

Qatar Foundation workshop preps teachers and students for success at international science fair

Doha, 5 October 2013 – Qatar Foundation Research and Development (QF R&D) recently concluded an informative workshop entitled ‘Scientific Research Skills and Engineering Design’, which aims to equip educators with practical tools to prepare students for success at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair.

In collaboration with the Supreme Education Council in Qatar and Intel Corp, the five-day workshop was held at the Qatar National Convention Centre last week. The event saw the participation of 58 teachers from across the country, representing 41 schools for boys and girls.

Specialists from the SEC’s Curriculum Standards Office also attended the workshop to gain valuable insight on how to coach students for science fairs, and facilitate the highest standards in scientific research.

During the event, experts in the field of education presented a number of engaging sessions on the importance of student involvement, as well as the most effective techniques and methods for scientific research. Organisers were keen to share meaningful advice on ways to manage, organise, and coach students for international science fairs.

This workshop reflects Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development’s commitment to providing educators with the necessary training to motivate their students in the study of science. It is also in line with the organisation’s objective to ensure that the younger generations receive the support they need to develop innovative research capabilities and gain an appreciation for science, technology, engineering, and math.

Dr Ayman Bassil, Head of Research Training at Qatar Foundation’s Research and Development Division, said, “Our primary goal is to train students in Qatar for participation in both regional and international events and to nurture a new generation who is capable of representing the nation to the very highest standards in scientific research. Our efforts are in keeping with Qatar Foundation’s mission and commitment to build a knowledge-based economy and to unlock its human potential at all levels.”

Dr Asmaa Almuhanadi, Head of Research Skills at the SEC, emphasised the significance of the collaboration between Qatar Foundation and the SEC.

“This workshop is at the heart of the crucial work we carry out, which is to expand upon the knowledge of our teachers, so that they can transfer these requisite skills to their students,” she said. “The workshop is characterised by its global appeal, especially since it focuses on participation

in the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair, which our students will take part in when it is held in the US in May 2014.”

Mr Mazen Farraj, Corporate Affairs Group Manager at Intel for the Gulf region, was very pleased with the collaboration and the potential it brings Qatar.

“Intel Corporation is very excited about the promise of helping the students of Qatar raise the bar when it comes to sciences. We have gathered our most experienced and qualified trainers to conduct the workshop with the objective of truly delivering value to the participants. We want to thank Qatar Foundation and the SEC for their leadership and vision in this initiative. Intel believes this is a solid first step in the journey to the Intel ISEF (Intel International Science and Engineering Fair) where we hope to see the State of Qatar shine.”

Dr Almuhammad added, “We are preparing our students to become stars of science in accordance with Qatar National Vision 2030, which focuses on the importance of scientific research and enhances the potential of youth in this area.”

Emad Al Khamayseh, from the **Office for Standards in Scientific Research** at the SEC, said he was pleased that participants were able to gain an in-depth understanding of the key themes within scientific research, innovation, and engineering design. He also underlined the criteria adopted by the SEC in the selection of participants for the workshop.

“To begin with, we chose to engage scientific research coordinators at schools in Qatar, so that they could transfer this information to their colleagues and apply those teachings in the academic research they oversee,” said Mr Al Khamayseh.

As of next week, the Supreme Education Council will offer a new comprehensive workshop in scientific research, with the aim of providing educators with another opportunity to benefit from fundamental skills that they can transfer to pupils and teachers.

Ashraf Ghandour, a teacher at Khalifa Secondary School for Boys, said, “It is widely believed that Engineering Design is all about drawings on paper that are yet to reach the manufacturing stage. However, we discovered during the workshop that it is in fact about identifying a problem that exists in a particular product and conducting scientific research to create a design that can solve existing flaws and defects.”

He added, “We will be guiding our students to work on scientific research that will be adopted into an engineering design, and help them find ways to improve upon the current design of products by making them even more efficient.”

The workshop also included a detailed explanation of the conditions required to participate in the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair, which is the world's largest pre-college science competition and provides an annual forum for more than 1,500 high school students from over 70 countries who attend to showcase their independent research.

The successful workshop culminated in a closing ceremony that drew attention to the commitment and contribution of educators. Certificates of participation were presented to attendees by Dr Nabeel H. Al-Salem, Executive Director of Outreach and Communications at Qatar Foundation Research and Development, Dr Asmaa Almuhanadi, Head of Research Skills at the SEC, and Mazen Farraj, Corporate Affairs Group Manager at Intel for the Gulf region.

This will be the first time Qatar signs up for the competition in the US, although it has entered numerous regional competitions in Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Palestine.

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Qatar Foundation – Unlocking Human Potential

Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development (QF) is a private, non-profit organization that is supporting Qatar on its journey from carbon economy to knowledge economy by unlocking human potential, for the benefit of not only Qatar, but the world. Founded in 1995 by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Father Emir, QF is chaired by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser.

QF's work encompasses education, research and community development. World-class universities are brought to Qatar to help create an education sector in which young people can develop the attitudes and skills required for a knowledge economy. At the same time, QF builds Qatar's innovation and technology capacity by developing and commercializing solutions through key sciences. The Foundation also works to foster a progressive society while enhancing cultural life, protecting Qatar's heritage and addressing immediate social needs in the community.

For a complete list of QF's initiatives and projects, visit <http://www.qf.org.qa>