of this survey in the context of working on a strategy to promote the integration of persons with disabilities into society. This survey focused on the study of the prevalence of disability in the country, through a public survey that provides detailed and accurate information about the lives of the people of Qatar in general and the difficulties they face in their lives regardless of their health condition or disabilities. This survey distinguishes its provision of detailed and accurate information and high-quality awareness data, comparable results at the international level, used to identify the required interventions. Furthermore, the survey is not limited to persons with disabilities. This allows Mada Center, the government, and private institutions with a relationship with Qatar, to define future directions and prepare well for projects related to persons with disabilities.

Best Practices

As part of its efforts to empower strategic partners to increase digital access in key sectors, Mada Center worked with international experts to develop resources for best practices in Accessible Retail and Indoor Navigation Technology. Mada utilized these resources to build local capabilities as part of its efforts to increase the accessible public places throughout the State of Qatar through the use of these digital solutions. The resources were made public through a series of training workshops and are available on the Center's website.



Nafath Magazine

During 2019, Mada has conducted 4 publications of "Nafath", a quarterly magazine in Arabic and English. Nafath aims to be the leading source of information for the latest trends, innovations, and developments in artificial intelligence, devices, and digital solutions related to ICT accessibility.



Starting from its role as an information window around the world, Nafath magazine highlights pioneering work in providing solutions and services of ICT accessibility and AT locally, regionally, and globally.

Nafath magazine provides the latest data and information on the most recent developments and news in the field of technology, digital solutions, smart applications and their uses in education and theoretical and scientific knowledge. Furthermore, it highlights all that has emerged from the new fourth industrial revolution that has generated a huge scientific and knowledge renaissance for humanity, in general, and for people with functional restrictions, in particular, by increasing inventions in various practical fields and facilitating human life in the era of modern technology and artificial intelligence. The magazine's articles were written by Mada's experts with the collaboration of several international experts.



Local and International Relations

Events Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Mada Center participated in the twelfth session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. The Center presented a working paper during the event organized by the Qatar Mission to the United Nations in New York on the role of assistive technology in assisting people with Autism.

The paper included a review of the services provided by Mada Center to help develop assistive technology and solutions to develop the skills of people with autism and disability and ensure equal opportunities for their participation in the digital community. It highlighted the scope of those services and consultations provided as they were not only limited to Qatar but include the Arab world.



Symposium on Artificial Intelligence, Art and Inclusion



Mada Center took part in the symposium organized by Hamad bin Khalifa University on whether artificial intelligence was truly capable of making art. This event was organized by the HBKU's College of Science and Engineering and the Institute for Translation and Interpretation at the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. It included two-panel discussions and hosted keynote speakers from the "Fire Station: Artists' Headquarters" and Mada Center in Qatar. The second-panel discussion sheds light on how "AI" can change the experience and participation of people with disabilities in art. The discussion covered case studies to demonstrate how persons with disabilities can utilize artificial intelligence to gain experience and perception of contemporary art forms.

Furthermore, at QITCOM 2019, Mada Center displayed a live 3D printing of an art piece from the Museum of Islamic Art in Qatar, to highlight the possibilities of the latest technologies in providing a comprehensive artistic experience. This rich discussion was concluded by providing views on the future characteristics of artificial intelligence's contribution to art development.





The 7th International Scientific Conference on Information and Communication Technologies and Access for Persons with Disabilities (ICTA) - 2019

Mada had interactive participation at the 7th International Scientific Conference on Information and Communication Technology and Access for Persons with Disabilities, which was organized under the sponsorships of the Arab League Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization "ALECSO" with the support of "E-Access" Laboratory for Research in Information and Communication Technology and Electrical Engineering at the University of Tunis and the Tunisian Association. The conference focused on areas related to assistive technology and digital access, with a special focus on technology-enhanced education for persons with disabilities.

