Reach Out To Asia (ROTA) is engaged on a globally-important mission in Qatar and across Asia to empower local communities and improve their quality of living. In addition, the numerous volunteers that ROTA deploys on these projects undergo life-enriching experiences themselves. They, in turn, bring this knowledge back to bear on their own families and communities. In this way, ROTA truly reaches out to touch the world and makes changes everywhere it goes.

ROTA's activities are, of course, in line with Qatar National Vision 2030, which emphasizes the need for society's successful participation in developing the country's socio-political and economic facets. Proof of our commitment to reflecting this Vision was the recent Empower Annual Youth Conference, held from 28 to 30 March at the Qatar National Convention Centre, and attended by over 400 youth from around the GCC. The youth are the mainstay of ROTA's ongoing success, and therefore it is important that ROTA both acknowledge their skills and continually add to their skills set.

Empower 2013 aimed to provide opportunities for youth to develop their skills, knowledge, and attitudes in order to equip them to be able to take on future leadership roles in support of ROTA's strategic framework. In addition, it created a platform for youth to express their unique identities and realize their individual capabilities, which will allow them to make a positive contribution to Qatar's youth development goals.

In line with Qatar Foundation, ROTA is working very hard to achieve its core goal of unlocking the full potential of the youth in Asia, providing world-class education and training. By nurturing creativity, innovation, and critical thinking in young people, we can overcome the challenges of our rapidly-changing global home.

We welcome you to the ROTA community!

Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad Al Thani
Chairperson of ROTA
Improving Literacy

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and ROTA have announced a three-year collaboration to increase public access to libraries in Asia and the Middle East. "ROTA is very pleased to be a part of this important agreement. We are confident that this partnership will go a long way in expanding our efforts and create new opportunities that will improve the lives of many people in the quest for a more equal society, and thereby make a difference," said Essa Al Mannai, Executive Director, ROTA.

Global Innovators

Qatar’s first international gathering focusing on technical and vocational education and training (TVE) was hosted by the College of the North Atlantic-Qatar (CNA-Q), in partnership with ROTA, Qatar Petroleum, and UNESCO Unesco. The CNA-Q Global Innovators Conference 2013, which took place from 4 to 7 April at the Qatar National Convention Centre, highlighted the latest research and methodologies undertaken in the field of TVE, and culminated in a major think tank session for TVE leaders in Qatar.

Many Talents

Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Thani is a gifted photographer, adventurous traveler, and a passionate mountaineer, with an aim of climbing the seven highest summits of the seven continents of the world. Sheikh Mohammed’s Everest achievement was in support of sports programs in Nepal with the goal to promote inclusive sports in selected project schools.

Rota brand ambassador Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Thani

ROTA Brand Ambassador Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Thani has returned victorious after becoming the first Qatari to reach the summit of the world’s highest mountain, Mount Everest, at an altitude of 8,848 m. With a team of Arabs that named their private group Arabs With Altitude, Sheikh Mohammed Al Thani was accompanied throughout his adventurous two-month, adrenaline-filled journey in his quest to reach the top of the world by his friends Raed Zidan, the first Palestinian man to ascend Everest, Masoud Mohammadi, Roha Maharrak, who became the first Saudi Arabian woman and youngest Arab to climb Everest, and videographer Elia Sakhly. They are attempting to raise $1 million for Nepalese education projects.

In a congratulatory statement to Sheikh Mohammed Al Thani, Essa Al Mannai, Executive Director, ROTA, said: “This is, indeed, a proud moment for all of us. By reaching the summit of Mount Everest, Sheikh Mohammed Al Thani has taken ROTA to new heights, and has spread its mission and vision, that every individual has the opportunity to make a difference in their community and the world.” Sheikh Mohammed’s Everest achievement was in support of sports programs in Nepal with the goal to promote inclusive sports in selected project schools.

20th iearn conference to take place in july

The 20th Annual iEARN International Conference and 17th Annual Youth Summit will take place from 1 to 6 July at the Qatar National Convention Centre and the Hamad bin Khalifa University Student Center. This year marks the 25th anniversary of iEARN, which was established in 1988.

