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## Qatar Foundation International's *Madar Al-Huruf* Arabic Learning App Among Top 40 World Summit Award Winners

*Madar Al-Huruf, 'The Wheel of Arabic Letters,' represented Qatar among 40 winners of UN- based World Summit Award, showcasing the world's best practices in digital innovation*

QATAR / SALZBURG – March 22, 2017: The World Summit Award (WSA) has announced its 40 mobile innovation winners, selected from 451 global nominations. The WSA Winners 2016 demonstrate the richness and diversity of mobile content globally and prove how mobile innovation can improve society. Qatar Foundation International (QFI) is pleased to have its open education application, “Madar Al-Huruf,” selected as one of the winners, representing Qatar in the WSA.

Madar Al-Huruf” means “wheel of letters” in Arabic. The wheel is a valuable language tool and mobile app that introduces users to the Arabic alphabet. Anyone who is unfamiliar with the Arabic alphabet can write his or her name by matching English letters and sounds to their Arabic phonetic counterparts. The wheel has been used to connect students all over the world with the Arabic language and demystify the intimidating characters to ease Arabic learning and communication.

The first iteration of Madar Al-Huruf was a physical wheel, created and designed by VCU Qatar graduate, Muneera Al-Badi, for QFI's Arabic language and Arab Culture program. Al-Badi also developed a user guide and worked closely with US-based teachers of Arabic in Washington, DC, and Tucson, AZ to finalize the wheel's design and a mini unit for use in the classroom, making the wheel a truly global and collaborative endeavor.

“When I thought about students learning Arabic, I felt that creating a tool to help them write their names would assist teachers in connecting them to the new language since a person's name is his or her identity. I then began working on Madar Al-Huruf, with QFI's support,” said Muneera Al-Badi, Madar Al-Huruf Designer. “It is my first design to be patented. As a Qatari, I'm proud to have designed an educational tool that helps spread my native language.”

Due to the success and demand of the physical Arabic wheel, QFI worked with Al-Badi and partnered with Qatar Computing Research Institute (QCRI), a nonprofit multidisciplinary computing research institute founded by the Qatar Foundation, and later with MindGrub, LLC, to adapt the design into an [iOS](#) and [Android](#) compatible application. Designed to accommodate both novice and expert users, the app now includes sound to hear the spoken letters so that beginners can hear and sound out the Arabic alphabet. Additionally, the app now allows the user to customize and share their name in Arabic as a digital sticker online through social media.

The WSA winners were selected by a Jury of international ICT experts in two democratic rounds. Each UN Member State is eligible to nominate one product per category for the World Summit Award. This way any nomination results from a national pre-selection prior to the international WSA Jury and guarantees a fair and democratic process.

**-ENDS-**

About Qatar Foundation International

Qatar Foundation International (QFI), LLC, is a U.S.-based member of Qatar Foundation (QF).

QFI operates as both a grant-making organization, and a convener of thought leaders on issues related to global and international education, open education and education technologies as they intersect with the three core QFI programmatic areas: Arabic language and Arab culture, STE(A)M (STEM plus the Arts), and Youth Engagement.

QFI inspires meaningful connections to the Arab world by creating a global community of diverse learners and educators and connecting them through effective and collaborative learning environments —inside and outside the classroom.

Through our activities, QFI is committed to providing K-12 students in Qatar, the Americas, and the United Kingdom (UK) with the intellectual, communicative, and cultural competencies that will enable them to be engaged global citizens.

Visit [www.qfi.org](http://www.qfi.org) to learn more.

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#### About the WSA

The World Summit Award is a global initiative within the framework of the United Nations World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). WSA is the only ICT event worldwide, that reaches the mobile community in over 178 countries. WSA highlights digital content improving society and focusses on local content with global relevance.

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