


# My Dunya: Game Budget

How I get from the finished jam build to a store launch on Steam (Windows and macOS), iOS and Android in 12 months, with the web version staying free. Laid out on Zoud GameLab's four milestones.

Basement Vibes Studio · Zoud GameLab, November 2026 · Budget v2

All amounts are in US dollars (USD 1 = AED 3.6725). I'll review the rates at each milestone.

**Finishing My Dunya properly will cost USD 108,400 over 12 months.** I worked it out from the bottom up: who's doing the work, for how long and at what rate. Then I added the tools, the outside help, some contingency and some marketing. Everyone gets a fair rate, me included. A budget the developers can't live on isn't really a budget.

Zoud's award (up to USD 70,000) would pay for everything that costs cash: the two contract developers, my AI tools, the specialists, the beta, the store fees, the contingency and the marketing. My own year of work (USD 38,400) is what I put in, and I earn it back from sales. In the middle forecast, my share of the first year covers it.

Each milestone has a simple pass test. I've also split the features into must-haves and nice-to-haves, so if time or money gets tight, I already know what moves to after launch.

The jam build isn't in this budget. I made it on my own time and money, and it's already a whole UAE life from 18 to retirement: the karak cart that grows into a family business, Landmark runs, Islamic and conventional banking side by side, zakat on real gold prices, 80+ money lessons, full Arabic, and accessibility options from simple language to reduced motion and high contrast.

## 1. Who's doing the work

| Who | What they do | Months | USD |
|---|---|---|---|
| Me: lead developer and designer | The design, the balancing after every playtest, the new jobs and content, the release builds and support after launch. I also run the milestones and report to Zoud. | 1-12, full time | 38,400 |
| Desktop developer (contract) | Turns the web game into a Steam build for Windows and macOS, with controller support, cloud saves and everything Steam needs | 4-5 | 6,400 |
| Mobile developer (contract) | Builds the iOS and Android apps: touch controls sized for thumbs, phone performance, and what Apple and Google need | 7-8 | 6,400 |
| **People** | | | **51,200** |

I'm paying everyone USD 3,200 a month. The two developers are contractors, so that's their full rate with no employer costs on top. They'll sign over the rights to their work, which keeps all the game's rights with me (agreement §5.4) and keeps this a solo jam entry.

## 2. Where the money goes, and who pays

| Item | What it's for | USD |
|---|---|---|
| **People (section 1)** | | |
| Me and the two contract developers | Design, gameplay, content, and the Steam, iOS and Android builds | 51,200 |
| **AI tools** | | |
| Paid AI plans | I build with AI every day: Claude for code and writing; ChatGPT, PixelLab, Meshy and Scenario for art and 3D; ElevenLabs for sound. It runs about USD 2,000 a month, and around 5,000 in the month before launch. The paid plans also give me the commercial rights to what they make. | 27,000 |
| **Outside help** | | |
| New soundtrack (contract) | A composer writes Gulf-flavoured music to replace the AI tracks | 1,300 |
| Pixel art (contract) | Phone and tablet layouts, store art and frames for the trailer. I'll redraw the faces of the people you meet with my own AI art tools. | 2,000 |
| Finance and Islamic-finance review | A UAE-licensed adviser and an Islamic-finance specialist check every rule, number and lesson twice, once at design and once at beta | 2,000 |
| Arabic editing | A professional editor goes over the game's Arabic (about 50,000 words) before the alpha and again before launch | 1,500 |
| **Testing** | | |
| Beta with 35+ outside testers | Two rounds: our QA community, then sessions at UAE schools and universities. Covers vouchers, devices, surveys and the findings report for Zoud. | 2,400 |
| **Running costs** | | |
| Hosting and test phones | A year of hosting and domains, plus an Android phone and an iPhone to test on | 1,500 |
| Store accounts and fees | Apple and Google developer accounts, the Steam app fee and age ratings | 800 |
| Legal | The contractor agreements (with the rights transfer) and privacy for young players under UAE law and the stores' child-safety rules | 700 |
| **Cost to build** | | **90,400** |
| Contingency (10%) | Kept back until the end and only spent if something runs over, like a second heavy AI month or a fee going up. If that still isn't enough, I drop features from the nice-to-have list (section 4). | 9,000 |
| Marketing (10%) | A Steam page from the alpha onwards, a Next Fest demo, the launch trailer, UAE and Gulf streamers and creators, some launch ads, and launch events at schools and universities | 9,000 |
| **Total cost** | | **108,400** |

