



QATAR NATIONAL RESEARCH FUND AND BRITISH COUNCIL BRING FAMELAB TO QATAR

Scientists, Engineers, Researchers and Students with a Passion for Public Engagement Participated in FameLab 2016

Doha, Qatar, 11 April 2016: For the first time in Doha, twelve scientists from Qatar pitched their projects at the world's largest science communications competition, FameLab 2016. The global initiative gave participants with a passion for public engagement just three minutes to present a project of their choice.

A British Council initiative, in partnership with The Times Cheltenham Science Festival and Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF), the event was held in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Qatar University (QU) and Hamad bin Khalifa University (HBKU).

More than 65 students, 45 teachers and 55 researchers applied to take part in the augural event. Divided into two categories, 12 participants made it through to the national final, which was held at HBKU's Student Center in Education City.

After each contestant delivered their presentation before an audience and a panel of judges, Aida Ra'fat was awarded first place in the 'Aspiring Scientists' category, and Ro'aa Adel was the overall winner of the 'Young Scientists' contest.

"FameLab Qatar – in its first cycle – has proven to be an innovative platform for enabling young scientists, high school students, teachers and engineers in Qatar to share their passion for science, technology, engineering and maths with the public," said Dr Abdul Sattar Al-Taie, Executive Director of QNRF.

"We are very proud of the winners, and would like to invite high school students and STEM teachers, as well as scientists and professionals, to participate in this engaging competition in the coming years in order to help achieve the Qatar National Vision 2030," he concluded.

Aida Ra'fat will now go on to take part in the international FameLab final held at The Times Cheltenham Science Festival in June. Ro'aa Adel will participate in the finals at the London International Science Youth Forum (LIYSF), where she will meet with other young scientists from all around the world.

"I was really excited when I got through because I was given the opportunity to meet a lot of interesting people that are working in the same industry," said Aida. "The majority of them are researchers, so it has been a very inspiring experience. It has been a little stressful, but that's normal. I really enjoyed it."

The 'Young Scientists' winner, 16-year old high-school student Ro'aa Adel, believes that her innovative contributions in the areas of science and medicine will make the world a better place.

Frank Fitzpatrick, Country Director, British Council, Qatar said: "I am very pleased about the positive response that FameLab 2016 has had here in Qatar. It is the first time that we have staged this tried and tested British Council competition in any Gulf country. The success that we have had is the fruit of an outstanding collaboration with our strategic partner, Qatar National Research Fund, and our delivery partners, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and Qatar University."

"Being able to talk about science, explain science and make science relevant to young people, and to engage their interest, is an ability and skill that is so important in order to ensure the commitment and success of the next generation of young scientists. I am sure that this will enhance knowledge, trust and understanding between the UK and Qatar," he concluded.

The international competition has been hosted in more than 40 countries since its launch in 2007, and it aims to find and mentor the new voices of science from across the world and engage the public with science, technology, engineering and mathematics, otherwise known as STEM.

Competitions like FameLab 2016 play a key role in incubating an interest in science amongst the broader community. By taking part, budding scientists with a flair for communication can pick up the skills they need to improve the public's understanding of science and inspire the next generation of scientists and engineers.

More information about how to enter Famelab can be found on the website:

<http://www.britishcouncil.qa/en/fameLab>

For more information about QNRF's funding programmes, visit: www.qnrf.org

Image Captions:

Image 1: Participants of the first FameLab competition held in Qatar.

Image 2: Dr Abdul Sattar Al-Taie, Executive Director of QNRF, presents a prize to FameLab winner.

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About Qatar Foundation Research and Development (QF R&D)

Leading Qatar's vision to become an international centre for research and development excellence and innovation, QF R&D is home to Qatar Science & Technology Park, a world-class hub for technology innovation and commercialisation, as well as Qatar National Research Fund, a globally renowned scientific research funding organization.

About Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF)

Driven by the aim of fostering a culture of research in Qatar, QNRF was established in 2006 to advance knowledge and education by acting as a support system for researchers. It is a member within the Research & Development establishment at Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development.

QNRF administers funding for original, competitively selected research and furthers collaborations within academia, the public, private, governmental and non-governmental sectors through effective, mutually beneficial partnerships. While QNRF actively seeks internationally recognised researchers, it is dedicated to funding research that meets the needs of Qatar. For more information, visit: www.qnrf.org

FameLab® is an initiative of the Cheltenham Festivals in the UK. The British Council has license to deliver the competition in 26 countries overseas. NASA has license to deliver the competition in the USA. Since its inception in 2005, over 7000 people working in science, technology, engineering and maths from across more than 30 countries have taken part.

The British Council creates international opportunities for the people of the UK and other countries and builds trust between them worldwide. We are a Royal Charter charity, established as the UK's international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations. Our 7000 staff in over 100 countries work with thousands of professionals and policy makers and millions of young people every year through English, arts, education and society programmes. For more information, please visit: www.britishcouncil.org. You can also keep in touch with the British Council through <http://twitter.com/britishcouncil> and <http://blog.britishcouncil.org>.