

N A F A T H

Issue 6 | 2018

92%

Qatar e-Accessibility Score



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assistive technology center



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Innovation Program
presents:
-TawasolApp
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GREAT 2018
The 2nd Edition of
Mada's Annual
Conference

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In preparation for the
2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar
Mada AT Center reviews accessibility
in 2018 FIFA World Cup

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Qatar Assistive Technology Center “Mada”

Qatar Assistive Technology Center “Mada” 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 meet the needs of persons with disabilities (PWDs) and the elderly in Qatar. The center also works to implement international best practices in the field of assistive technology (AT), and develop a sustainable model for the provision of AT and digital inclusion services for PWDs in the State of Qatar.

Our Vision

All Persons with a Disabilities in Qatar reaching their full potential through Information and Communication Technology.

Our Mission

Unlock the potential of all Persons with Disabilities in Qatar by enabling both individuals and their environment through Information and Communication Technology.

Mada Center serves persons with all types of disabilities including visual, mental, hearing, physical, learning disabilities and various types of disorders along with the elderly and their families.

Mada prioritizes three key areas; education, employment and community. The center also provides

advisory services and policy recommendations to various stakeholders and organizations.

We are committed to promote innovation and the development of new solutions for persons with disabilities, particularly by creating relevant Arabic Language Assistive Technologies, to better serve local and regional needs. We work closely with important AT manufacturers and relevant worldwide private sector entities to develop innovative Assistive Technology solutions and services. Our organization also conducts relevant research studies to keep Qatar and the Arab region updated on the latest breakthroughs and international best practices.

“Nafath” is a quarterly publication issued by Mada Center to be a major source of information on the latest trends and innovations in the field of assistive technology. Our quarterly publication is an information platform and also a discovery tool: we want to bring together the huge domestic and regional appetite for Arabic Assistive Technology products and services with the latest technologies and trends in the whole world.

Like everything we do, we highly appreciate and encourage your contributions and feedback, as readers’ opinion is most valuable to us. This periodical is available in print and digital forms, as well as other accessible formats upon request. ■



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MADA Innovation Program presents:
«Tawasol App» an Arabic Augmentative and Alternative Communication Solution



There is a significant lack of Arabic Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) solutions for people with disabilities, which negatively affects their ability to communicate verbally. “Tawasol App” is one of the first Arabic-language solutions for AAC that uses “Tawasol Symbols” which is an Arabic/English dictionary containing the most commonly spoken and written words represented by symbols and illustrations. “Tawasol Symbols” is a project aiming to improve communication skills for people and children with communication or reading and writing difficulties.

“Tawasol App” gives people with communication difficulties and children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) the ability to express themselves and build sentences in Arabic through a wide range of symbols.

Mada’s Innovation Program has provided funding and subject-matter expertise to Royablity inc. through its Entrepreneur Grant to develop “Tawasol App”.

The current English AAC solutions did not provide the cultural contexts nor the language necessary for the Arabic-speaking Qatari community. On the other hand, the “Tawasol Symbols” provides a great opportunity for non-verbal communication that is culturally proportional to the Qatari and Arabic user. Merging these symbols into a single application enhances the ability of non-verbal people to communicate with others.

The app allows users to add symbols and vocabulary as they need, making it ideal for a wide range of people with disabilities, including adults such as trauma victims and those who temporarily

need a communication tool. This application supports the use of alternative buttons and other access tools for mobile devices, making it easy to use for people with severe physical disabilities to communicate with their family members.

This application was developed by following the international guidelines governing AAC methods, as well as transforming speech models into alternative and enhanced communication by following the principles of verbal behavior and the analysis of applied behavior. This application emerged as one of the distinctive solutions in the Innovation Zone during the Gulf Region Education Assistive Technology Conference (GREAT 2018). The application is expected to have a significant impact on persons with disabilities and their families because it gives a voice to people with communication difficulties who need an alternative Arabic-speaking communication tool in Qatar and the Arab region.

This application is designed to be highly adjustable so that teachers and families of persons with disabilities are able to customize it to meet the communication needs of their children at home, at school or elsewhere. Providing a comprehensive Arab communication tool for people with disabilities will help them engage in society by talking to others and expressing themselves. By enabling them to communicate, people with disabilities can get better opportunities to learn and work.

Using the Arabic language to provide a technical solution consisting of appropriate words and symbols will facilitate and improve the lives of people who are unable to communicate in English. In addition, the expressive language resulting from this application can be understood by family members, relatives, the school and the community who speak the Arabic language.



