

MBI Al Jaber ● Foundation

review

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Supporting civil society in the Arab World with Human Rights Watch



H.E. Sheikh Mohamed Bin Issa Al Jaber with Kenneth Roth, Executive Director of Human Rights Watch

On behalf of the MBI Al Jaber Foundation, our Chairman Sheikh Mohamed signed an agreement with Kenneth Roth, Executive Director of Human Rights Watch, in the presence of Sarah Leah Whitson, Director of Human Rights Watch's Middle East and North Africa Division, in order to support the work of Human Rights Watch in the area of civil society in the Arab world, with particular reference to the cause of human rights in Arab countries in transition.

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The MBI Al Jaber Foundation is committed to supporting the strengthening of civil society across the Arab world. For more than a decade the Foundation has sponsored civil society training programmes in the region, and this collaboration with Human Rights Watch, which was formalised in 2012, is within the broader context of the Foundation's work in the three key areas of education, cultural dialogue, and citizenship and good governance.

For more information on Human Rights Watch: www.hrw.org





Message from the Chairman

It has been a very busy year for the MBI Al Jaber Foundation, starting with the signing of an agreement with UNESCO to support education in Yemen, and finishing with the London launch of the MBI Al Jaber Media Institute in Sana'a. Yemen has been an important focus for us, but our activities have continued in other areas too, with some longstanding partners like MODUL University, and some new ones too – in particular Human Rights Watch.

Events across the region have meant the protection of human rights and civil society are more important than ever, and we are proud to be able to give support to the important work of Human Rights Watch. We are equally proud that our own, independent media training institute is up and running in Yemen. Yemen is home to a rapidly growing population of young, eager and ambitious men and women who are anxious to show the world their true potential. I hope that this institute will play a part in equipping some of these youth to engage and interact with peers from around the world.

You can read more about this, and some of our other projects, in this latest issue of our Foundation Review.

Mohamed Bin Issa Al Jaber
Patron and Chairman

Exciting news from MODUL University Vienna: Sheikh Mohamed has been made a Senator.

Our Chairman Sheikh Mohamed has been made Senator of MODUL University, Vienna in recognition of his longstanding support for education, cultural dialogue, peace and human rights.

Conferring the award of Senator of MODUL University on Sheikh Mohamed, President of MODUL University Professor Karl Wober said: "Our University is breaking new ground, as the title of Senator - the highest award conferred by MODUL University - is being awarded for the first time. His Excellency was among the first to support MODUL University and his activities are congruent not only with the academic and cultural visions of the University, but with deeper undercurrents of humanism and philanthropy in history as well. Without the crucial role played by His Excellency and the MBI Al Jaber Foundation during the founding phase of the university in 2007, this project might never have taken off."



HE Sheikh Mohamed Bin Issa Al Jaber with President Jank of the Vienna Chamber of Commerce, and Prof Karl Wober & Prof. Dr. Harvey Goldstein of MODUL University

Continuing the Euro-Arab dialogue

The Euro-Arab Dialogue initiative was first launched at UNESCO's 46th International Conference on "Education for all for learning to live together" held at IBE in September 2001, in Geneva. The initiative aimed at promoting cooperation between the Arab and European regions through civil society and to enable a fruitful exchange of ideas and experiences in the areas of education, culture and science.

Sheikh Mohamed has supported this initiative for over ten years through UNESCO and in June 2012 the MBI Al Jaber Foundation supported UNESCO in organising the International Conference "Euro-Arab Dialogue: Contribution to a New Humanism", in Vienna. Now, the initiative has been taken forward with a meeting of technical experts in Portugal 24-26 November 2013.

The UNESCO National Commissions have already completed a comparative study on school textbooks in both the Arab and European Regions and are now preparing an action plan for the production of an educational kit for schools on the teaching of common values and cultural heritage shared by both the regions. These products will be submitted to the representatives of European and Arab governments at an International Conference "Euro-Arab Dialogue: Common Cultural Heritage and Values" to be organized by UNESCO in cooperation with the MBI Al Jaber Foundation in 2014.

Alumni Update

In honour of our Chairman's recent recognition, this update from our Alumni focuses on some of our graduates from MODUL University.

