

MBI Al Jaber ● Foundation

Special Edition

review

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Yemen Review

Founder, Patron and Chairman, Sheikh Mohamed Bin Issa Al Jaber, has been supporting Yemen, one of the poorest countries in the MENA region, for many years. Yemen, referred to as "Arabia Felix" by the ancient Romans, has suffered greatly in recent times and yet is known as the cradle of Arabian civilisation. Sheikh Mohamed and the MBI Al Jaber Foundation have given support in a variety of ways, financing projects in education and training, encouraging a free press, promoting cultural heritage and now by sponsoring "Strengthening the Humanitarian Response in Yemen", a Yemen Civil Society Event which seeks to facilitate dialogue and address key issues affecting the current response to tragic events that have beset the country in recent years.

Educational Reform in Yemen: A Partnership with UNESCO



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MBI AL JABER
Foundation

In Paris during February 2013, HE Sheikh Mohamed and the Director General of UNESCO, Mrs Irina Bokova, launched a project enabling the development of an integrated, sector-wide strategy to address the challenges facing the education sector in Yemen. In response to requests by the Yemeni Government at the time, and in partnership with UNESCO, Sheikh Mohamed, on behalf of the MBI Al Jaber Foundation, agreed to provide \$1 million to fund a two-year project working with the Yemeni Ministries of Education, Technical and Vocational Education, and Higher Education and Research, focussed on improving and strengthening the education system and its service delivery. It was hoped that this would enable the formulation of a new national vision for education, developing a platform which could support the broad spectrum of the country's educational needs and lead reform of technical and vocational training.



Message from the Chairman

This is a special edition of the Foundation Review, and its purpose is to throw a spotlight on Yemen at a time when all of us need to focus our attention and activities on providing help for a country that is currently experiencing a humanitarian crisis of terrible proportions.

We are very pleased to be able to support the Yemen Civil Society Day in London. The scale of the task of supporting and providing help to Yemen is vast, and only by bringing together multiple agencies can we begin to meet the needs of this beleaguered country.

My Foundation has a track record of support for Yemen, through scholarships, partnerships with UNESCO, other organisations and our own MBI Media Institute. You can read about these activities here, and also on our website.

Let us hope and pray that 2017 brings hope and peace to Yemen, and a better future for its people.

Mohamed Bin Issa Al Jaber
Patron and Chairman

Scholarships & Training Programmes

In addition to the general scholarship scheme operated annually by the MBI Al Jaber Foundation, we have awarded scholarships under a number of different programmes specifically to students from Yemen. In 2008, the Foundation offered support in its Yemen focus year to a number of high achieving Yemenis who wanted to study at post-graduate level in the UK. They studied a variety of subjects ranging from Advanced Neuro-Imaging at UCL and Comparative Politics at LSE to International Relations at Westminster. During the same period, Sheikh Mohamed began a now long-standing relationship with MODUL University in Vienna, where young students from Yemen and other areas of the Middle East were awarded scholarships to study for degrees related to the tourism industry. More recently, young Yemenis have been awarded Foundation scholarships to study at several universities in Turkey.



In addition, the MBI Al Jaber Foundation supported short-course programmes at post-graduate level during 2013 and 2014 at the Faculty of Dentistry in Sana'a. Dr Mohamed Al-Haroni, then based at University College London, presented a course in Research Methodology introducing a set of transferrable skills to participating students. Following the success of the first workshop, the Foundation was pleased to support a second educational initiative with Dr Al-Haroni - a project aimed at the provision of Continuous Professional Development in medical education in Yemen. The programme not only provided participants with the necessary skills required for curriculum design in medical education but also enabled them to set a platform for wider educational reform in their own disciplines.

MBI Al Jaber Media Institute, Sana'a

In 2013 the MBI Al Jaber Foundation launched an independent media training institute in Sana'a, in response to Sheikh Mohamed's recognition of the need for and belief in a free and fair press as a prerequisite for democracy. Until May 2015, when the MBI Al Jaber Media Institute was forced to temporarily suspend activities, the independent, privately funded institution trained more than 1,000 journalists, students, teachers, trainers and citizens in all aspects of media. It also brought attention to the cause of journalists in Yemen, where in the past they may have faced the threat of violence or imprisonment.



