

Innovation goes full speed ahead in the Arab world

CAIRO, By Rasha Dewedar | CGNews - June 17, 2010



Photo: <http://www.linternaute.com/science/science-et-nous/dossiers/07/science-arabe/quadrant4.jpg>

When it comes to the Muslim world, the media often focuses on foreign policy, terrorism and the differences between the Muslim world and the West. But in the book [1001 Inventions: Muslim Heritage in Our World](#), University of Manchester's Professor Salim Al-Hassani draws a different picture of Muslims, highlighting their artistic and scientific progress.

This progress, in fact, was the spark that initiated most modern Western advances in medicine, mathematics and science starting in the 16th century.

But Muslims around the world are also contributing to innovation today. In the Middle East this contribution is evidenced in the growing science culture.

One of these projects is [Stars of Science](#), a pan-Arab television contest showcasing young Arab innovators aged 18 to 30. It is the first of its kind: a Middle Eastern science-based reality television show.

Approaching its second season, the programme selects 16 young innovators to transform their project ideas into reality by working at a specially designed workshop in the Qatar Science and Technology Park, equipped with state of the art tools, materials and labs. Cameras follow the students as they tackle new challenges and compete for a \$300,000 cash prize.

Science programmes have rarely attracted considerable audiences in the region. However, the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development hit it big with this show, which airs on 17 channels throughout the Arab world.