

ARAB WORLD MEETS STARS OF SCIENCE HOPEFULS DURING CASTING STAGE

Young Innovators Battle for Jury's Approval in Qatar Foundation's Stars of Science Season 9

Doha, Qatar, October 11, 2017 – The race to become the Arab world's next top innovator in Qatar Foundation's *Stars of Science* TV program stepped up a gear this week as qualifying contestants left the casting couch behind. Only those with the most unwavering pitch survived the show's three-episode casting phase.

All competitors who turned out for casting were focused on the same thing: a spot on the show to develop their innovative project. In the studio, the three *Stars of Science* jurors were ready to decide their fate. Longtime juror Professor Fouad Mrad, the brilliant and volatile tech expert, was ready to fire – as always. Also back in the mix was Dr. Abdelhamid El-Zoheiry, the jovial medical doctor who loves giving Professor Mrad grief. Joining them was new jury member, the visionary Dr. Khalid Al-Ali. Prior to a decade-long tenure at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), Dr. Al-Ali was tasked with developing QF's Qatar Science & Technology Park project. The prodigious aerospace engineer-turned Silicon Valley entrepreneur now spends his time between continents having founded his own tech company 'Senseta,' a world leader in big-data analytics and drone-powered solutions.

The first casting episode featured ideas from the biomedical sector, and competitors scored both home runs and strikeouts. Undependable ideas met their predictable demise, including a machine that supposedly detects any disease in the body. With their rivalry reborn, Dr. El-Zoheiry and Professor Mrad found themselves championing different innovators. The episode's biggest hits were a robotic aid for people with paralysis and a unique laparoscopic device that will help doctors perform specialized surgeries.

Under the withering critique of the jury, several ideas also fizzled in the second casting episode, where the jury heard pitch ideas in the information and communications technology (ICT) sphere. An invention meant to monitor library-goers was too 'Big Brother' for the jury. But the panel was full of praise for a handful of projects.

Energy and environment ideas populated the third casting episode. Some, however, filled Professor Mrad with astonishment. After a stroll – and a stern talking-to from Dr. El-Zoheiry – he calmed down and took a more laid-back approach with contestants.

The young innovators will need to channel their nerves a little longer. Next weekend, in the 'Majlis' episode, airing from October 13, the top nine innovators will be announced and the jury will give them the green light to move on to the prototyping round. This marks the ultimate test: are they able to make a working example of their idea? The prototypes will be refined, tested, and appraised by potential customers.

Four finalists will advance from the elimination rounds into the grand finale to vie for a share of a cash prize of USD \$600,000, ranked by jury and public online votes in the final week of airing.

For a full broadcast guide or to catch up on episodes please visit www.starsofscience.com

Photo Captions

Image1: An innovator states her case to the *Stars of Science* jury during the casting phase of the TV program.

Image2: (From left): Jurors Dr. Abdelhamid El-Zoheiry, Dr. Khalid Al-Ali, and Professor Fouad Mrad confer during the casting phase of *Stars of Science*.

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Stars of Science

Stars of Science, the flagship “edutainment reality” TV format initiated by Qatar Foundation, is the Arab world’s leading innovation show that enables the region’s aspiring science and technology entrepreneurs.

Throughout the season nine innovators are challenged to develop creative solutions to regional problems within the fields of computing & information technology, energy, environment, and health. An expert panel of jurors assesses and eliminates innovators and their projects in Prototyping and Customer Validation episodes until only four remain. These four finalists vie for a share of \$600,000 in funding, determined by a jury deliberation and online voting from the public.

Stars of Science airs every Saturday from September 23rd 2017 until November 25th 2017. Please go to www.starsofscience for a full list of Broadcasters or to catch up on episodes.

Regional broadcasting details are as follows:

Qatar, Al Rayyan TV: Fridays: 18:00 GMT

Lebanon, LBC & LDC: Saturdays 15:00 GMT

Oman, Oman TV Culture Channel: Saturdays 15:30 GMT

Algeria, Echorouk TV: Saturdays 18:00 GMT

Iraq, Al Sumaria: Saturdays 18:30 GMT

Jordan, Al Roya: Saturdays 18:30 GMT

Kuwait, Al Rai TV: Saturdays 20:30 GMT

Episode will be uploaded on the SOS website at 21:30 GMT

Additional Screenings

Al Rayyan TV: Saturdays 17:00 QAT

Algeria, Echorouk TV: Saturdays 23:00 ALG, 24:00 ALG

Iraq, Al Sumaria: Saturday night 03:00 AST, Sunday morning 13:45 AST, Thursday night 22:45 AST

Qatar Foundation – Unlocking Human Potential

Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development (QF) is a private, non-profit organization that is supporting Qatar on its journey from a carbon economy to knowledge economy by unlocking human potential, for the benefit of not only Qatar, but the world. Founded in 1995 by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Father Emir, QF is chaired by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser.

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 commercializing 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.

<http://www.qf.org.qa/>