MBI Al Jaber Lecture Series



Martin Jerrett, former United Nations Senior Political Affairs Officer

The MBI Al Jaber Foundation hosted its first lecture series during the autumn of 2014 and is now in its third year. The first lecture focussed on Yemen with 'The Proliferation of Private Media in Yemen Post 2011' presented by Abubakr Al Shamahi, a professional journalist and ex-Media Researcher at the MBI Al Jaber Media Institute in Sana'a. Other speakers have included Nawal Al Maghafi, film journalist and news reporter who presented 'A Lens on the Waves of Political Change in Yemen'; Awsan Kamal who took part in the "Update Meeting on Yemen", a panel presentation

co-hosted by the British-Yemeni Society; Professor Trevor Marchand, Emeritus Professor of Social Anthropology at SOAS, who presented "Architecture that 'Fills the Eye': Building Traditions in Highland Yemen", and Martin Jerrett, former United Nations Senior Political Affairs Officer, who spoke about "Difficult Diplomacy: The Challenges of Speaking to the South". Many of these lectures can be found on the MBI Al Jaber Foundation YouTube channel.



Sir Alan Duncan & HE Sheikh Mohamed Bin Issa Al Jaber



Her Excellency, Ms. Amat al-Alim Alsoswa, Yemen's first woman minister



Conferences, Annual Lectures & Support for the British-Yemeni Society

In recent years, Sheikh Mohamed Bin Issa Al Jaber and the MBI Al Jaber Foundation have sponsored several conferences and annual lectures which have helped bring attention to the situation in Yemen. These include "Yemen: Challenges for the Future" in January 2013, a two-day international conference organised by the British-Yemeni Society, which brought together academic and professional experts to discuss the challenges facing Yemen at that time. The Foundation also sponsored the inaugural annual British-Yemeni Society lecture in February 2014, where the keynote address was given by Ambassador Amat al-Alim Alsoswa, Yemen's first woman minister. In February 2015, the MBI Al Jaber Foundation continued its support by funding a reception for the second British-Yemeni Society annual lecture. 'Yemen: The Fight for Stability and Hope' was presented by the Rt Hon Sir Alan Duncan, UK Government Special Envoy to Yemen and Oman until 2016, at the Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre, SOAS, University of London, on 4th February 2015.

Parliamentary Briefing on Yemen



Photograph: Almgidat Mofall/VOA

The MBI Al Jaber Foundation and CAABU jointly hosted a Parliamentary Briefing, 'Two Eyewitness Accounts of Catastrophe in Yemen', at Portcullis House on 10th October, 2016. The briefing, chaired by Paula Sheriff MP, included panellists Nawal Al-Maghafi and Peter Osborne, two journalists who had recently returned from war-torn Yemen. Both journalists gave in-depth, harrowing details of what life in Yemen is, and has been like, since the war began. They reported on first-hand experience of the difficulties that Yemenis are facing on a daily basis, raising awareness of the plight of ordinary people caught up in this tragic situation.

Strengthening the Humanitarian Response in Yemen: Yemen Civil Society Event

Sheikh Mohamed Bin Issa Al Jaber and the MBI Al Jaber Foundation are sponsoring "Strengthening the Humanitarian Response in Yemen: Yemen Civil Society Event" in January 2017, jointly organised by ACTED, ACF, CARE, Mercy Corps, NRC, Oxfam, Save the Children and Warchild. This event, bringing together stakeholders from the international community, will facilitate dialogue with Yemeni civil society, the private sector, and national and international aid organisations, and will seek to better understand the humanitarian challenges in Yemen, addressing key issues affecting the current response.



Photograph: Charlotte Cans

Exhibition on the Traditional Architecture of Yemen



Photograph: Professor Trevor Marchand

A forthcoming photographic exhibition, "Architecture that Fills My Eye: Building in Yemen", focussing on Yemen's architectural cultural heritage and curated by Professor Trevor Marchand of SOAS, will be sponsored by the MBI Al Jaber Foundation. The exhibition and its planned public talks and educational events will explore the astonishing variety of building styles and traditions that have evolved over millennia in a region of diverse terrains, extreme climates and distinctive local histories. The principal objective of this exhibition is to remind the public of Yemen's tremendous cultural creativity and the need for international collaboration to protect it and its people from the destructive forces that have beset the region. The exhibition runs from 12th July until 23rd September 2017. For more information: contact