«QAR Money Reader» a Banknote Recognition App for People with Visual Impairments

A Mada Innovation Program Initiative



Identifying the value of banknotes is one of the main challenges faced by people with visual impairments. Such challenges make it hard to exercise basic daily activities, like needing to seek assistance to determine the value of such bills and to disclose sensitive personal information (financial, identity details, etc.). This is an area where recent advancements in assistive technology has contributed

towards developing suitable solutions for this community to be able to independently have control over financial aspects of their lives.

As part of the Mada Innovation Program, the Qatar Assistive Technology Center (MADA) has funded and supported Innovation Factory Ltd. through its Entrepreneur Grant to develop a Qatar specific banknote

recognition application to serve people with visual impairments.

This application recognizes and read Qatari banknotes and supports both Arabic and English. This solution is designed for smartphones and uses the camera to recognize the value of banknotes using image processing technology. The application can read the front and back of the banknotes from a distance of 15-50 cm. When the banknote is recognized, the smartphone vibrates, and the paper value is pronounced.

The app is currently available in both the Apple App Store and the Android App Store (Google Play), which is able to recognize multiple currency values and collect money to give the grand total. For example, if a user tries to recognize the value of six banknotes on the table with different values, the application will be able to perform an automatic calculation and notify the user of the total amount recognized.

The application is currently fully operational without the need for an Internet connection, which allows the user to use it anywhere. This application was one of the distinctive solutions in the innovation Zone during the Gulf Region Education Assistive Technology Conference (GREAT 2018).

Traditionally, assistive technologies for the blind and visually impaired community tend to be in the form of expensive dedicated devices (e.g. braille readers, document magnifiers, computer screen readers, etc.). The QAR Money Reader App intends to offer a solution of a daily life problem by incorporating the assistive technology solution into a mainstream device. This makes the solution available to much wider range of users ultimately having a significant impact within the blind and visually impaired community.

The QAR Money Reader App has the following features:

- Identify all Qatari banknotes from both sides
- Calculate the total number of banknotes automatically
- Arabic and English speakers
- Identify any banknote within one second
- Does not require Internet connectivity
- Supports different input methods: move one finger or three fingers on the screen, shake the phone and more ways to make it easy to use
- Supports pre-set vibration patterns based on the value of the banknotes
- Supports the identification of folded banknotes
- Uses automatic flash in the dark environment
- Voice and vibration alert when recognizing banknotes' value

Qatar e-Accessibility Score for Government Websites reaches 92%



As part of the implementation of the digital and web accessibility policies and the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities, MADA Assistive Technology Center has launched a project that focuses on enhancing e-Accessibility of government websites since 2016. In the same year, Mada's e-Accessibility team provided consultations

and conducted evaluations and training to more than 35 government entities.

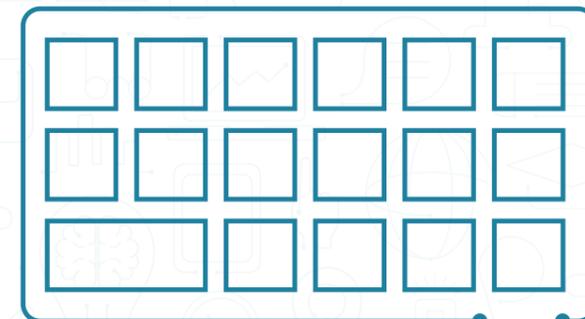
As a result, to date the average score of government website score has risen to 92 %. The work initially faced some challenges as some parties did not have a clear idea or an in-depth understanding of the concept of e-Accessibility. Despite the challenges, Mada

has seen positive results from government agencies that had the means and were interested in applying e-Accessibility standards and requirements to make their websites fully accessible to people with disabilities.

Mada's Accessibility team is currently working with 42 government entities to achieve full compliance with accessibility standards for websites and mobile applications. Ultimately, the project seeks to reach a stage where government sites apply the criteria that qualify them to obtain e-Accessibility accreditation from Mada. Website owners in Qatar can easily search for their level of accessibility through the internet accessibility monitor in Qatar available at the following link: <http://qatar.checkers.eiii.eu/en/benchmarking>

Mada's website Accreditation Program is a unique and valuable way to achieve the center's strategic objectives, design barrier-free websites and ensure a positive user experience for all. In order for government agencies to obtain Mada's e-Accessibility accreditation badge to be placed on their website, they must undergo training and receive consultations from Mada on e-Accessibility. They must also adhere to the standards and recommendations and achieve a score of 95% or higher on the e-Accessibility scale and 90% for ease of use.