Four working papers reviewed the digital access policy in the State of Qatar and Mada's accomplishments during the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) session entitled "Policies for Digital Access to Information and Communication Technology in the Arab World". Additionally, there was a presentation of Mada's Innovation Program, Tawasol Symbols, and Accessible user interface component repository during conference sessions, seeking to provide the best technological solutions in the field of ICT accessibility to support persons with disabilities in all fields in the Arab world.



Accessible Europe Forum

As part of Mada's keenness to cope with local and international events, the Center attended the "Accessible Europe" forum, held in Saint Julian, Malta, from 4 to 6 December. The participants discussed the future of ICT accessibility in reducing inequalities, furthermore, exchanged views and experiences on ways to advance the ICT accessibility Program in Europe.



The "Accessible Europe" forum was organized jointly with the European Commission (EC) and hosted by the Malta Parliamentary Secretariat for Persons with Disabilities and Active Aging (PSDAA). The event was a platform for sharing access experiences with elite participants from around the world through dialogues related to emerging issues in the field of digital access and sustainable development. Furthermore, to prepare all groups of society, including persons with disabilities, to benefit from the information and communications technology by enabling Capability Building in digital skills, to contribute to its development at various levels locally and internationally. The forum was also an opportunity to exchange the best global standards and practices.



Career Village Initiative - 2019

Mada participated in the Career Village initiative launched by Qatar Career Development Center (QCDC), which targeted students from all levels, parents, and vocational and academic advisors and specialists. The initiative was organized by the Multaqa (Education City Student Center) at HBKU from February 26 to March 1, 2019. The initiative included representatives from leading companies and institutions in the State of Qatar from the education, finance, business, energy, industry, transportation, communications, health, security, media, and culture sectors. Mada's participation was demonstrated by raising awareness of digital access to transportation and communication technology among students and institutions and focusing on the importance of technology in all fields, especially in inclusive digital education. Mada has strived to deliver its message and introduce the importance of universal digital access and assistive technology, in addition to the need to achieve inclusiveness and enable access for persons with disabilities. The Center also highlighted the significance of employing creativity and innovation in all fields, this was in conjunction with the goals proposed by the initiative, which focused on educating students about the requirements of the Qatari labor market, introducing them to the best fields through which they can serve the state and the Qatari community and keep pace with developments in education and vocational work.



World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)



Mada joined the World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva through a workshop entitled “Digital Technologies and Accessibility”, which represents the largest annual gathering in the world for the “Information and Communication Technology for Development” society. The event was organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), UNESCO, and the United Nations Development Program, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTD), in close cooperation with all participants in the WSIS work plans. The forum was an effective mechanism for coordinating multi-stakeholder implementation activities, exchanging information, supporting knowledge, and applying best practices to advance development goals.

The Center concentrated on digital technology and digital access, to emphasize its keenness to develop accessible digital platforms in line with the Qatar National Vision 2030 and SDGs. Moreover, it highlighted the importance to understand the needs of local institutions to promote their accessibility, localize innovations in the Arabic language, and make them more inclusive.





Partnerships with ICT Industry leaders

To keep pace with the most recent digital revolution represented by the Fourth Industrial Revolution that combines the inclusive digital transformation of all assets and the integration of the digital system, Mada Center endeavors to bridge the digital divide and ensure the digital inclusion of persons with disabilities. Mada's efforts emanate from its firm belief in the importance of empowering persons with disabilities and involving them in the process of sustainable development, achieving the best levels of access in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and in line with the Sustainable Development Goals 2030.

As the pioneer of innovation in ICT accessibility solutions in Arabic, Mada had (3) strategic partnerships with ICT industry leaders including the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA), Ooredoo, and Microsoft Qatar. This came under the Center's strategy to develop technology solutions in the Arabic language for the Arab world and in its commitment to increase the number of free resources available for developers, innovators, and researchers in the field of assistive technology. Furthermore, to facilitate and support the process of assistive technology innovations directed to people with disabilities and the elderly, and the development of the ecosystem for innovation in this specialized field.