| Who pays | For what | USD |
|---|---|---|
| Zoud's award | Everything that costs cash | 70,000 |
| Me (Basement Vibes Studio) | My own 12 months of work, earned back from sales and from anything left over in the contingency or marketing | 38,400 |
| **Total** | | **108,400** |

## 3. The plan on Zoud's milestones

| Milestone (agreement §3.4) | By | Zoud pays 1st / 2nd-3rd | What I deliver, and how we'll know it's done | Cash spent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Payment 1:** game, budget and concept submitted | award | 7,500 / 5,000 | Already done: the jam build, this budget and the design document | – |
| **M1:** Game Design Document approved | month 2 | 6,250 / 6,500 | The updated GDD, the first finance and Islamic-finance review, the first Arabic edit, and the contracts, store accounts, test phones and tools all set up. Class seed mode for schools, inside my own time.<br>**Done when** Zoud signs off the GDD, the reviewers have no open corrections, both contracts are signed, and 20 bot lives on one seed meet the same world events in the same months, with all 20 on the teacher board. | 8,750 |
| **M2:** playable alpha, all core mechanics, start to finish, on the target systems | month 6 | 18,750 / 19,500 | The Steam build for Windows and macOS (the desktop developer's two months), the phone layouts, and the Steam page up and collecting wishlists.<br>**Done when** a whole life plays through on Steam and the web, our bots get through 100 lives in English and Arabic without a crash or a stuck screen, and 10 testers rate the fun at 7/10 or higher. | 16,400 |
| **M3:** playtest beta, 35+ independent testers in two rounds, with a findings report | month 9 | 18,750 / 19,500 | The iOS and Android apps (the mobile developer's two months) join the beta. Both test rounds and the report, the second finance review, and a demo in Steam Next Fest.<br>**Done when** 35+ people have tested it over two rounds, no serious bugs are left open, and the average fun rating is 7.5/10 or higher. | 17,800 |
| **M4:** commercial launch on a store, stable, with an approved 60-day launch plan | month 12 | 18,750 / 19,500 | Launch on Steam, the App Store and Google Play, with the new soundtrack, store art, the trailer, the second Arabic edit and the launch marketing. The contingency sits here.<br>**Done when** it's live on all three stores, 99% of sessions are crash-free in the first two weeks, and Zoud approves the 60-day plan. | 27,050 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Total** | **70,000** | **Plus my own 12 months (38,400), which don't come out of the award** | **70,000** |

Each time Zoud pays a milestone, the money in covers what I've spent so far (USD 13,750 in against 8,750 out at M1, 32,500 against 25,150 at M2, 51,250 against 42,950 at M3). The work always comes before the payment, so I float the gap in between. The biggest gap is just before launch: up to USD 18,750, or 9,750 if I don't need the contingency.

## 4. What must ship, and what can wait

| Must-haves: these ship in the 12 months |
|---|
| Class seed mode for schools (M1): one seed, the same life for the whole class, a teacher board |
| Launch on Steam, iOS and Android, with the web version still free |
| The full life sim: relationships, health, homes and family |
| 30 new jobs and side activities, and more ways to start a life |
| A living market, where your shop's visitors, prices and rivals follow the economy |
| Leaderboards with friends |
| The finance reviews, the Arabic edits and the 35+ tester beta |

| Nice-to-haves: as time, sales or extra funding allow |
|---|
| Online turn-based multiplayer, with regional leaderboards |
| My Life Worldwide: the UK, the US, India and Asia, each with its own money rules |
| Recorded narration in Arabic and English |
| Lesson plans and school licences for the classroom edition |

If time or money runs short, these move to after launch, starting from the bottom of the list. The must-haves still ship complete.

