

# SHANKABOOT

*goes back to school*

شانکابوت  
SHANKABOOT.COM

PRESS PACK

BATOOTA FILMS

BBC WORLD SERVICE TRUST

A WEBDRAMA PRODUCED BY BATOOTA FILMS IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE BBC WORLD SERVICE TRUST.

NOKIA  
ovi

## the basics



**Producer:** Katia Saleh

**Director:** Amin Dora

**Lead Writer:** Bassem Breish

**Project Director:** Michael Randall

**Executive Producer:** Chris Carey

**Executive Script & Story Consultant:** James Payne

**Production company:** Batoota Films in association  
with the BBC World Service Trust

**Starring:** Hassan Akil (Suleiman), Samira Kawass (Ruwaida),  
Juliana Yazbeck (Yara), Latife Saade (Teta), Nasri Sayegh (Chadi),  
Rodney Haddad (Badr) and Saseen Kawzaly (Shuman)

**Genre:** Web drama

**Seasons:** Five

**Language:** Arabic (with English subtitles)

**Website:** [www.shankabout.com](http://www.shankabout.com)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/shankabout](http://www.facebook.com/shankabout)

**YouTube:** [www.youtube.com/shankabout](http://www.youtube.com/shankabout)

**Mobile application store:** [www.ovl.com](http://www.ovl.com)

**Twitter handle:** "shankabout"

**Contact details:** Batoota Films / 70-586420 or 01-448475

[info@batootafilms.com](mailto:info@batootafilms.com)

Suleiman  
& Yara →



# what is shankaboot?

**"Shankaboot"** – the world's first Arabic -language web series – is a drama tinged with comedy. It combines witty social observations with an edgy shooting style and naturalistic acting. The gripping storylines capture the mood and spirit of Beirut. The heroes of "Shankaboot" are ordinary people who are confronted by familiar dilemmas. Their efforts to overcome these challenges have struck a chord with young audiences across the Arab world.

✓ **SULEIMAN** is the 15-year-old hero of "Shankaboot". The Delivery King of Beirut, he can get you anything, anytime, anywhere. But one wrong delivery changes Suleiman's life forever and he is forced to rely on his wits, other characters he encounters and his trusty moped, "Shankaboot", to get himself out of trouble.

✓ **RUWAIDA** has run away from an abusive husband to pursue her dreams of stardom. She is beautiful but naive, an easy victim for showbusiness sharks and manipulative TV moguls. Fame has a price: can Ruwaida afford it and can she deal with the consequences?

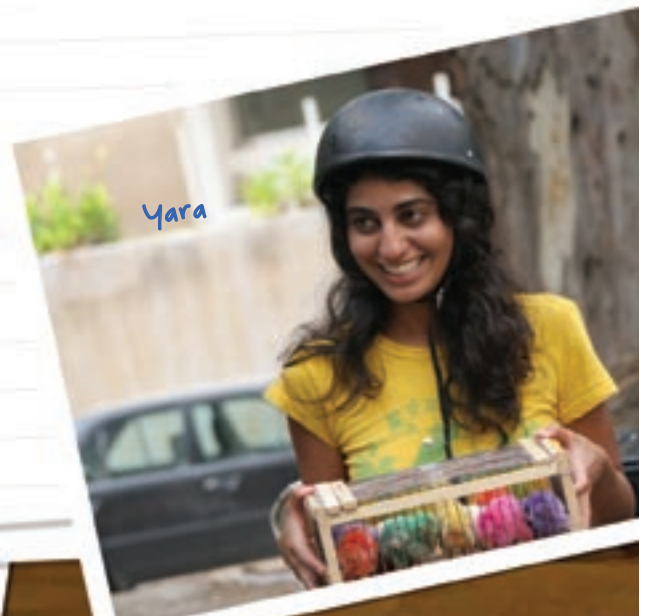
✓ **CHADI** is Suleiman's closest friend, the big brother he never had. Haunted by events in his past life, Chadi is hiding something from everyone, including Suleiman. When he turns police informant, Chadi struggles to maintain his integrity in the face of mounting odds.

Ruwaida



Suleiman

Yara





✓ TETA is the old lady of the village. She has tended to her little store all her life and has raised Yara from a baby. Teta may look like a harmless old granny but, behind her fluffy exterior, she knows exactly what she wants and how to get it.

✓ YARA is brave and capable, a girl from the Bekaa who knows her way around the fields as well as she knows her way around her grandmother's temper. Yara takes a shine to Suleiman and follows him back to Beirut. But Teta has other plans in store for her.

