

Bahraini girl power at GCC gaming meet wants to evoke emotions

Created by three Bahraini women in their 20s, the fantasy game Frakendolly was one of the attractions at the GCC Gaming Conference and Game Jam at the Bahrain Polytechnic in Isa Town



Developers of Frakendolly
Zainab Addulla Hasan Alansari,
Fatima Addulla Hasan Alansari
and Eman Naser at work

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Frakendolly is a freak-of-nature boy. He is the protagonist of a dark humour game, where the only possibility for the gamer is to try prolonging the character's life before he reaches an inevitable capture and death.

Created by three Bahraini women in their 20s, the fantasy game was one of the attractions at the GCC Gaming Conference and Game Jam at the Bahrain Polytechnic in Isa Town yesterday. Twin sisters Zainab Addulla Hasan Alansari and Fatima Addulla Hasan Alansari with game artist Eman Naser have been working together since 2014. They expect to commercially launch Frakendolly later this year.

"We focused on the doll as an outcast in a society that created it," Zainab Addulla Hasan Alansari, Frakendolly's programmer and designer told DT News on the sidelines of the event organized as part of the Startup Bahrain Week 2018.

Zainab Addulla Hasan Alansari, who graduated with a programming major from the Bahrain Polytechnic began her journey as a game developer in 2012. "There are some people who look down and underestimate our skill, but that is very rare," she said while recollecting the encouragement received as a female game developer.

Twin sister Fatima Addulla Hasan Alansari, who is the project's sound engineer, said her experience as a female developer has been positive. "The community, especially fellow developers, are very open-minded and supportive," she added. Game artist Eman Naser joined the Alansari sisters in 2014.

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"Video games is very holistic form of art," says Saba Saleem Warsi, developer of 'Musa, a brother's story'. "The genre of cause-based games is becoming more and more popular."

The game development community in Bahrain is very young with little to no professional guidance. But, the emergence of gaming related events and communities support aspiring developers. Fatima Addulla Hasan Alansari said the Bahrain Game Developers, a local community promoting game development, is an integral part in driving the country's gaming dreams.

In 2015, the trio participated in the Game Jam hosted in the United Arab Emirates as well as attended the MENA Game Conference held in Lebanon earlier.

"The gaming industry in Lebanon and Jordan has reached much higher than the GCC," said Zainab Addulla Hasan Alansari who is now working on a solo game to be launched by the end of the year. It is about a character who struggles to survive in the desert.

"We're just getting started," she said.

Saba Saleem Warsi, another participant of the conference is the developer and founder of The Stories Studio. She showcased her game 'Musa, a brother's story' for the competition.

The game is about two refugee brothers and their fight for survival, the gamer plays the role of the older brother Musa who is in charge of the safety of his younger brother. The game illustrates the journey of the two brothers as they embark on a journey through a world torn apart by war into a new reality of their own.

"Video games are very holistic form of art," says Saba Saleem Warsi. "the genre of cause-based games is becoming more and more popular," she said. At The Stories Studio, Saba Saleem Warsi and her husband create games that highlight the human condition and prompt the player to understand a cause.

"We make games that are not only fun but also make us feel what the character is going through," she said.



The game 'Musa,
a brother's story'