Mada will conduct an annual audit on the websites of those entities after obtaining the badge in order to ensure that the international e-Accessibility standards continue to be implemented.



The Gifted Mursi Seraj: A Success Story in the World of Technology

"Mursi Seraj is a 15-year-old student, who is very passionate about technologies and robotics. He had a dream to become a pioneer in the field of enabling low-functioning autistic children to communicate effectively through technology. With Mada's support, he developed applications for NAO Robot to improve communication skills in autistic students. Mursi was one of the main keynote speakers at Mada annual conference GREAT 2018."

In the summer of 2017, Mursi Seraj started a month-long tenure at MADA Assistive Technology Center. The initial purpose of this tenure was to complete an academic project that had failed to satisfy the criteria set forth by the school.

However, the project- the first version of which had taken an entire school year to do -was completed in two weeks. This project was a model of a smart house prototype made using electronic components. While the original project report was roughly three pages in length, the revised version he completed at MADA was five times that length, and vastly more comprehensive. The main reason he was able to complete this report so quickly -when it took him half a year to finish it the first time- was that even

though this was work, it definitely didn't feel like it. "The relatively relaxed environment at MADA helped motivate me since I could pretty much work at my own pace with no real pressure", Mursi said.

The social robot project was one of the projects that Mursi worked on. He found it lying around and asked if he could work with it, but at first he had no real clue exactly what he was going to do with it. Shortly after that, an autistic child visiting MADA was drawn to the robot and entered Mursi's office to play with it. Mursi decided to humor the boy, programming the robot on the fly to respond to his questions and actions. And in doing so, he saw an opportunity, this child was substantially more

comfortable talking to the robot than he was to other people. So why not use this?

However, two major challenges were in his way. The first one was that Mursi only had two weeks of time. The second was that programming the robot to play the role it was meant to play as a 'social trainer' of sorts required dabbling in functions and areas of the programming suite that he was going to be using for the first time and therefore knew absolutely nothing about.

"The experience was definitely incredibly fun, again primarily due to the relaxed atmosphere but also because none of the work I did there felt like work", Mursi said. It was more akin to playing a game or doing a bit of creative writing. As a result of these conditions and with the support of Mada, Mursi was able to produce a highly satisfactory prototype. The aim of this prototype was to demonstrate the potential of using humanoid robots in order to help autistic children deal with some of the greater setbacks their condition tends to come with (weak eye contact, low attention span, etc.).

Mada gave Mursi the opportunity to present his prototype in an International Scientific Conference ICTA'18 held in Oman in 2017.

"My experience in Oman was enjoyable- I got to see a new part of the world, and was able to see just how much impact my work had on the assistive technology community in the Middle East. I was able to discuss the project with high-level scientists who were able to provide me with feedback on the project from angles I had not anticipated as well as suggestions I wouldn't normally have thought of", Mursi mentioned.

His contributions to the Oman conference would lead him to headline the GREAT conference in April of this year, where he was able to see the general impact of the work he did not just on the scientific community, but the on the PWDs as well. Something he was waiting with bated breath to find out about.

As a headliner and a speaker on the conference's Innovation Panel, Mursi was also able to speak about his own experience with autism as a high-functioning individual and how it informed the design choices present in the social robot program he was working on.

"Overall, my experience working for MADA was definitely one of the most positive ones I've had, and I would gladly repeat it if given the chance", Mursi concluded. This realistic experiment has shown that mainstream schools are frequently neither fully educated nor equipped to deal with the needs of an autistic child and provide them with the necessary support. ICT accessibility and AT play vital role in the education of children with HFA, by providing a secure learning environment in which stimuli remains stable.

The impact of technologies on gifted high functioning children is crucial to enhance educational opportunities, develop work skills, enrich daily living experience and promote community inclusion. Finally, we must always remember that the participation of high functioning children with autism in the general education environment is essential.