The overall theme will focus on the use of technology in education to reach out, learn and build a better world together. The conference aims to further develop attendees’ knowledge and skills in the use of ICT for inquiry and collaborative learning.

Students from across the world, and discover and learn more about the Arab/Qatari culture. This conference is open to all educators and students already involved in iEARN, as well as those interested in the field of ICT for education.

In March 2008, ROTA became the representative of iEARN in Qatar. Since then, 45 teachers from 90 schools in Qatar have attended ROTA’s iEARN workshops and participated in a variety of iEARN projects with their students.

"Collaboration and the sharing of ideas and lessons learned are keystones to professional development, which feeds back into improving educational standards," said Prof. Joseph Fair, iEARN’s program has benefited many teachers and pupils, and we hope others will get involved in this worthwhile initiative to build on its successes in Qatar," said Professor Hissa Sadig, Dean of the College of Education, Qatar University.

Youth Leaders Gather at Emperors 2013

The fifth edition of the successful event attended by Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Thani, ROTA Chairperson. The theme was ‘Water Co-operation’, in recognition of the UN International Year of Water Co-operation.

The conference was sponsored by Mckinsey & Co Properties. More than 400 delegates, aged 16 to 26, from Qatar, various Gulf countries, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, and the UK were in attendance.

They participated in a series of half-day service learning activities, with a mix of sports and environmental activities on the third and final day of Qatar’s largest annual youth gathering.

The opening address was delivered by Her Excellency Sheikha Dr Aisha bint Faleh bin Nassir Al Thani, ROTA Board Member.

Youth leaders give Afghans hope

ROTA inaugurated its third school in war-torn Afghanistan recently. In partnership with CARE International Afghanistan, ROTA is implementing projects in three provinces of Afghanistan: Kapisa, Ghazni, and Khost.

The project started in July 2011, and will continue by June 2014. Under this project, ROTA constructed three permanent schools, out of which two schools were already constructed in Khost province and handed over to the education department by March 2012. The third school, in Hazar- e-Sharif district, Kapisa province, is now completed and inaugurated.

ROTA believes that the provision of education to the new generation is of key importance to ensure that people are equipped with the right tools to play an active role in their country’s development.

New ROTA School gives Afghans hope

The opening address at the Empower 2013 Youth Conference was delivered by Her Excellency Sheikha Dr Aisha bint Faleh bin Nassir Al Thani, ROTA Board Member.

"Empower 2013 is indeed timely as it comes at an important moment, a time when more and more people around the world are taking an interest in Qatar," commented Her Excellency Sheikha Dr Aisha.

"It is important to share knowledge and experience to build a strong foundation together for a better future." Empower 2013 delegates had the privilege to have interactive sessions with two leading speakers. Dr Essam Heggy is a planetary scientist in the Radar Science Group at the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory and Visiting Associate in Geology at the California Institute of Technology. Dr Fatima Majahid Ouk is Assistant Professor of International Affairs at Qatar University, and is also teaching at Qatar Faculty of Islamic Studies at Hamad bin Khalifa University.

Tunisia School Renovation completed

Sponsored by Vodafone Qatar, 30 students from ROTA, CNA-Q Return after trip to Western Jendouba to Upgrade school infrastructure

Student volunteers have completed a school renovation project in the western Jendouba Province of Tunisia. During the nine-day trip, the 30-member team from the College of the North Atlantic-Qatar (CNA-Q) carried out stripping, plastering and painting of interior and exterior walls of the school, and laid a new gravel playing field, all in an effort to upgrade the school’s dilapidated infrastructure to create an environment more conducive to the learning experience.

The trip was part of an agreement signed between ROTA and CNA-Q in April 2011. “The volunteers demonstrated an incredibly positive attitude,” said George Tavaela, ROTA Volunteer Program Manager. In February 2011, ROTA launched Reach Out To Arabia to provide assistance to Arabic countries in the North African region.
ROTA by numbers: How ROTA’s investments are having an impact across Asia

Guided by our chairperson, Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad Al Thani, ROTA operates as a non-governmental organization within the framework of Qatar Foundation (QF), a private non-profit organization founded in 1995 by His Highness Sheikha Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, Amir of Qatar, and chaired by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser.

