



MBI Al Jaber ● Foundation

review

Spring 2009

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Letter from the Chairman



MBI Al Jaber Building in Oxford

It is my pleasure to introduce the latest newsletter from the MBI Al Jaber Foundation. Spring is always a busy time for the Foundation, as we process the applications for our scholarship schemes.

It is always wonderful to see how many young people from the Middle East have succeeded in gaining a place at some of the world's most prestigious Universities, and to hear their dreams and aspirations. Here you can read about some of our successful applicants and Alumni, and how they are moving towards fulfilling their own personal potential whilst contributing to the development of the region. They are all ambassadors, building bridges between two cultures, and also in this Review you can read about some of our cultural and educational projects which aim to strengthen and build on links between the Middle East and the wider world.

It is always satisfying when a project comes to fruition, and in October of this year we will be celebrating the opening of the MBI Al Jaber Building at Corpus Christi, Oxford. Corpus Christi College, founded in 1517 is one of the colleges of the University of Oxford, home to 360 students. The College was in need of a building in which it could host lectures and seminars of international standing and decided in May 2004 to build a new auditorium – the most important building to be constructed on the site in over 300 years. The Foundation's grant of £1,000,000 has helped make this possible. The architect's drawing can be seen here, but later editions of this Review will bring you images of the building in action, and we hope you will be able to join us at an event there in the future.

Mohamed Bin Issa Al Jaber
Patron and Chairman

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Yemeni Scholars in London

The focus for this year's London scholarship programme is Yemen and in September we were proud to welcome our new scholars to the capital with an English afternoon tea at the Foundation offices and a meeting with Sheikh Mohamed. The students have made good progress and are now working on their dissertations.

Dr. Abdulbaset Al-Shoaibi, Dr. Abdulgabbbar Hamid, and Dr. Anwar Ali Alshukami are all studying Advanced Neuroimaging at University College London. Here they share with us some of their dreams for the future.

"We have been close friends for more than 16 years and participated together in many academic, charity and social activities. We share the same vision of helping and developing our society and improving healthcare in Yemen. We have our dream to establish a Neuroradiology Centre in Yemen, aiming to provide the best possible medical service and experience for patients suffering from neurological and other problems. We started the first step, coming to London to get high qualifications and experience in Neuroradiology. We are currently studying at

the Institute of Neurology at UCL, whilst also holding clinical fellowships in Neuroradiology at the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery. We faced some difficulties at the beginning regarding the course, life and how to deal with a new culture, but now we have adapted. We are looking forward to achieving the next steps to realising our project."

For more information on the scholars' proposed Yemeni-British Neurology Centre, please contact: info@mbifoundation.com.



Edge of Arabia Exhibition at the Brunei Gallery, London

The MBI Al Jaber Foundation is proud to have been one of the major sponsors of the pioneering Edge of Arabia exhibition organised by Offscreen Education.

The much-anticipated exhibition opened with a press conference and a private view at the Brunei Gallery at SOAS in October 2008.

Edge of Arabia featured the work of 17 contemporary artists from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, male and female, who explore the complex and diverse identities of 21st century life in the Middle East through their art. These artists participated in the first comprehensive exhibition of contemporary Saudi art shown in the UK and offered a unique look inside contemporary culture in the Kingdom.

The issues addressed were as much personal or domestic as global: the artists chose not to focus on artistic and intellectual clichés associated with the region and instead presented a

contemporary world view as unpredictable as it is beautiful. Edge of Arabia is now planning to embark on a wider European tour between 2010 and 2012.

For further information and a complete showcase of the artworks, please visit: www.edgeofarabia.com



The Arab Media Today: New Audiences and New Technologies

In conjunction with the London US Embassy Media Outreach Centre, the Foundation sponsored the 'Arab Media Today' conference held on the 16th of March 2009 at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

The conference, organised by the London Middle East Institute, provided insight into today's media in the Arabic-speaking world. It investigated and highlighted how new technological advances have re-defined the media across the region by edging away from the government-controlled traditional media outlets into satellite TV channels and internet-based media.

The speakers and panellists participating in the conference, including academics, journalists, media professionals, bloggers and other Arab media watchers, presented in-depth discussions and analyses on understanding the Arabic speaking audience, old and new media impacts and the political blogging across the region.

A full session was dedicated to discuss the emerging Arab blogosphere. Six bloggers

from Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia, Bahrain, Lebanon and Syria talked about their experiences with blogging, sharing with the audience their stories on raising the bar by tackling political, religious and social issues and ideas not delivered by traditional media outlets: but it was apparent that they still have to find ways around government censorship and to protect their personal safety. The conference was concluded by a dinner for participants, giving them an opportunity to reflect on the day and exchange views.

Below: A speaker discusses the Arab press in the internet age

CREDIT Fiona Wholey



Alumni News

The MBI Al Jaber Foundation's Alumni extend across the Middle East and increases year on year. Our Alumni are involved in various projects throughout the Arab world and are contributing towards its development in diverse fields from management and technology to education and music. We receive updates from our Alumni on a regular basis. To see more, please visit: mbifoundation.com/alumni/alumni-update.