GREAT 2018 The 2nd Edition of Mada's Annual Conference

Under the patronage of H.E. Mr. Jassim bin Saif al-Sulaiti, Minister of Transport and Communications, the Qatar Assistive Technology Center "Mada" held the Gulf Region Education Assistive Technology Conference "GREAT 2018" from April 23 to 25. The second edition of the Conference aimed at providing a platform for the exchange of information and expertise by bringing together experts, users, frontline workers, innovators and producers to promote innovative technology, best practices, implementation strategies, research and education in the area of accessibility and assistive technology in the region.

The conference opened its first day with speeches of a distinguished group of speakers and experts, as well as a special session on innovation, which was marked by the merger of young innovators and specialists in scientific research. The opening also included an exhibition of the latest technology innovations, an innovation theatre that offered a platform to showcase selected solutions and innovative assistive technology

initiatives. The innovation area highlighted the Arabic assistive technology solutions developed with Mada's support as part of Mada's innovation program. Fourteen local and international exhibitors were involved in providing the latest technology solutions in the assistive technology display area. Mada area at the conference witnessed the launch of eight new best practices and projects in various areas to develop the ecosystem for people with disabilities such as education, employment and society through assistive technology, information technology and digital access.

In its second and third day, the Conference discussed the latest innovations and technological and educational trends with the aim of educating officials, policymakers and specialists from various fields about assistive technology and its usage and the latest developments in the field of universal accessibility. A large group of international experts in assistive technology participated in various workshops and panel discussions that were well attended.

1100 
Participants

55 
International and
specialist experts

64 
Specialized
workshops

14 
Exhibitors at the AT exhibition
and Innovation Zone

11 
Arabic innovative assistive
technology solutions launched

8 
New best practices
for persons
with disabilities
launched

67 
AT Super Users graduated from the capacity-building program

The conference concluded with a ceremony held under the patronage of H.E. Minister of Transport and Communications, who presented a special award for talented student Mursi Seraj as the youngest innovator at the GREAT 2018 conference. The closing ceremony also witnessed the graduation of super users and the announcement of winners of the universal accessibility and e-Accessibility awards.

Universal accessibility and e-Accessibility awards

Mada has worked throughout the year with government agencies to increase digital accessibility which reflects Qatar's and the Ministry of Transport and Communications commitment to the National e-Accessibility Policy and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of persons with disabilities, in addition to ensuring the achievement of the Qatar National Vision 2030. In this context, Mada AT Center has allocated a first-of-its-kind award, which was announced at the end of 2017 and has been opened for competition for those who meet the terms of participation. The closing ceremony of GREAT 2018 witnessed granting the e-Accessibility award to the best Websites that meet international and Mada's standards. Following a continuous process of monitoring and evaluation of indicators, three entities have qualified for the final phase. His Excellency Minister of Transport and Communications and Mada

CEO presented the award to the winners. The Ministry of Interior came in the first place and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in second place, and the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic affairs in third place. Mada, in collaboration with the Accessible Qatar initiative, presented a special award for the Museum of Islamic Art, which achieved the highest score for universal access in 2017.

AT Super Users Graduation

Mada center has worked to build the capacities of relevant stakeholders through the launch of the capacity building program for Super Users with academic accreditation from Qatar University. This program provided extensive training on the basics of assistive technology and its multiple uses in support of persons with disabilities in the areas of independent living, education, health and employment. 67 participants in this program graduated at the closing ceremony of the GREAT 2018 conference. The project was implemented in cooperation between Mada and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Hamad Medical Corporation and Qatar Foundation for Social Work represented by "Shafallah". This initiative made a great progress in increasing the number and improving the quality of assistive technology workers to reach an inclusive society that offers equality for all its members.

Dream, Believe and Act

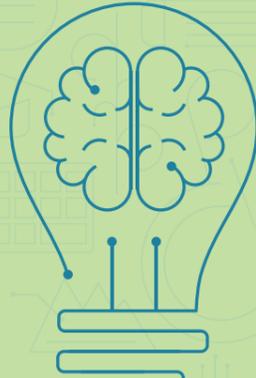
These three concepts have totally changed my life when I've come to the question: "How shall I believe that my disability should be a trigger and never be considered as an obstacle?"

When I was a child I used to hear that my disability was a kind of a barrier. I used to hear: "Lobna, beware! Mind trying to stand up otherwise you may fall and break your hand or foot... Lobna, don't worry! mom or dad will help you to eat, drink and of course get dressed..."

Being fed up with playing the role of a barbie, I started to indulge the game of those miraculous

hands; I tried to be more reliant on myself: My biscuit was in my plate and I tried to hold it with my lips, my teeth cut it into pieces or halves. Waw! Only by that way I was able to feel how delicious it was! Yes, there is no one telling me now to hurry up.