ICT accessibility Partnerships

Mada's participations were distinguished by its effectiveness and diversity locally and internationally through several events, activities, exhibitions, and conferences through which Mada signed several strategic partnership agreements and memberships from a group of pioneers in the field of ICT accessibility aimed at achieving development, innovation, sustainability, and inclusiveness at the local and global levels. These partnerships reinforced Mada's excellence in this field.



Doha International Conference on Disability and Development



The Mada Center participated in the Doha International Conference on Disability and Development, which was held under the patronage of Her Highness Sheikha Moza Bint Nasser, to bring a fundamental change in sustainable social development plans, to include all groups, especially persons with disabilities.

In this regard, Mada collaborated with the Qatar Foundation for Social Work to make the conference accessible, including the application, the website, and all its materials and contents. Mada had trained the organizing team and provided it with the recommendations and consultations needed to improve accessibility of their Mobile App and the website as per the international guidelines set by WCAG 2.0, 2.1 A and AA. After the evaluation and successfully meeting the criteria, the Center, as the ICT access partner, granted a digital access accreditation for the conference website.

Moreover, Mada provided voice captioning technology as a service during the opening and closing of the ceremony to enable people with disabilities to live full experience during the conference. An accessible customer service area that included the latest assistive technology devices was allocated, to enable people with disabilities to participate effectively and to facilitate the registration process for them. Additionally, Mada participated in the accompanying exhibition to shed light on its work in the field of digital access and building an inclusive Qatar through providing assistive technology solutions in Arabic.



QITCOM 2019

Mada Center had effective participation as ICT accessibility partner at QITCOM, which was initiated with the honor of His Highness Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani and many high-ranking local and international personalities.

During QITCOM, Mada Center received several ministers and ambassadors who added a unique advantage to Mada's pavilion, where the latest digital access technologies were discussed. Furthermore, Mada successfully presented the best technical solutions to empower persons with disabilities and the elderly, through promoting ICT accessibility at the local and international levels in the fields of education, culture, and innovation.

Moreover, Mada had sponsored the ICT accessibility path through the Hackathon organized by the "Digital Business Incubator" on the innovation stage platform at QITCOM 2019. The Center also carried out many events and activities, the most important of which was awarding the winner of the Mada-ALECSO Prize for Applications for Persons with Disabilities.

Mada's participation culminated in success through holding and signing several strategic partnership agreements with the most significant local and international institutions that would enhance Mada's role as a center of excellence in digital access on the local and global scene.



Seed Stars Summit MENA 2019



With the intention to expand the framework of collaboration at the regional level, Mada Center participated in the Seed Stars Summit - MENA 2019, where the two emerging companies that qualified for the finals were announced, namely Talov and Lazarillo. Through cooperation with Seed Stars, Mada seeks to enable persons with disabilities and the elderly to participate in cultural life and ICT in line with Arab identity. This partnership is an essential step towards promoting digital inclusion and further building a technology-based society that meets the needs of people with Functional Limitations. Startups have been chosen to participate in the Seed Stars - MENA region through their success in presenting an innovation or an innovative idea that will be evaluated for the final stage of the competition. The event will be held at the Seed Stars Summit in Switzerland in April 2020, where the winner of Mada's ICT Award and other awards will be announced.



International Memberships

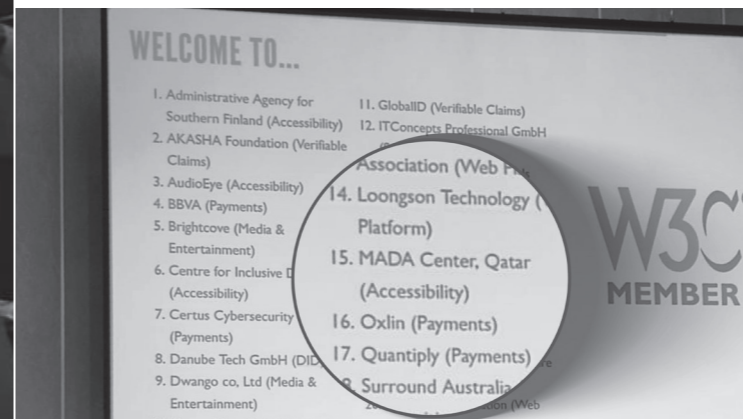
Mada Center worked hard to enhance its partnerships and memberships to several leading international organisations with the objective of collaborating to achieve digital inclusiveness across ICT in various fields. Mada has obtained membership in several institutions including global unions, international initiatives, and associations specialized in digital access to information technology communications, the following being the most notable:



World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)

Wide Mada Center is a member of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), the only Middle Eastern organization concerned with the Arabization of digital access platforms and adapting them to serve the Arab world. The Center is a key member of the organization's planning and advisory committee, a working group which is primarily concerned with website systems and is responsible for establishing international guidelines and regulations on which websites are designed. Mada as a center of excellence for innovative solutions in ICT accessibility in the Arabic language, participated (through the digital access team) in technical meetings that specialize in issuing standards and rules for accessible digital content, and worked to provide these standards in Arabic and ensure all technical terms and concepts are correct.

The participants were divided into several teams concerned with designing, creating, and supervising websites. Mada was directly concerned with the digital access team specialized in developing guidelines for accessing websites. The Center will work continuously to intensify efforts to implement the best solutions for web access and adapt them to suit persons with disabilities, and to provide further solutions to localize and Arabize innovations and standards that reduce the gap between persons with disabilities and digital content on various platforms.





International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

As part of its commitment to ensuring that Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) are empowered by the digital transformations brought about by the New Industrial Revolution, Mada Center has joined the United Nations' International Telecommunications Union (ITU), the world's leading ICT international body, which brings together more than 700 sector members and affiliates from industry, government, the NGO sector, and academia.

The significance of this membership includes the specialized sectors that Mada Center is concerned with as a center of excellence in digital access in the Arabic language and through which it strives to bridge the digital divide and ensure digital inclusion of persons with disabilities. Mada's efforts come out of its firm belief in the need to empowering persons with disabilities and involve them in the process of sustainable development and achieve the best levels of access per the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals 2030.

This membership promoted the concerted efforts of Mada Center and the International Telecommunication Union to achieve common goals and work together to expand the scope of utilizing ICT in the areas of Capability Building, digital inclusion, ICT applications, and innovation, to achieve universal ICT accessibility and make it an ideal experience for persons with disabilities in Qatar and the Arab world. Furthermore, Mada seeks to implement the best standards for training people concerned with digital access locally and internationally, as well as discovering more solutions to localize innovations and technological research, and raising awareness of the importance of ICT and its accessibility in the Arabic language, moreover, applying standards that reduce the gap between people with disabilities and the digital contents on various platforms.

The Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs (G3ict)



Continuing with the importance of providing digital access at high-quality levels to ensure digital access for all, Mada Center has been a member of the International Association of Accessibility Professionals "IAAP" of the Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs concerned with full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Mada Center held a partnership with the Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs, the advocacy initiative launched by the United Nations Global Alliance for Information and Communication Technology and Development in cooperation with the Secretariat of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to monitor the implementation of digital access policies in Qatar.

Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA)



Mada Center has partnered with the Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA), an American non-profit organization that includes manufacturers, resellers, and providers of assistive technology devices and services. This stems from Mada's belief in the importance of technology tools manufacturers to accurately input the Arabic language, to help Arab speakers wherever they are.