Saifedeem Ammous

Palestine (LSE 2003/2004)

"The last week was crazy busy as I was handing in my PhD. I am going to graduate on May 20th with my PhD in Sustainable Development from Columbia University in the US. I am not sure yet what I will be doing after that, though I have had some job offers!" Congratulations to Saifedeem, whose thesis is a multi-disciplinary study of the biofuels programme in Senegal and how it relates to the global drive towards the use of biofuels. Saif will be coming to London this summer to attend a friend's wedding and to visit us at the Foundation as he says "I owe you all a lot, and I really look forward to meeting you all in my upcoming trip to London."



Dr. Ahmed Hosney Radwan

Egypt (LEAD 2002/04)

Ahmed is now partner in a private Consultancy Company in the Field of Architecture & Urban Planning and Studies in the Middle East. He achieved his PhD Degree in Architecture in 2007 and currently works as an Assistant Professor of Architecture teaching in Helwan University, MIU & AUC. Ahmed has been involved in the architectural designs of many projects in Egypt, Sudan, Syria, KSA, Jordan, Iran and Ethiopia. He started his own company which has a branch in Sudan; primarily specializing in residential and commercial architecture and design but now extended to educational, public and mixed used buildings, in addition to urban planning and tourist developments in Egypt and the Middle East. Their website has more information: www.idccegypt.com



Sophie Zanoon

Sudan (SOAS 2002/03)

"I worked for the British Council in Dubai 2007 - 2008 as a Project Manager for Schools and also worked as Project Manager for Social Partnerships with a remit for all the UAE. I was involved in many educational projects including linking schools in the Gulf and the UK through the Connecting Classrooms Project. In September 2008, I moved to Al Ain to work as Head of Operations with a British Organisation, SSAT (Specialist Schools and Academies Trust). This involves setting up a new office and managing the employees. Check out this website for more information on the company: www.ssatrust.org.uk"

New Programmes added to MBI Al Jaber Foundation Scholarships at MODUL University Vienna

Following on from Foundation scholarships for the BBA in Tourism and Hospitality Management at MODUL University Vienna, the 2009/10 academic year sees the expansion of the programme to include Masters' degrees in New Media Technology, Public Governance & Management, and Tourism Management.



Applications to the programme have been received from across the Arab world, from Algeria to Yemen, and to all degree programmes. Successful applicants will join the existing MBI scholars at MODUL, some of whom are about to enter the third year of their undergraduate degree. Recently, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) officially accepted MODUL University Vienna as an affiliated member, the first Austrian university to be recognized by the UNWTO.

For further information about the university, please visit www.modul.ac.at

Elham Al-Lawati from Oman holds a scholarship to read for a BBA in Tourism & Hospitality Management at MODUL. She tells us a little of her life in Vienna:

"I have been living in Vienna since September 2008 and it is a very nice and comfortable city. It is quite small which makes it easy for me to reach any place easily which I consider to be one of the best things about Vienna. I am currently studying in my second semester. The BBA course which I am taking in Tourism and Hospitality Management has fully met my expectations and I am hopeful that this qualification will allow me to have a successful career in the Tourism industry."

Our Chairman receives City of Vienna Gold Medal



Above: MBI Al Jaber and Mr. Haeupl

On February 17th, at the beautiful and historic City Hall, Michael Haeupl, the Mayor of Vienna, presented MBI Al Jaber with a Gold Medal of honour for his special achievements in the economic and cross-cultural educational sectors of the city. In addition to outlining MBI Al Jaber's contribution to the city in the realm of business, including his famous hotels, Mr. Haeupl pointed out the numerous educational initiatives of MBI Al Jaber and his MBI Al Jaber Foundation, which contributes to a better understanding between people of the Middle East and the rest of the World, especially with Europe. In Vienna, the Foundation supports Arab students to study at Modul University Vienna as part of its scholarship programmes (see above), and MBI Al Jaber personally has also provided scholarships to young Austrian citizens of Vienna allowing them to study in the international atmosphere of MODUL.

MBI Al Jaber Lecture at the Seminar for Arabian Studies

For the seventh year running, the MBI Al Jaber Foundation will be supporting the Seminar for Arabian Studies to be held at the British Museum 23-25 of July 2009.

The Seminar, the only annual international forum for the presentation of the latest academic research in the humanities on the Arabian Peninsula from the earliest times to the present day, has been running for over



30 years and attracts participants from all over the world. Papers on all aspects of pre-modern Arabia are presented, and the latest research on the region debated. The resulting proceedings are published, providing an indispensable resource for all scholars interested in the Arabian peninsula. This year the MBI Al Jaber Lecture, named in honour of the Foundation's sponsorship, will be given by Michael Macdonald of the University of Oxford, on 'Arabia and the Written Word'.

For further information, please visit: www.arabianseminar.org.uk/