I grew up with wonderful parents who brought us pencils and so many pens and pictures to color. I took the pencil and started to manage it with my mouth. I started to draw, to write and even to have futuristic vision of me, being an architect but I've chosen English literature.



Lobna Smida is an international expert in technology and accessibility. She is the representative of the International Foundation for Rehabilitation in the Middle East. Lobna was a keynote speaker in various international assemblies as a member of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), focusing mainly on the use of technology to promote digital inclusion of persons with disabilities.



This was how I went through my books, did my homework and after my graduation, my new favorite hobby was to type using my nose on my smartphone or my laptop.

Afterwards, the internet connected to my house, and I roamed all the sites with no mouse. Indeed, this time my nose and my chin were my tools. It was and still is amazing to use programs to conquer the realm of your dreams that I couldn't make surely on any sheet. I started to know people, develop social programs which I shared with other persons as well as my experience, tried to assist families with vigilance. I conducted my advice for parental education and tried to get out from my room to explore other places in different parts of the world. My target was and still is to enhance parents not to be ashamed of their children, to encourage to look at them delightedly and proudly and share with them the adventures and the stories of success.

In 2007 I got the master's degree, and in 2009 I received an invitation to speak and to participate At the National Forum on Education and Social issues, I talked about the impact of the Internet and its importance in our lives.

As a true dreamer and believer, I have more and more faith in my abilities, and I have been searching the Internet for any tool that might help me develop myself. So, I learned a lot about information technology, created my own blog and channel on YouTube, and started posting and sharing videos, comments and articles via social media.

In 2015, I was chosen to become president of the International Telecommunication Union for persons with disabilities in the Arab region under the auspices of the United Nations. Through the Internet, I presented a project called "Disability and Technologies" for the International

Telecommunication Union to compete for the World Summit Award on the Information Society in 2016, and I was invited to speak at international forums and conferences as well as being chosen to be the "Ambassador of Smart Tunisia".

At the Edinburgh meeting in 2016, I received the necessary votes to become vice president of the International Rehabilitation Foundation for the Arab Region and North Africa. I am now an international activist who is trying to pave the way for present and future generations so that they can fulfill their dreams.

I was really impressed with the attention and care provided by of the State of Qatar to engineers and researchers to present new proposals and ideas to participate in the presentation of strategic plans and ways to improve the lives of persons with disabilities in Qatar. These plans and ideas were discussed and reviewed during the GREAT 2018 Conference under the patronage of the Ministry of Transport and Communication. I have always thought that this is what we needed from awareness and tools to build a healthy relationship between government and society, which is one of the best practices we are missing in our Arab world in this area.

I was impressed by the services provided by Mada center, and I was also impressed by the way the center team worked. I am grateful for their invitation to participate in this conference, which provided me with the opportunity to consult and exchange views and experiences with experts and assistive technology professionals from around the world.

I am honored to be one the regular contributors to Nafath newsletter, one of the leading newsletter in the field of ICT and e-Accessibility.



“Access to Employment” Program A Successful Model for Persons with Disabilities to Qualify for Employment in Accordance with International Standards

What is this program?

Access to Employment Program is a personalized employment program with a real difference that it helps persons with disabilities reach their true potential and become successful members of society. The program was a supportive, encouraging, and inspirational journey for each candidate who joined this ground breaking Mada initiative.

The main purpose of the program is about empowering, supporting, mentoring, counseling and training People with Disabilities in the belief they can become job ready. This inspirational program helps the candidates have the confidence to believe they can achieve some goals and aspirations. This was achieved with the help and guidance of employment specialists who trained and mentored candidates by developing their skills through support plans and helping them prepare a portfolio of learning and skills. Each session was followed up by action plans and how to overcome personal barriers.

What does the program offer?

The accredited training was provided in a supportive and encouraging training style to enable the participants to learn in a comfortable climate that would take into consideration their disability and individual learning needs. The subjects covered were Basic Computer Skills, Administration and Customer Service and Communication Skills. Each graduate received certificates on each module and developed a portfolio of learning and development activities.

Each candidate was assessed by Mada Assistive Technology Specialists to ascertain what AT equipment they required and what adaptations were necessary. The assessments were detailed and appropriate support plans were adhered to so that regular reviews of AT equipment for the candidate needs were maintained. Each candidate also undertook medical appointments to make sure they were able to become job ready and document any additional concerns.