Mohamed Ahmed Yehia, who graduated in 2010 was one of the first students to benefit from the MODUL scholarship programme, and today holds a prominent role within the Egyptian tourism ministry as Cabinet Member of the Tourism Minister. Mohamed says: "The scholarship made my studies at MODUL possible. It opened my eyes to a wider world, and the contacts I made through it have proven invaluable in my career. Tourism is crucial to the Egyptian economy, with millions of jobs depending upon those who come to enjoy the cultural heritage of Egypt and the natural wonders of the Red Sea. Now we are promoting Egypt through our Papyrus festival and new YouTube channel. These initiatives are based on ideas I developed while at MODUL University, and are helping to change perceptions of the Middle East for the better. The scholarships provided by Sheikh Mohamed over the last two decades, particularly those within the hospitality industry, will help rebuild that cultural dialogue through education and through the forging of commercial links."

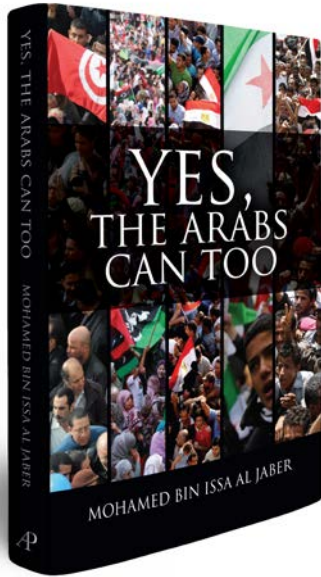


Mohamed at the 4th Annual E-Tourism & E-Marketing conference in Cairo.

Mahmoud S. Mesmeh studied Public Governance & Management at MODUL and graduated in 2012 with an MBA. Mahmoud is now Head of the Procurement Department at the Islamic University of Gaza in his home country of Palestine. Mahmoud is interested in studying for a PhD in Management and attends as many conferences and training courses as possible in order to achieve this goal. Mahmoud's dissertation for his MBA focused upon the role of public relations officers in developing tourism in the Gaza Strip - a subject he hopes to take further.



Riad Imedjdoubene graduated in 2011 with an MBA in Tourism Management. His dissertation focused on strategies for the sustainable development of tourism. Originally from Algeria, Riad is now working as a Marketing Manager for the Vienna Mozart Orchestra – Wiener Mozart Orchester Konzertveranstaltungs GmbH - and is responsible for the Arabic, French and Italian speaking markets, online marketing and graphic design. He is an active member of a non-profit making Austrian-Algerian Association where he helps with intercultural exchange between Austrian and Algerian students.



The MBI Al Jaber Media Institute, Sana'a



Students taking a course at the MBI Al Jaber Media Institute

'Yes, the Arabs Can Too'

Prominent philanthropist and businessman H.E. Sheikh Mohamed Bin Issa Al Jaber's seminal book 'Yes, the Arabs Can Too' has now been updated and translated into English. The book seeks to cast new light on the current events in the Arab world by providing a contemporary Arab view on the changes that are being wrought both economically and socially across the region.

Sheikh Mohamed provides a prescient and brave diagnosis of the Arab people's thirst for democracy, human rights and proper citizenship in their own countries.

Alongside the views of Sheikh Mohamed, the book contains a foreword from Professor Michael Worton, of UCL who explains: "Across the world, we see growing demands for reforms in the political system, whether this be in the 'Arab Spring' or in the shift to the Right in many countries across Europe. This work is intended as an encouragement to Arabs to reform their political and economic processes, whilst remaining true to the values that through the centuries have underpinned the best of Arab beliefs and endeavours. Sheikh Mohamed offers messages of how this process must be one of integration with the rest of the world whilst also retaining Arab integrity and specificity."

Following the events of 2011 and the revolution in Yemen, all forms of media have seen a period of rapid development. Drawing on previous projects in the fields of journalism and media, Sheikh Mohamed proposed the establishment of an independent, privately funded institution to train journalists, students, teachers and trainers and citizens in all aspects of media.

The MBI Al Jaber Media Institute is funded initially for two years, but it is anticipated that it will continue to operate beyond this period. The Institute has a permanent staff in addition to freelance trainers and, though under the umbrella of the MBI Al Jaber Foundation in London, is an autonomous, locally run and registered organization with a Board of Advisors.

The Board of Advisors is international and comprised of people chosen for their regional or subject expertise. It includes Nobel Laureate Tawakkol Karman, Dalia Mogahed, member of the World Economic Forum and Yemeni Minister of Information Ali Al Amrani, plus representatives from Europe. The Board meets once a year to discuss the forward plan of the Institute and act in an Advisory capacity when required.

The Institute is unique since, although there are other media training organisations operating in Yemen, the MBI Al Jaber Media Institute is not dependent on project or governmental agency funding. The Institute will also have its own online newspaper, with content supplied by staff, students and alumni.

The Institute is up and running and it is anticipated that its alumni will be active in covering the elections taking place next year.