CASE STUDY

ROTA three-year education project
Swat, Afghanistan

An example of ROTA’s international involvement is its three-year project to revitalize education in Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, on the border of Afghanistan. This area has witnessed years of armed insurgency and a series of natural disasters, which have affected communities severely. The ROTA project in Swat was aimed at improving access to quality education through teacher training, as well as enhancing community participation and co-curricular activities. Below is a summary of the achievements of this significant project:

- 280 teachers from 42 project schools trained in required skills
- Refresher trainer for 280 teachers
- 300 members of 42 Parent Teacher Committees (PTC) trained
- Refresher training for 150 PTCs carried out

Improvement in enrolment in project schools 7%
Improvement in attendance 5%
Improvement in math learning 6%
Improvement in English learning 13%
Improvement in Urdu learning 13%
Improvement in overall achievement in school exams 3%
Improvement in hygiene awareness in Year 1 34%
Improvement in personal safety awareness 30%


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JOYCE ALBAUAD, A STUDENT AT THE AMNA BINT WAHAB SCHOOL, REPORTS ON A COMMUNITY SERVICE TRIP TO CAMBODIA, ORGANIZED BY ROTA, FROM 1 TO 8 MARCH

The trip to Cambodia involved four people from ROTA, 23 girls, and six teachers from four secondary independent schools in Qatar, two students from Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar (VCIQatar) and Hessa Alqarni, Director of Student Leadership at VCUIQatar.

We went to the Dubai Islamic School to paint a classroom to turn it into a library. It was hard work, as we had to scrub the walls first, and then paint them, which was messy. Then we had to clean the floors. Afterwards we went back to our hotel, and for dinner we tried Cambodian food, which was not that bad.

We decorated the classroom and added some final touches. The end result was amazing. We played with the kids too, which was so much fun. I really learned how language is not a barrier, as we communicated very well using sign language.

After a temple tour we went to the ROTA school to teach our first class. What an exciting feeling that was! We were supposed to show a video, but there was a power outage. We played traditional Qatari games instead, and they taught us Cambodian games. We also talked about what both our countries had in common. So for our first day as teachers it went well. We ended our day with leadership training.

On the next day we talked about what was good and bad for the environment. The principal teacher's shoes. I can work for my community, and can earn enough to fulfill the basic needs of my family. I’m feeling more independent; it’s a really great feeling to me. Thanks to ROTA for the support.

JIT RANI THARU: Before I was always worried about my future; things like making a living and especially living with dignity were the things that really agonized me. A few years back, I didn’t have any work, and my education was unable to continue my education. That was in the past; now I have my own medical clinic. There are some people who have come up to me and asked me to work for them, but instead of working for someone else, I have started my own clinic in my village.
ROTA’s mission is to extend assistance into Asia, where its strategic geographic location gives it a unique opportunity to support its neighboring countries as they overcome developmental difficulties. In addition, more than 60 percent of Qatar’s own expatriate community is of Asian origin, giving ROTA added insight and understanding of the needs and cultural norms of the Asian people. Below is a selection of ROTA projects to give readers an idea of the breadth and scale of the organization’s international involvement and commitment.

**Indonesia**

ROTA and the Titian Foundation embarked on a project to infuse traditional ceramic and batik arts with the street art movement in Indonesia, which benefited 60,000 local community members.

**Nepal**

ROTA, in conjunction with the Mercy Corps and ActionAid Nepal, strove to improve the quality of education on offer through extensive training efforts, in addition to increasing awareness about disaster risk reduction.

**Cambodia**

ROTA and kCdI, in collaboration with Cambodia-based consultants, sought to promote the Kampot traditional music and dance school for orphaned and disabled children in Kampot province, Cambodia, in order to help enrich the lives of locals.

**Bangladesh**

ROTA recently undertook non-formal education, vocational training, and livelihood support for vulnerable families in the Cox’s Bazar district of Bangladesh.

**International Involvement**

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