Disability types of participants:

53 persons with different disabilities joined the program.



The Impact of the program on the graduates

The impact of the Access to Employment program for persons with disabilities has been instrumental in helping the graduates improve their lives for the better. With the continued support from Mada employment specialists and assistive technology assessors, the graduates now have a promising future ahead where they believe they are worthy and valued. For the first in their life their hopes and dreams of gaining meaningful employment has become a reality. Graduates from the program are being offered jobs by Ministries and other employers in Qatar.

Through the Mada intervention of Assistive Technology for some graduates this was the first time they used a computer and each aspect of computer training and training resources was explained step by step. The AT equipment was selected according to the disability requirement and an assessment report was made based on what the individual capabilities were and what equipment could be modified to suit their needs. It became apparent very soon into the AT assessment that those individuals were capable of joining the program and with the right support,

encouragement and understanding they would improve their knowledge and gain new skills.

The Graduates have benefitted enormously from personalized one to one training and mentoring. They were supported every step of the way by the trainer, Employment Specialists, Assistive Technology Assessors for their individual needs by appropriately. For most of the graduates this program was a unique intervention by Mada.

The biggest change in the candidate was enhanced confidence and self-belief through the training and mentoring with the Mada team and it had a significant impact on their confidence and they felt empowered to make a positive difference to their daily lives and for the first time have much better career prospects. This increased confidence and self-motivation was very inspiring for their families too who for the first time began to believe that their son or daughter does have a chance of a meaningful job and a positive future ahead.

The program has proven that PWDs can reach their true potential with the right support, encouragement, interventions according to the needs of the disabled person. It has also encouraged the families to believe their son or daughter can realize and reach their true potential. Having a disability should not preclude you from living your life. However, for some serious disabilities there are other options available, but it depends on the type of disability and the individual concerned.

Graduation Ceremony

On February 15, 2018, a graduation ceremony was held for graduates of the first and second phases of the program. The purpose of the ceremony was to celebrate the 53 graduates who successfully completed the Mada Access to Employment program. This was an excellent opportunity to promote this program in the presence of His Excellency Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa al-Thani, Prime Minister, Minister of the Interior and other prominent figures, who presented the graduates with certificates and prizes. All the graduates were very excited at the graduation ceremony, as this was the first time in their lives that their achievements were appreciated and acknowledged. This was an unforgettable day for their families and for Mada team members who were proud of all the journey the graduates made through the program.

Assistive Technology and Hearing Impairments Success Stories



Jawaher is a 25 years old Qatari woman with hearing hardness, she is a high school graduate from deaf school from 2006 and since then she was attending training courses and events at The Qatari Center of Social Cultural for the Deaf. Aisha is a 20 years old Qatari young woman also with hearing hardness, she is also a high school graduate from Audio Education Complex. She is a friendly and sociable person who strives to work hard and develop her skills. They both joined Mada's employment program on October 2017 to benefit from the special and individualized training program offered by certified trainers and specialists with help of the necessary assistive technology in order for them to become able to get a job and realize their aspirations.

Aisha and Jawaher were both committed to training hours and very enthusiastic about developing their computer, customer service and communication skills. Their needs for assistive technology were initially assessed by MADA experts who recommended the use of FM system, phone amplifier, pebble watch and Mada Reader/Writer.

These technological solutions provided by the Mada Center have had a significant impact on Aisha and Jawaher. These solutions enabled them to identify different sounds,

