

QUALITY PROTOTYPES PROPEL ALGERIAN AND SYRIAN INNOVATORS

Innovators move to Next Stage in Stars of Science on MBC4

Doha, 24 October 2015 – Algeria’s Mourad Mohamed Benosman and Syria’s Yaman Abou Jieb overtook their fellow innovators in a lively *Stars of Science* elimination episode on MBC4, securing their tickets to the next stage of the pan-Arab “edutainment reality” TV program. After a tough critique from the expert jury, Jordan’s Maymoona Ayesch and Lebanon’s Adib Al Ghossein’s journeys on the program came to an end.

On *Stars of Science*, Qatar Foundation’s “edutainment reality” TV program, young innovators compete against each other to turn their ideas into reality.

Twelve candidates aged 18 to 30 from across the Arab world travel to Doha, Qatar, where they are mentored by world-class engineering and design specialists in the laboratories of Qatar Science & Technology Park (QSTP), a member of Qatar Foundation. There, the innovators take on challenges as they develop their ideas from a concept to a potential product, highlighting the show’s dedication to QF’s vision of fostering a culture of quality and excellence.

In the engineering stage, candidates were tasked with creating a working prototype of their ideas with the help of expert mentors. Their prototypes, the result of countless hours in the laboratory, can potentially have impact in many different fields.

Maymoona’s Date Pits Filter in Desalination, a water filter that uses pits of the popular fruit to remove salt in order to make saltwater consumable, and Yaman’s Solar Washing Machine, which recycles water and runs on solar energy, are modern innovations that address the need for water and energy conservation.

Adib’s Ergonomic Activity Desk Lamp, which automatically adjusts lighting for many tasks, can prevent mistakes caused by suboptimal conditions and boost productivity in the workplace. The ECG Wearable Stress Analyzer, pioneered by Mourad, is a novel device that can measure heart rate and differentiate between physical and mental stress to improve health diagnoses.

Standing between the four candidates and a coveted spot in the forthcoming design stage were three expert judges, tasked with choosing two candidates to progress based on prototype performance (50 percent), product outlook (30 percent), and the resourcefulness and leadership exhibited by the candidate (20 percent).

Perennial jurors Professor Fouad Mrad, Executive Director of the United Nations ESCWA regional technology center, and Mr. Yussif Abdulrahman Saleh, General Manager of Qatar Shell Research and Technology Center, were joined in the engineering stage by Dr. Francois Gilardoni, a prominent Swiss venture capitalist and scientist.

Candidates took turns presenting their prototypes to the jury members, who drew upon their expertise to critique and question the candidates.

In his presentation, Yaman started off strong, pointing to test results that showed his device used 15 percent the energy and 30 percent the water of normal washing machines. However, he overlooked

some important details, such as a way to heat the water, and struggled to articulate a clear vision of the future utility of his invention.

Maymoona, who overcame difficulties sourcing her date pits in the weeks leading up to the elimination episode, also faced tough questioning of her test results from the jury. Dr. Gilardoni who has extensive experience designing experiments, was especially critical of her testing methods and prototype.

“Often, being challenged on an intellectual level triggers the spark that opens one’s mind to novel solutions,” said Dr. Gilardoni. “Stars of Science is valuable not only because it encourages creativity and entrepreneurship, but also because it is a program that demonstrates the importance of giving and taking constructive critique and exchanging knowledge to achieve innovation.”

Mourad did not waste any time impressing the jury, proudly wearing a working prototype of his ECG Wearable Stress Analyzer Device during his presentation. The young Algerian showed few signs of jitters as he deftly answered the panel’s questions. Adib, after facing many setbacks while developing his prototype in the laboratory, was feisty as he defended his invention against the jurors’ critiques, pointing to its usefulness for a range of activities.

After deliberation, the jury’s results were announced to the candidates, who sat nervously on the edge of their seats. Host Khalid Al Jumaily revealed that Mourad and Yaman would move on, placing first and second, respectively. The Algerian and Syrian, who like many candidates have developed close bonds of friendship, will progress to the design stage of the competition. Maymoona of Jordan and Adib of Lebanon will go home with their prototypes, but will benefit from the experience they gained from their peers, mentors, and jury members.

