



## ROTA set to start Adult Arabic Literacy Program

**Doha, Qatar, 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2013:** Inspired by the success of Adult English Literacy initiative for low skilled migrant workers, Reach Out To Asia (ROTA), Qatar's leading education and humanitarian not-for-profit organization, is all set to start a pilot Adult Arab Literacy skills course.

The program sponsored by Qatar Petroleum, will give 50 migrant workers the opportunity to develop their ability to effectively communicate at a basic level in Arabic in their daily activities.

Prior to becoming trainers, the volunteers attended a one-day training program organized by ROTA, and provided by *Mr. Mohammed Al Haj Mahmoud Taleb* from Sheikh Abdulla bin Zeid Al Mahmoud Islamic and Centre (Al Fanar). The training covered practical information relating to teaching Arabic, communication across language barriers, and global migration. At the end of the training, Literacy Trainers were given a personal copy of the RAAL curriculum.

Starting this month, the pilot Arab literacy skills course will be conducted over a period of 6 weeks, and for this ROTA has partnered with Qatar University and Fanar to develop a model for teaching basic adult Arabic literacy to low-skilled workers employed at Qatar University and ROTA.

*"The ROTA Adult Arabic Literacy Program is a fruitful way of supporting workers to enhance their ability in order to achieve personal goals and improve life opportunities. We hope that by participating in the RAAL program, participants will develop higher aspirations and an increased sense of wellbeing and empowerment,"* said Mr. Essa Al Mannai.

The RAAL initiative is a result of a survey carried out by ROTA, which suggested that 55 percent of low-skilled workers did not have any Arabic literacy skills, while 45 percent of workers appeared to have a fair degree of spoken Arabic with no reading or writing skills.



A key feature of the program is that it offers opportunities for young people in Qatar to take part in an experiential service learning opportunity, developing their skills and knowledge as RAAL Literacy Trainers and Champions.

*One of the trainers, Mr. Mohammed Al Haj Mahmoud Taleb, said "the special cooperation and partnership between ROTA and Sheikh Abdulla bin Zeid Al Mahmoud Islamic and cultural Center (Al Fanar) is well translated today through this training on the principles and rules of teaching Arabic offered to the non-Arabic speakers. We consider this step very important as it helps these volunteers to be totally integrated in the society and deal positively with the Qatari culture which would help them to communicate with others with respect and appreciation".*

*From his part, Bernard Oconor, one of the trainees, described his experience as useful. He said: "This training was very useful and valuable. We talked about the methods and curricula in general as well as about the potential difficulties that may face some of the non-Arabic speakers. After my 3-year experience in teaching English, I always feel that new things are always there to be learnt, and this is also what I am feeling in learning the Arabic language. I am very excited towards the opportunity of volunteering with ROTA and I wish to keep in touch with them even after the end of this project".*

*"We hope the lasting legacy of the program will not only help trainers and learners putting their new skills to good use, but also have an increased sense of community, with members of different sections of society having had the opportunity to interact together in a meaningful and positive way," added Mr. Al Mannai.*

To be known as ROTA Adult Arabic Literacy program (RAAL), this Arabic literacy initiative aims to educate workers coming from diverse languages and cultural backgrounds to attain the fundamental skills of modern standard Arabic, and develop the students' desire and commitment for continuing learning Arabic.

The Initiative also aims to build strong bridges of cultural communication, and to promote tolerance among peoples and civilizations through a motivating environment that makes volunteers and students the center of the educational process.



*“Adults today need a higher level of literacy to function properly, because society has become more complex and low skill jobs are disappearing. Better education can help people to be more productive in the society and enable them to bring more resources to the family which in turn will boost the economy in general”, says ROTA Executive Director, Mr. Essa Al Mannai.*

For more information about all Reach Out To Asia’s programs in Qatar and 11 Asian countries, visit [www.reachouttoasia.org](http://www.reachouttoasia.org) or the ROTA Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/reachouttoasia](https://www.facebook.com/reachouttoasia)

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**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.

Further information on Reach Out To Asia can be found at:

[www.reachouttoasia.org](http://www.reachouttoasia.org)

**About Qatar Foundation**

Founded in 1995 by His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, Emir of Qatar, and chaired by Her Highness Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser, Qatar Foundation is a private, non-profit organization committed to the principle that a nation’s greatest natural resource is its people. The headquarters of Qatar Foundation are located within its flagship project, Education City. A fourteen million square-metre campus, Education City is home to numerous progressive learning institutions and centers of research, including branch campuses of six of the world’s leading universities, plus a cutting-edge science and technology park. Qatar Foundation also works to enhance the quality of life in Qatar by investing in ‘Education, Science and Technology and Community Health and Development’.