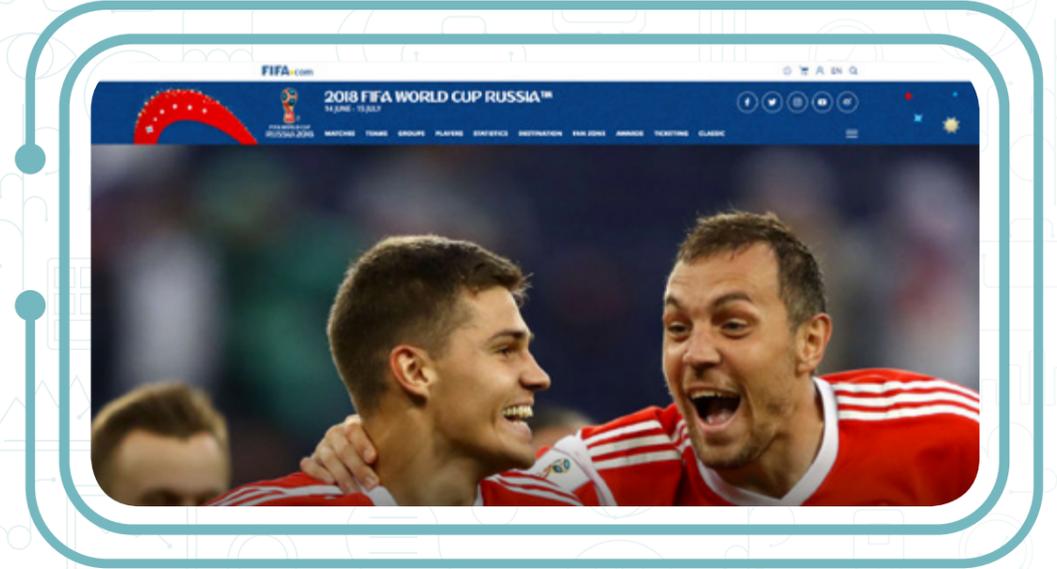
such as the sound of the phone ringing and made them feel more secure as they can recognize emergency alarm in buildings. Some devices provided them with the ability to amplify and eliminate noise from different sounds which made it possible for them to communicate with others without having to use a sign language interpreter. Moreover, Mada Writer/Reader gave them the ability to write texts and reports without misspellings as well as to read various texts.

Using this technology and with the support of the sign language interpreters, trainers and the Mada councilors, Jawaher was able to benefit greatly from the training program and her engagement during the sessions was perfect. Now Jawaher is more confident and optimistic about her future. She said: "This program has changed my life, now I have excellent work skills and job ready".

Aisha was able to gain newfound knowledge and skills on this program, as she saw this training as a real opportunity to improve her life. She set her personal goals about what she would achieve on this program and she succeeded in every aspect of the program. "She is a pleasure to work with and has a promising future ahead", the program team said.

In Preparation for the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar

Mada AT Center reviews accessibility in 2018 FIFA World Cup



Qatar Assistive Technology Center “Mada” participated in a delegation formed by the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy to study the Russian experience in organizing the FIFA World Cup in 2018. In accordance with its specialties, which include ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities, the center participated in this Delegation as an observer. Technology is of great importance to help ensure accessibility in all its forms for the international sports events. The organization of the World Cup 2022 in Qatar will include the use of the latest technology and assistive technology solutions to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities and others to the events of this tournament.

The accessibility observation forum consisted of professionals, disability organizations and people with disabilities that represented them. The focus group representing the State of Qatar was on a mission, and therefore had a clear plan for its work, which included reviewing, monitoring and reporting on accessibility at the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia.

The whole point of this program was to learn from 2018 and make 2022 even better for people with disabilities. The areas of accessibility covered were; transportation, FIFA venues, restaurants, built environment and cultural experiences.

The daily itinerary allowed the team to experience all aspects of being in Moscow to experience the World Cup. The group travelled to Moscow having a

pleasant experience in the accessible Domodedovo airport. There was clear signage everywhere in the airport to direct people with disabilities. There was also an intercom where you can call for assistance. The staff at the airport was very helpful, they assisted people with disabilities through the entire journey in the airport to the accessible shuttle bus waiting in the pickup area of the airport.

This was the first year FIFA had fully implemented accessibility into Football stadiums. The group met with a representative from FIFA explaining all the accessibility features in the venue. After reviewing and experiencing a football match, the group thought the football stadium was accessible for the most part, with toilets and seating areas reserved for persons with disabilities.

Mada’s representative focus was mainly on assistive technology solutions in work to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities to enjoy the World Cup. The delegation met with NGOs concerned with persons with disabilities in Russia to understand the level of support provided to them and different accessibility requirements. These non-governmental organizations have also provided consultations and training to the FIFA staff including organizers and technicians. Based on the role of Mada and its strategic objectives, the center has documented this experience and studied digital and physical accessibility aspects applied in this tournament in order to contribute effectively to providing a fully accessible experience for persons with disabilities in the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

Explore the World of Accessibility in Arabic

The Mada AT Portal features the first of its kind Arabic Accessibility Glossary. This glossary presents key terminology in the field of Assistive Technology and Accessibility. It is an important resource for professionals, users, and families of persons with disabilities.

Visit

www.madaportal.org/glossary



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