Mada and Lazarillo facilitate the access of people visually impaired to the Mathaf Arab Museum of modern Art

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Museums can be hostile place for visitors with disability, with buildings that are hard to navigate in a wheelchair, and exhibits presented with few concessions to those with sensory or cognitive impairments. With the right solutions, expert recommendation and user feedbacks, accessibility can be improved to meet the growing need for accessible tourism spots in Qatar.

Out of its commitment to perform its role as ICT Accessibility strategic enabler, and in line with its efforts to enable equal basis for PwDs and the elderly to take part in cultural life via ICT, Mada is developing an innovative project together with the Mathaf Arab Museum of Modern Art in Qatar and Lazarillo. The initiative seeks to allow visually impaired people to visit the Mathaf facilities, using an internal navigation system that is currently in the pilot phase.

Such an initiative is about making art more accessible for everyone, the Lazarillo audible guide and map will help users experience a tour and find their way around the museum. Lazarillo with its free mobile app helps persons with disabilities navigate the physical and digital world of companies and public institutions services, reducing anxiety and saving time to customers with an audible assistance that expertly guides them through their physical space and connects them to services while being at home. Companies Improve the experience of their customers with disabilities in an easy, simple, and secure way.

With such a collaboration, Mada aims to enhance the user experience as visitors are guided through the various exhibits in a way that maximizes the learning experience. This makes museums more efficient, and the experience of the visitor more enjoyable.

Lazarillo is a tool used every day by persons with disabilities to help them navigate their world. It can be also used as a communication platform by uploading content and services to further inform customers about various services and benefits. Lazarillo is

designed for persons with disabilities who use smartphones on Android or IOS systems. It is accessible for people that are visually impaired who use "Talkback" and "Voiceover" screen readers. Persons with visual impairments receive audible directions with information to guide them through their surroundings. For persons with physical disability, it provides information on accessible routes, showing the best way to maneuver without problems.

Today Lazarillo has grown to 180,000 users globally in 45 countries and it is available in 25 languages including Arabic. It has digitized locations of companies and made them accessible including banks, hospitals, University campuses, museums, retail stores, parks, and public buildings. It also launched a newsfeed to promote information in accessible ways which is currently used by several government agencies and companies. [Lazarillo was a winner of Mada – Seedstars ICT Accessibility Award 2020, and if you would like to know more about Lazarillo and this great project go to https://www.lazarillo.app and download the app].

How it will work in MATHAF?

Lazarillo will digitize Lazarillo floor maps, detailing places of interest (services), which allows users to create direct routes to their specific desired service. The app will create a narrative for the exhibition gallery allowing users to have a guided tour. Lazarillo's indoor positioning technology uses Bluetooth Beacons, which are small, autonomous devices that can be detected by smartphones and are easy to install on any surface within a facility. The devices do not need updates, electronic connections, or internet connection. When someone with the Lazarillo App enters the venue, the beacons send an identifier that the app detects. Lazarillo's wayfinding platform will be applied in the MATHAF. The customized solution will be useful for persons with visual impairments who can use the app to guide them using audio messages to find the point of interest and services inside the venues. For persons with physical disabilities, the app can guide them by showing accessible routes within a venue. The interface is available in English and Spanish, and app is adaptable in 22 different languages including Arabic.

This pioneering initiative by Mada Center, in cooperation with Lazarillo and the Arab Museum of Modern Art, will positively reflect on the accessibility of people with visual impairments to the museum, its exhibits and activities. This will promote their inclusion and ensure their greater participation in cultural and entertainment life