As the story unfolds, these colourful characters find themselves running the gauntlet of Beirut's criminal underworld:

- ✗ BADR the gun-toting boss of an Internet café
- ✗ FIRAS the teenage gang leader
- ✗ FADI the talent manager with dubious moral standards



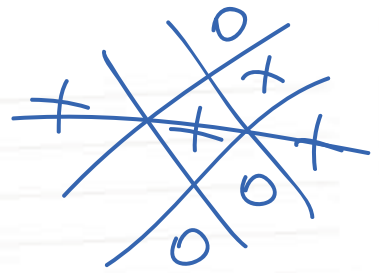
"This is the first Lebanese/Arabic series I have ever enjoyed in my life and this is the first series in which I find the script, dialogues and acting realistic... finally, I am proud!"

"At last there is a drama in the Arab world that deals with big and important issues"

"Thanks, "Shankaboot", for pointing out the problems that anyone we know could face. I hope that you are going to treat the solutions too...great job!"

Launched in March 2010, "Shankaboot" is published on an interactive website ([www.shankaboot.com](http://www.shankaboot.com)) as well as on Facebook and YouTube. The show is produced by Batoota Films, a Beirut-based production company, working in association with the BBC World Service Trust, the educational arm of the British Broadcasting Corporation.

The web series runs in seasons of 10-12 episodes. The episodes are typically around five minutes long to ensure that they can be viewed on low-bandwidth Internet connections. Fast-paced drama sequences are combined with "mockumentary" interviews which reveal the characters' inner thoughts and attitudes.



Over the past six months, "Shankaboot" has gone from strength to strength. The website attracts up to 2,000 hits a day whilst around 250,000 people in countries such as Lebanon, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Palestine have viewed the episodes on YouTube. "Shankaboot" currently has nearly 17,000 fans on Facebook.



The drama highlights important social problems, which are often overlooked by the mainstream media. These issues have caused heated debate on Facebook and the "Shankaboot" website. Viewers from across the region have shared their frustration with commonly held prejudices and stereotypes.

"Shankaboot" provides a fresh perspective – without moralising or preaching. "Shankaboot" lets the audience make up its own mind.

The project has generated significant media interest across the region. Reports and features have been carried by leading Arab newspapers and magazines as well as Al-Arabiya, LBC, the BBC World Service, AFP, France 24, Reuters, The Los Angeles Times and Variety magazine. "Shankaboot" has been promoted at festivals in Switzerland, Qatar and the UAE. On November 5, it won the Golden Award for Best Web Series at the Cinéma Tous Ecrans competition in Geneva. "Shankaboot" will be screened at the Dubai Film Festival in December.

## the roadshow

Suleiman & Teta

From November 10 to 12, "Shankaboot" will be visiting a total of six schools across Lebanon. The idea is to raise awareness of the power of social media and the tools for self-expression which are readily available on the Internet. After a short presentation, students will get the chance to see how new mobile phone technology can enable citizen journalists to record and edit short films, then upload them to YouTube.

Over the past two months, Batoota Films and the BBC World Service Trust have been working with young people in Beirut to develop media knowhow and storytelling skills. Through hands-on creative workshops, participants learn how to present social themes in a balanced, objective way which stimulates constructive debate.

In October, students produced a series of films on the subject of domestic workers in Lebanon. The films will be showcased on the "Shankaboot" website this month as part of a new initiative dubbed "Shankactive". The aim is to develop a creative platform for multi-media content inspired by "Shankaboot". It will feature video, photo galleries, animations and blogs.

As part of ongoing efforts to get "Shankaboot" out to the widest possible audience, Batoota Films has teamed up with Nokia to develop an application which allows users to download episodes from the Internet and view them on mobile phones. The free app is available from the OVI store ([www.store.ovi.com](http://www.store.ovi.com)) and will also be distributed to students during the roadshow.

# roadshow schedule

	Time	Location
<b>November 10, 2010</b> Monsif National High School the North High School (NTC)	8:00 - 9:00 AM 12:00 - 1:00 PM	Monsif, Byblos Tripoli
<b>November 11, 2010</b> Al Amir Sidon National School	8:30 - 9:30 AM 1:00 - 2:00 PM	Maghdouche Sidon
<b>November 12, 2010</b> Mesrobian Evangelical	10:30 AM - 12:00 PM 2:15 - 3:00 PM	Bourj Hammoud Baabda- Louaize

Amin & Murielle

Suleiman & Ruwaida

Suleiman

teta