“At the moment my name was called, I felt a huge weight come off my shoulders. I’m ecstatic! My next step is to turn my full attention to excelling in the design stage - if I believe in my idea and I formulate a strategy to advance to the final, I am certain – with Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate’s, help – I will win,” said Mourad after the episode.

Next week, the last group of four *Stars of Science* innovators in the engineering phase will defend their projects and brave possible elimination. This primetime episode, the season’s seventh, will be shown on Friday, October 30th at 7PM KSA/ 4PM GMT on MBC4. After Episode Seven, the important design stage will commence, which will narrow the field from six young innovators to four. These four finalists earn a share of the \$600,000 prize, with the winner being determined in a special live final episode.

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Stars of Science

Stars of Science, an “edutainment reality” TV format initiated by Qatar Foundation, is the region’s leading innovation program. *Stars of Science* fosters and advances the Arab world’s aspiring science and technology entrepreneurs. In this seventh season, 12 candidates are challenged to prove their resourcefulness during critical stages of the innovation cycle while collaborating with industry leading mentors. An expert panel of jurors assesses and eliminates candidates and their innovative products in Engineering and Design episodes until only four remain. These four finalists vie for a share of a \$600,000 prize, determined by a jury deliberation and voting from the public.

***Stars of Science* airs from Friday, September 18th, to Friday, November 20th, 2015 on MBC4.**

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. **About MBC Group**

MBC Group (Middle East Broadcasting Center) is the largest and leading private media company in the Middle East & North Africa region. For the past 23 years, MBC Group was able to enrich people’s lives through information, interaction and entertainment. In 2002, nearly a decade after the launch of MBC1 in London, back in 1991, and as the 1st private free-to-air Arab satellite TV channel, MBC Group moved its headquarters to Dubai Media City, United Arab Emirates, where it remains.

Today, MBC Group includes 20 TV channels: MBC1 (general family entertainment); MBC2 and MBC MAX (24-hour western movies); MBC3 (children’s edutainment with a mix of both local productions and western acquisitions); MBC4 (entertainment for young families with a female-focus); MBC Action (an indigenous adrenaline-packed channel targeting young males with local and homegrown productions); MBC Variety (Western films and general entertainment with uninterrupted broadcasting); Al Arabiya News Channel (the 24-hour Arabic language news channel); Al Hadath (an extension of Al Arabiya News Channel with a specific focus on real events in the Arab world and beyond); Wanasah (24-hour Arabic



music channel); MBC DRAMA (24/7 Arabic drama); MBC MASR (general family entertainment geared towards the Egyptian family); MBC MASR 2 (providing the Egyptian audience with superior quality entertainment, in addition to live coverage of some of the Egyptian league's football matches); MBC + Drama (a joint paid-for channel between MBC and OSN); MBC Bollywood (delivering the freshest in Bollywood content geared towards the region via an Arabized interface); and most recently four sports channels, MBC PRO SPORTS (geared towards the “Saudi Football Premier League” fans in the Kingdom); and MBC USA (the channel is present on “Dish Network” in the US, and targets Arab audiences aboard; the channel is dedicated to offer and broadcast a wide range of content from the prominent MBC channels including movies, series and global formats).

In July 2011, seven channels within MBC Group began to broadcast in HD across the MENA Region: MBC1 HD, MBC2 HD, MBC4 HD, MBC Action HD, MBC Drama HD, MBC Max HD and Al Arabiya HD. In 2013, MBC3 HD joined the collection of HD channels followed by MBC Variety HD in 2014.

MBC Group also includes two FM radio stations: MBC FM (Gulf music) and Panorama FM (contemporary Arabic hit music); as well as O3 Productions, a premium content drama production company. Furthermore, MBC Group includes online platforms: www.mbc.net, www.alarabiya.net, www.shahid.net (the first free VOD and catch-up portal in the Arab world) and www.actionha.net, and www.mbcprosports.net among others.