

## ROTA USES TECHNOLOGY TO TRANSFORM EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN

*Unprecedented Learning Opportunities for Students and Communities in Need*

**Doha, Qatar, 14 June 2016:** Reach Out To Asia (ROTA), in collaboration with the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), is transforming the lives of students and teachers living in the remote Swat region of Pakistan through its mobile learning services project.

Providing access to electronic learning materials, the Aptus system, designed by COL, consists of a server that enables students and teachers to access educational resources on chargeable tablet devices, which can be used on a local server without having to connect to the internet.

Since the start of the project, the unique education initiative has been successfully implemented in Grade 8, 9, and 10 classrooms across the Swat region, providing students with a flexible learning system that includes drills and practice exercises, tutorials, and project and problem-solving based learning opportunities.

Dr. Mohamed Ally, Senior Researcher at Athabasca University in Canada, along with local researcher Mr Raffat Khaqan, recently conducted a study to determine the effectiveness of the mobile learning intervention and obtain feedback from students and teachers.

Results from the study revealed there has been a marked improvement in academic performance. Additionally there has been a substantial improvement in teaching methodology, with local teachers now delivering their classroom lessons in a more engaging and innovative way.

Mr. Irfan Udin, one of the teachers trained to use the Aptus system, said: “Before we had the tablets I would only be able to read a chapter from a book before asking questions. With the tablet I still read to students, but they can watch a video relating to the book, which gives them an overall better understanding of what we are reading and learning in the classroom.”

“It is remarkable to see the educational transformation of students and teachers who now have access to the mobile learning aids. The Aptus system offers students the opportunity to learn in an innovative way and also improve their technology literacy by using digital learning platforms,” said Mr. Essa Al Mannai, Executive Director of ROTA.

“Results from the recent study to evaluate the effectiveness of the mobile learning services have revealed there has been a tremendous progress in academic performance. The Aptus system has been proven to improve students’ ICT skills,

which, in turn, better prepares them for the technological era we are living in,” Al Mannai added.

Professor Asha Kanwar, President and CEO of Commonwealth of Learning, said: “The Aptus system is a wonderful example of how innovative ICT combined with strong educational materials can increase more equitable access to learning. As an organization with expertise in open and distance learning, COL is pleased to see the beneficial impact of the project, which not only supports learning on a local scale, but also contributes to global sustainable development efforts. We are very grateful to be able to work with our esteemed partners ROTA and Qatar Foundation in bringing this project to students and communities in need.”

ROTA is a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF) and through the Aptus system is helping to empower youth through education.

COL is an intergovernmental organization created by Commonwealth Heads of Government (CHOGM) to encourage the development and sharing of open learning/distance education knowledge, resources and technologies. Hosted by the government of Canada and headquartered in Burnaby, British Columbia, COL is the world’s only intergovernmental organization solely concerned with the promotion and development of distance education and open learning. COL is helping developing nations improve access to quality education and training.

**-ENDS-**

### **About ROTA**

Reach Out To Asia is a non-profit organization launched in December 2005 in Doha, Qatar, by Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani. Operating under the auspices of the Qatar Foundation, ROTA is committed to providing high quality and relevant primary and secondary education, encouraging relationships among communities, creating safe learning environments and restoring education in crisis affected areas across Asia and around the world. ROTA envisions a world, where all young people have access to the education they need in order for them to realize their full potential and shape the development of their communities.

For more information about Reach Out To Asia, please visit: [www.reachouttoasia.org](http://www.reachouttoasia.org)

### **About Qatar Foundation**

#### **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. Qatar Foundation was co-founded in 1995 by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Father Amir, and Chairperson 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>