

● New short film aims to raise awareness

Focus on child abuse



■ The poster of the Bahraini film on child abuse

A NEW short Bahraini film that puts the spotlight on child abuse is set to be aired this Ramadan.

The film, titled *Speak Up*, is directed by Hassan Abdulwahab Al Qanas, and is a mix of animation and live action filmed in Durrat Al Bahrain.

Mr Al Qanas told the *GDN* that now was the right time to raise such a sensitive and taboo topic of discussion.

"This is the time of the year when schools are closed and parents take time off to spend with their families," he said.

"Children during their free time will be watching all sorts of things on YouTube or other social media, and they don't know whether it is right or wrong."

The six-minute-long *Speak Up* tells the story of two Bahraini youngsters, played by Noora Al Khunna and Saud Saffa, who are learning about the facts of life from their parents, played by Jamal Al Hayki and Somaya Al Hunna.

It begins with the family sitting in a living room, where the mother (Ms Al Hunna) speaks to her daughter (Noora) about not accepting gifts or money from strangers.

The action then moves to the son (Saud), who wants to go to the shop to buy some sweets and

By SANDEEP SINGH GREWAL

crisps – but his sister tells him to first inform their parents, which he refuses to do.

Instead, he tells his sister that she can follow his every move on her iPad, as he is wearing a camera.

"This is when the film turns into animation mode to allow children better understand what happens when they are alone and encounter strangers," said Mr Al Qanas.

The boy is followed by a teenager named Ahmed who lives in the neighbourhood and offers him sweets.

Following his sister's advice, the boy refuses the sweets but is chased by Ahmed to an abandoned house.

Fortunately, he manages to escape and finds a Bahraini man to help him out.

"Once the boy returns home he is afraid and not willing to talk to anyone," said Mr Al Qanas, who also worked on the film's visual effects.

"We wanted to use animated characters for children watching the film to relate to and understand.

"The message in the film for children is that they should not be afraid to talk and ask

for help."

The film, from Red Magic Production, has been produced in line with family therapist Mohammed Al Sayed's Eshraqaat initiative, which uses the hashtag #keepmeawaybh on social media to raise awareness of child abuse and how parents should deal with it.

It will be aired on *Bahrain Television* throughout Ramadan, with plans also underway to screen it in cinemas.

The *GDN* reported in February that at least

25 cases of alleged child sex abuse were referred to prosecutors in the first 46 days of this year.

Public Prosecution services social worker Fatima Faqeehi said most of the victims were young boys aged between nine and 12.

The national toll-free child helpline, 998, is under the supervision of different ministries and provides assistance and help from specialists.

sandy@gdn.com.bh

BD1,000 donated to workers' society

A BD1,000 donation has been made to the Migrant Workers Protection Society (MWPS) by the American Women's Association (AWA).

The cheque was presented to MWPS chairwoman Marietta Dias by AWA president Diana Raia at a general meeting held at the Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay.

Meanwhile, another cheque for BD500 was donated to the BSPCA, which was received by its fundraising co-ordinator Michelle Page.

Also present were AWA's community service chairwoman Lisa Wahba and other members.



■ Ms Raia, third from left, presenting the cheque to Ms Dias, alongside other AWA committee members



■ A ceremony was held at Bahrain Polytechnic to honour participants in the second GCC Game Jam event, which saw 14 teams battle it out to create a game in less than three days. Aimed at highlighting emerging new talent and showcasing new gaming projects, the event was supported and funded by the eGovernment Authority alongside private sector sponsors. Above, the participants.