## 5. If the award is smaller

| USD 30,000 (15% revenue share) | |
|---|---|
| AI tools (about 1,250 a month) | 15,000 |
| One contract developer for 2 months: Steam and Android | 6,400 |
| Finance and Islamic-finance review | 1,500 |
| Arabic editing | 1,000 |
| Beta with 35+ testers (one school round) | 1,500 |
| Stores, hosting and legal | 2,100 |
| Contingency | 2,500 |
| **Total** | **30,000** |

I'd still launch on Steam (Windows and macOS), Google Play and the web, and my own time stays my stake. iOS, the new

| USD 15,000 (10% revenue share) | |
|---|---|
| AI tools (about 750 a month) | 9,000 |
| Finance and Islamic-finance review | 1,000 |
| Beta with 35+ testers from our QA community and one school | 1,000 |
| Stores, hosting and legal | 2,000 |
| Contingency | 2,000 |
| **Total** | **15,000** |

Steam (Windows and macOS) and the web, with every milestone still met. I'd do the Steam build myself, and the phone apps would come later out of sales.

soundtrack and the nice-to-haves would be paid for out of sales.

## 6. After launch

**Prices.** USD 9.99 on Steam, which is normal for indie life and management sims. On phones, the first years of a life are free and one purchase unlocks the rest (I'm planning USD 4.99, but it isn't final). The web version stays free, like it is now. After the stores take their cut, I'd get about USD 5.60 per Steam copy (allowing for sales) and USD 4.24 per phone unlock.

| First-year sales (my estimate) | Steam | Phone unlocks | Net, year 1 | Net, 5 years | Zoud's 20% |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Low | 2,000 | 3,000 | 23,900 | 59,800 | 12,000 |
| Middle | 4,000 | 6,000 | 47,800 | 119,600 | 23,900 |
| High | 6,000 | 10,000 | 76,000 | 190,000 | 38,000 |

For the five years I assume each later year makes 60%, 40%, 30% and then 20% of the first. School and university licences aren't counted. In the middle case my 80% of year one comes to about USD 38,200, which pays back the 38,400 I put in.

**The wait for the first sales money.** The stores pay a month or so after each month's sales, so nothing comes in until one to two months after launch. Until then I handle support myself (serious bugs fixed within 48 hours, patches every week), and my other games plus any leftover contingency cover the running costs.

**The first 60 days** (Zoud approves this plan at M4), using the USD 9,000 marketing budget:

- **Before launch:** the Steam page goes up at the alpha (month 6) to start collecting wishlists, there's a demo in Steam Next Fest, pre-registration opens on the App Store and Google Play, and the trailer comes out.
- **Days 1-14:** a launch-week discount, devlogs in English and Arabic, the press kit out to UAE and Gulf media and education sites, streamers and creators from the region, some launch ads, and the first reviews from our QA community.
- **Days 15-45:** launch events at the schools and universities from the beta, a Ramadan or National Day update with a themed Landmark run, and a patch based on what the first players report.
- **Days 46-60:** a sales and retention report for Zoud, a second content update, and a plan for classroom licences.

## 7. Rights

I own or have commercial rights to everything in the game. The code and text were written with Claude. The art comes from ChatGPT, PixelLab, my own PIXLE tool, Blender and Meshy, all on paid plans. The sound and music come from ElevenLabs on a paid plan, and the Arabic font is Noto Kufi Arabic under the SIL Open Font License. Every source and its terms are in my rights register, and there's a public summary at basementvibes.com/mydunya/MyDunya_AI_and_Rights.pdf. Before launch I'll redraw the faces of the people you meet, and the new soundtrack will replace the AI music. The contractors sign the rights to their work over to me.

Signed,



**Joshua Cason**, lead developer and designer, Basement Vibes Studio
11 November 2026