



## STARS OF SCIENCE: QATAR LEADS ARAB WORLD'S EMERGING CULTURE OF SCIENCE

*Can The Region Produce The Next Steve Jobs?*

**Doha, Qatar, 17 November 2015:** Science and innovation are fundamental to a country's economic development; a fact that Qatar is well aware of. Taking a proactive approach to its future meant that the country foresaw a time when the world would shift its focus and become less reliant on oil and carbon resources. This resulted in Qatar's roadmap being created in the form of the Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV2030); setting out a clear path for the transition to a knowledge-based economy.

Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF) has supported the nation in achieving its vision over the last 20 years, with a focus on education, science, and research. This support allows the country to continue making successful economic, social, and technological advancements.

Through its countless initiatives and ventures over the course of the last two decades, QF has worked diligently to establish a unique educational environment that aims to promote a culture of research and innovation from a young age. One such initiative is Stars of Science, an 'edutainment reality' TV programme that follows the journey of 12 young and aspiring innovators from around the region attempting to develop and create their inventions at the laboratories of Qatar Science and Technology Park (QSTP) in Doha, a member of QF. The eventual winners and runners up also get a shot at the commercial launch of their products.

Currently in its seventh season, the hugely successful Stars of Science has been credited with serving a serious social purpose by being the region's leading innovation programme that is inspiring a generation of young Arabs to think outside the box and forge their paths as thinkers and innovators.

Stars of Science jury member and General Manager of Qatar Shell Research and Technology Centre (QSRTC), Mr Youssif Saleh, believes, "Stars of Science has made an exceptional contribution to the innovation journey in the Arab World. With the generous contribution from Qatar Foundation, Stars of Science facilitates innovation across the region and improves the scientific climate for young people, enabling them to make better use of their potential by addressing their specific ideas through innovation and creativity. Through this, Stars of Science provides a high level of information to anyone who needs to know about the journey, methodology, and principle behind products that they wish to see on the market."

Initiating Stars of Science is just one of the ways QF is attempting to unlock human potential and contribute to the development of education and technology. Hamad bin Khalifa University, alongside QF partner universities, such as Texas A&M University at Qatar, Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar, Weill Cornell Medicine – Qatar, and other QF members like Qatar Science and Technology Park (QSTP) and Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF), also play a significant role in helping to develop well-educated and highly-skilled graduates.

Additionally, there is Qatar Research Leadership Programme (QR LP), an initiative dedicated to science and research and producing home-grown scientists. Other QF programmes and members only serve to solidify Qatar as a leading centre for research, development, and innovation, such as Qatar Computing Research Institute's (QCRI) work and partnership with Wikimedia Foundation. Established to reinvigorate the Arabic content on Wikipedia, the partnership has resulted in over 6,000 articles to date being published on Arabic Wikipedia.ar.

QF's aim is to not only benefit Qatar but also the region and beyond.

### **Unlocking The Potential For An Arab Steve Jobs?**

In the past, Arab civilisation was known for its innovation and ingenuity, stressing knowledge as an end in itself; and with the recent emphasis on investing in education, science and technology, and countless initiatives, young Arabs have more opportunities to not only further their study in the region but to also stay in the Arab world and seek opportunities on a par with those they may find elsewhere.

The innovators that join Stars of Science are among the young Arabs that are finding opportunities in the region. One such success story is the Qatari Mohammed Al Kuwari, runner up in the fifth season of the programme. Addressing the often-contentious problem of goal verification in football, which is currently subject to referee discretion and therefore human error, Mohammed invented i7 Goal Line Technology.

Since leaving the show, Mohammed has gone on to become the Director of Product Development at World Sport Company in Qatar, gaining the opportunity to meet with international football governing body FIFA executives in the hopes he can promote his technology and implement it at the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar.

The winner of the show's fourth season has gone on to use his experience to help other young Arabs competing on the show. Qatari Khalid Aboujassoum won with his automated cooking pot 'Tahi', a device made to provide convenient smart and high-quality cooking. Inspired by his experience, Khalid also went on to launch an initiative named 'Sanea,' meaning 'maker' in Arabic, it is set up to encourage high school students to pursue their ideas and turn them into tangible products or realities.

Khalid's experience has convinced him that there is a bright future in science and technology awaiting the Arab world. When asked if he envisions a time that the region will be home to

world famous technology and inventors such as Apple Co-Founder Steve Jobs, who ironically was born to a Syrian father, Khaled enthusiastically agrees.

"Of course," says Khalid. "Over the past two years or so, I have had the chance to see what is happening in the Arab world in terms of innovation and entrepreneurship. It is very energising and brings a lot of hope, given what is happening today in the region. At least I can say that I see the light; a huge light at the end of the tunnel. I have seen people building and working on cool stuff that would appeal to the global market. I sincerely believe it is just a matter of time until we see global figures from the Arab world."

Dr Abdellatif Saoudi, QCRI's Managing Director, echoes this sentiment. "Stars of Science has worked hard to highlight and promote that the Middle East is still a source of invention and science for the world. The programme has helped to raise interest in science and technology among the region's youth, accelerating the development of the region's next generation of innovators."

With QF's efforts continuing, it is possible to imagine a future where the Arab world produces its own technology and becomes a major player in the field of science, as it once was.

The live finale of Stars of Science will air this Friday, 20th November, 2015, on MBC4 at 7PM KSA/ 4PM GMT.

**Image Captions:**

**Image 1:** Stars of Science audience watch Qatari journalist and host of the show, Khaled Al Jumaily, during a filming of the live show.

**Image 2:** Stars of Science jury member, Mr Youssif Saleh, who is also the General Manager of Qatar Shell Research and Technology Centre.

**Image 3:** Egyptian-American scientist and mentor on the show, Dr Farouk El Baz (Left) examines season four winner Khalid Abu Jassoum's (Right) healthy cooking device called Tahi.

**Image 4:** Season five runner up Mohammed Al Kuwari talking to school students.

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**Qatar Foundation – Unlocking Human Potential**

Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development (QF) is a private, non-profit organisation that is supporting Qatar on its journey from carbon economy to knowledge economy by unlocking human potential, for the benefit of not only Qatar, but the world. QF

was co-founded in 1995 by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Father Amir, and Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Qatar Foundation's Chairperson. QF's work encompasses education, research and community development. World-class universities are brought to Qatar to help create an education sector in which young people can develop the attitudes and skills required for a knowledge economy. At the same time, QF builds Qatar's innovation and technology capacity by developing and commercialising solutions through key sciences. The Foundation also works to foster a progressive society while enhancing cultural life, protecting Qatar's heritage and addressing immediate social needs in the community.

For a complete list of QF's initiatives and projects, visit <http://www.qf.org.qa>