



CONTACT: Nawal Al Sheikh  
Communications Manager, SEC

**Guaranteed fun and learning for young and old at the Science Education event**  
***Research clubs and training courses for students and teachers to encourage scientific research***

*Doha, Qatar April 8, 2008:* Children aged between 8 and 12 will get the opportunity to learn science by transforming theories into joyful and fun games during the 10-day Science Education Event being held at the City Center in May as part of the ongoing Ever Wondered campaign spearheaded by the Supreme Education Council. The science laboratory-like theatre combines fun ways of learning science for kids and will feature a number of activities including a mad scientists concert, DIY (Do It Yourself) experiments conducted by the kids themselves, mad scientists press conference, fun scientific workshops, and a three-day open day for parents and their children.

The edutainment event will integrate the three essential science basics – Physics, Chemistry and Biology – into the fun lab and ensure the kids know how to connect electrical circuits; learn how the human body functions or understand the laws and phenomenon of nature, all in a fun and entertaining way. The awareness campaign, which covers many aspects related to research focuses on seven main arenas - Culture, Science, Geography, Art, Nature, Environment and Sports – and is aimed at triggering students curiosity and stimulate their investigative senses, and encouraging them to look for answers through research.

Preparations are underway to launch a website to serve the purposes of the campaign to promote awareness of scientific research. The site contains a lot of information and educational sources directed towards teachers and students interested in scientific research.

Meanwhile, the Education Institute announced the beginning of work on two major projects to support and develop scientific research skills among students and teachers of independent schools; Research clubs for student and Action research for the teachers.

This was mentioned in a press conference held by the Education Institute this morning, which was attended by Ms. Sabah Al Haidoos, the Director of Education Institute, Professor Khalid Al Harqan, the Assistant Director, and Dr. Nawal Al-Sheikh, the Communications Manager at the SEC. Dr. Gene Jongsma, Coordinator of the Scientific Research Skills Development Project, and Mr. Steven Patten education advisor to the Education Institute, Dr. Ahmed Tibi - Professor of Pediatrics at Weill Cornell University and Dr. Nancy Allen,

Coordinator of the Master Program at Qatar University.

### **Research clubs for school students**

The Education Institute recently established a number of training courses for students entitled Developing Young Researchers by a group of teachers. The hands-on training courses are held under the supervision of Dr. Mary Kellet, Chancellor at the Open University in the United Kingdom as well as Dr. Gene Jongsma, Coordinator of the Scientific Research Skills Development Project. The program contains a series of 12 lessons to guide students on how to learn a variety of research principles, acquire inquiry skills, collect and analyze data, and how to report research. As part of the course, students need to complete an independent research project

### **Encouraging action research for teachers**

Training and encouraging teachers to become more reflective and influential on their students through their work is another target of the Education Institute. By conducting action research projects, teachers explore topics of interest to their schools in an effort to improve their teaching and enhance the professional climate of their school.

Teachers at target schools receive customized training in action research and been mentored on how to start their own projects. Those attending the Advanced Curriculum Training workshops receive introductory training in action research and are required to complete projects as part of their course requirements. Over 100 teachers are conducting research covering all disciplines – English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Arabic and Islamic Studies this academic year

The Research Skills Development Project aims to enhance the critical thinking, problem solving, and investigative skills of students as well as improve teachers' skills and competencies in guiding student research and conducting their own professional research. The project has five strategic initiatives: Maximize the development of critical thinking, problem solving, and research skills of students within the context of the Curriculum Standards in the Independent Schools; Increase the opportunities for students to learn about and engage in research outside the classroom (e.g., after school clubs, research centers, inter-school projects, international links) so that they appreciate the opportunities, pleasures and benefits that result from doing research; Develop teachers who have the knowledge, skills, and disposition to engage in research to improve their teaching practices and their school communities; Build community support for research in the Independent Schools and; Provide forums for disseminating, sharing, celebrating and rewarding student and teacher research.

*The Supreme Education Council was established by Emiri decree in 2002. It serves as the primary authority on education policy in Qatar and, with its three Institutes, is leading the effort to transform the nation's schools into a modern, world-class education system. More information about Qatar's education reform effort, **Education for a New Era**, is available at: [www.education.gov.qa](http://www.education.gov.qa).*

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