Mada in the Global Media

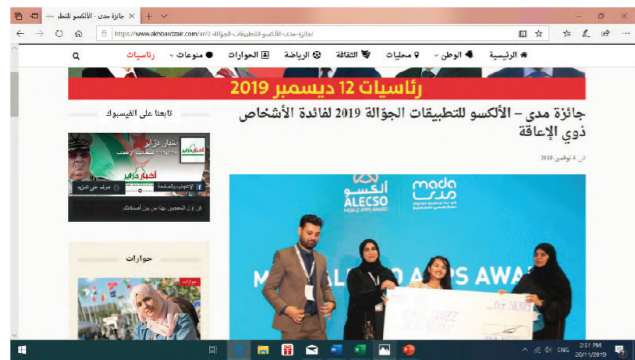


Qatar

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ITU Internal only: List with Participation Status

Name	ITU-R	ITU-T	ITU-D	CATEGORIES
Ministry of Transport and Communications, DOHA				MINISTRY
Communications Regulatory Authority, DOHA				ADMIN / REGULATOR
MADA - Qatar Assistive Technology Center, Doha			X	OTHER ENTITY
Ooredoo, DOHA	X	X	X	ROA
Qatar Satellite Company, DOHA	X			ROA



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2019

DARE Index Digital Accessibility Rights Evaluation Index DARE Index Score: 75/100 Global Ranking: 5 Regional Ranking: 2 Peer Economic Development Group Ranking: 3 Implementation Ranking: 2 For queries or feedback: Index@ict.org	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key Country Facts Country Laws and Regulations Country Capacity to Implement Country Profiles and Programs Outcomes by Areas of ICT Accessibility and Level of Implementation DARE Index Score Summary News and Events Publications and Reports Country Organizations Involved in Disability and Accessibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MADA Qatar Assistive Technology Center Qatar Social and Cultural Centre for the Blind Qatar Society for Rehabilitation of Social Needs User Guide and References
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Mada Center receives membership of World Wide Web Consortium

Mada Center has received the membership of World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) as the only Middle Eastern organization to localise and adapt digital access and assistive technology solutions to the needs of Arab people with disabilities and is now a key member of the W3C advisory committee.

The membership was received as Mada wrapped up its participation in committee's meetings W3C that primarily specialises in programmes and websites and that is responsible for setting up guidelines, standards and regulations on which websites are designed.

Mada Center, being a centre of excellence in digital access in Arabic, and for its ongoing work to understand and meet the needs of people with functional limitations professionally, was represented by the Digital Access Team at technical meetings on the issuance of standards and rules for accessible digital content.

Commenting on the occasion, Mada Center CEO Maha al-Mansouri expressed pride in the fact that the centre is the only Arab institution to have achieved full membership in the association, as a result of the tireless efforts made by Mada Center to make browsing the web and digital content of digital platforms an ideal experience for people with functional limitations in Qatar and the Arab world.

"The centre's presence in the association is a confirmation of its status as a pioneer in supporting digital and communication accessibility and adapt it to the requirements of people with functional limitations, disabilities and the elderly, and renewing our commitment to raise awareness of the importance of the concept of universal and accessible design, as it urges us to discover more solutions to localisation and Arabisation of innovations and standards that reduce the gap between people with disabilities and digital content on different platforms, in implementation of Qatar's digital and web accessibility policy and the UN Convention on Persons with Disabilities," she added.

At the national level, Mada Center has achieved a digital accessibility rate of 94% amongst government websites, while Qatar ranks fifth globally on the Digital Accessibility Rights Evaluation Index (DARE).

Mada Center is a private institution for public benefit, which was founded in 2010 as an initiative that aims at promoting digital inclusion and building a technology-based community that meets the needs of persons with functional limitations (PFLs), persons with disabilities (PWDs) and the elderly in Qatar. Today, Mada is the world's Center of Excellence in digital access in Arabic.

Through strategic partnerships, the centre works to enable the education, culture and community sectors through ICT to achieve an inclusive community and educational system. The Center achieves its goals by building partners' capabilities and supporting the development and accreditation of digital platforms in accordance with international standards of digital access. Mada raises awareness, provides consulting services and increases the number of assistive technology solutions in Arabic through the Mada Innovation Program to enable equal opportunities for PWDs and the elderly in the digital community. (QNA)

Qatar reaffirms commitment to integrate people with disabilities into society

Qatar has reaffirmed its commitment to work to integrate persons with disabilities into sustainable development, calling for best efforts to support the implementation of the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy.

This came in a statement delivered by HE the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the UN ambassador Sheikha Alya Ahmed bin Saif al-Thani during her participation in an event organised by the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs, on the occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, which falls on December 3 each year.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, President of the 74th session of the UN General Assembly ambassador Tiani Mohamed Pandey, and several member states' permanent representatives and experts.

Sheikha Alya renewed the actions and policies taken by Qatar to integrate persons with disabilities into society and to promote positive perception and recognition of the importance of their contributions to society.

She stressed the importance of productive work in order to achieve self-esteem, well-being and integration into society, pointing out that this is very important to meet the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Qatar uses ICT widely, explaining that this creates a different world for people with disabilities, promotes greater equality and ensures integration into the society, pointed out. The goal is to give people with disabilities access to online services and opportunities, including e-government services, she added.

Sheikha Alya noted the services of Qatar Assistive Technology Center (Mada) provided to people with disabilities, parents and professionals, in terms of the provision of extensive information on assistive technology in both English and Arabic languages, which is the first of its kind in the Arab world.

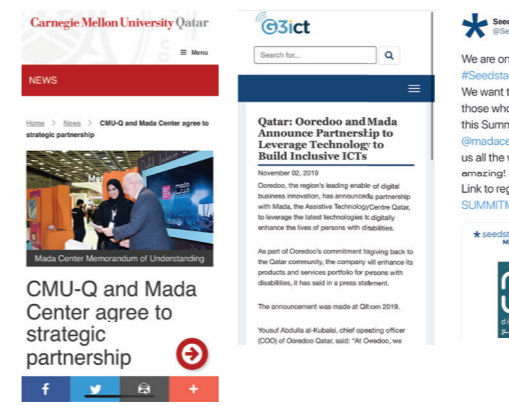
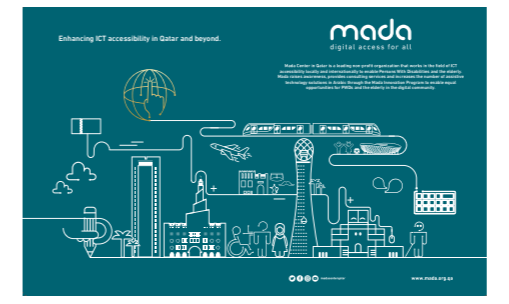
She referred to the international conference which will take place on December 7-8 under the auspices of Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF).

The conference will be held under the theme of "Harnessing the Power of Sustainable Development Agenda to Advance the Rights of Persons with Disabilities," she said.

Sheikha Alya also expressed her hope that the conference would result in the Doha Declaration that will help in forming key international reference in the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the 2030 Development Plan.



HE the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the UN ambassador Sheikha Alya Ahmed bin Saif al-Thani



ITA, Qatar sign pact to develop digital solutions for people with special needs



The Information Technology Authority (ITA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Qatar Assistive Technology Center (Mada) to cooperate in the field of supporting innovations for the development of digital solutions especially for people with special needs.

The MoU was signed by Dr. Salim bin Sultan al-Ruzaiqi, CEO of ITA, and Maha bint Mohammed al-Mansouri, CEO of Qatar Assistive Technology Center.

The cooperation between ITA and Qatar Assistive Technology Center (Mada) to cooperate in the field of supporting innovations for the development of digital solutions especially for people with special needs.

According to the MoU, the two parties will cooperate in building and promoting a culture of developing smart digital solutions in both countries as well as building the capacity of individuals through training programmes, competitions and direct support for entrepreneurship and research on the development of digital solutions to meet the needs of both countries.

Cooperation also extends to exchanging experiences between incubators in both countries, facilitate the entry of the local market of the two countries, and provide consulting services for small and medium enterprises in technology, user interface design and user experience.

연말뉴스

한-카타르 장애인보조공학기기 협력 MOU 체결식

기사입력 2019.10.13 오후 8:09
최종수정 2019.10.13 오후 8:11

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First Public Working Draft: Accessible Name and Description Computation 1.2
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