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review Foundation

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Royal occasion for Olive Tree project announcement



M.B.I. Al Jaber with Olive Tree co-founder Derek Tullett and HM Queen Elizabeth

A ground breaking scholarship programme named the Olive Tree was officially announced during the Royal opening of City University's Cass Business School on May 7th 2003. Present for the ceremony was M.B.I. Al Jaber, a founding patron of the project, who was presented to her Majesty The Queen during the course of the ceremonies. MBI's pledge is part of the £1 million the scheme has attracted so far. The other founding patron is Derek Tullett, president of international brokers Tulletts plc. The programme aims to bring together 20 Israeli and Palestinian students each year who will study together in London choosing undergraduate degrees from a broad range of subjects on offer at City, and who will also participate in a programme of cultural and social activities designed to encourage dialogue and understanding.

'The educational programmes we support, including this important programme at City University, are in line with our consistent and longstanding commitment to peace and democracy and the regional peace process' said M.B.I. Al Jaber.

A think tank of academics and Middle East experts has been formed to advise on the aims, structure and delivery of the programme covering details from student recruitment through to programme infrastructure and extra curricular activities. The Olive Tree expects to welcome its first group of students in Autumn 2004.



Chairman Stephen Day at the MBI Foundation visit to Cambridge

Letter from the Chairman

My life has been long and interesting. Bombed as a boy in war-time London, shot at as a young Colonial official in what is now Yemen, briefly a courtier, twice an Ambassador, minor actor in some exciting political dramas, now Chairman of a young and rapidly growing Foundation. If I had to choose which has been the most rewarding post, it would be that which I hold now.

The Middle East has played a major role in my life and I look at it today with respect and humility. No region of the world has contributed more to civilization, and it is changing at an astonishing pace, with a young population and new challenges. How can anyone begin to understand such a huge and complex patchwork of people, religions and geography?

Politics and diplomacy are important, but they skim the surface of the problems that preoccupy us all. It is only by education, research and therefore a modicum of understanding that we can lay the foundations for a more stable world. Working with our Patron, our Trustees, our Head of Programmes, our partner institutions and, above all, with our scholars, I have learned much, and together we can make a contribution towards a better future.

We put to our scholars the question that young President Kennedy asked Americans - ask not what society can do for you, but rather what can you do for your society? Experience has shown that individuals can make a difference, and nowhere more so than in the Middle East, as our Patron has demonstrated. The Foundation can provide an opportunity for a great leap forward in a young person's education, but we look to our alumni to return home and dedicate themselves to helping others. Nothing can be more rewarding.

SOUNDBITES

Afaf Adwan (Palestine)
SOAS - MA in Violence,
Conflict & Development

Sophie Zanoon (Sudan)
SOAS - MSc Development
Studies



Iraq's cultural heritage in peril

The fragile situation of Iraqi museums and cultural heritage was highlighted at the British Museum's 49th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale which took place in London in July of this year. Supported by the MBI Foundation, 11 Iraqi participants from the Iraqi Department of Antiquities and Heritage were able to attend the meeting. They included the Directors of the National Museum, Dr. Donny George and Dr Nawala al-Mutawalli, and Dr. Muyyad Said Damerji, representative of the Ministry of Information. Two special sessions were devoted to the current situation in Iraq, where large scale looting of ancient sites, as well as museums and universities is rife. These extraordinary sessions brought significant publicity in the media and heightened worldwide awareness of the gravity of the situation.

"Due to the destruction of the educational system and restrictions on the movement of Palestinians between cities, it became difficult for me to continue my higher education at home. The MBI Scholarship has given me the opportunity to continue my studies and to engage in a programme that could serve my community when I return to Palestine."

"I have always been concerned about the problems engulfing the Arab world. I was thrilled to be chosen as an MBI scholar. There is a feeling among all of us that we have been selected as Ambassadors for our countries."

"If one can be taught to have pride in one's past, then one can certainly feel hope for a brighter future. As a nation we must not look down but ahead. I hope to be able to spread such values through teaching."

Muzna Al-Quaiti (Saudi Arabia)
SOAS – MA in Asian History



Dar Al Hekma

This last academic year has been an exciting one in the short history of the prestigious Dar Al-Hekma girls' college in Jeddah. In March, Zuhair Fayeze, Chairman of the board of Trustees announced new building plans for the College funded by a \$5 million donation from M.B.I. Al Jaber. This money will go towards the completion of the southern part of the existing college and to fund a new building named after the MBI Foundation.

M.B.I. Al Jaber has long been a firm advocate of better educational opportunities for women and Dar Al Hekma is a perfect example of this offering the highest quality curricula and state of the art facilities to young women seeking higher education in Saudi Arabia. Dar Al Hekma, founded in 1999, is built on the principles of the Islamic faith, academic excellence and intellectual curiosity and is a private non-profit institution.

The first batch of graduate students left the college in July of this year at a ceremony in the presence of Crown Prince Abdullah and attended by M.B.I. Al Jaber. 19 girls graduated, with 6 collecting MBI Foundation scholarships which will permit them to continue post graduate studies at some of London's most prestigious institutions. Of the six students to be awarded scholarships, three will pursue post graduate degrees in Education Management, one in Political Economics, one in Technology Exploitation and Management and one in Education and International Development.





Great Ormond Street Hospital appeal



The world renowned Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children has recently launched a £34 million appeal towards a new International Patient Centre being built on their London site. The new centre will benefit thousands of children from the Middle East. The MBI Foundation is a strong supporter of the Hospital and contributed help and advice on the concept, copy and design of a brochure which will raise awareness of the appeal.

Over the past couple of years the MBI Foundation has been collecting unique pieces of art both historical and modern. As well as being a modest collector it is also a keen supporter of artists from the Arab world and regularly lends wall space in its Wigmore Street offices to artists keen to show their work. In each issue of the MBI Foundation Newsletter we propose to feature some of this work, either one of our acquired pieces or art lent for a period of time.

In 2002 two beautiful ceramic bowls were purchased for the Foundation. Made by Sally Pucill, a graduate of the Visual Islamic and Traditional Arts Programme at the Prince's Foundation in London. Her work shows the influence of medieval Islamic ceramics, both in design and technique and in particular uses designs popular in Egypt and Syria in the Mamluk period (1250-1517). The fine gold arabesques of the smaller bowl (above) simulate lustre painting, a technique invented in the Islamic world which spread via Spain to Renaissance Italy. VITA seeks to preserve cultural continuity, 'VITA aims to encourage greater understanding and proper practice of cultural traditions on the verge of extinction' said the HRH the Prince of Wales, President of the Prince's Foundation 'without this important knowledge, future generations would be lost in the wilderness.'



From left: Mr Stephen Day, M.B.I. Al Jaber, Koichiro Matsuura and Dr Ibrahim Pasha.

MBI Foundation joins forces with UNESCO

The MBI Foundation has recently been accorded observer status with UNESCO as an NGO (Non Governmental Organization). During a meeting in May with UNESCO Director General Koichiro Matsuura, M.B.I. Al Jaber pledged his support for a series of mutually defined projects designed to support the move to stability and peace in the Middle East. M.B.I. Al Jaber was accompanied by former Ambassador Mr Stephen Day, Chairman of the Foundation and by Dr Nihad Ibrahim Pasha, Trustee. Next steps will entail UNESCO selecting and proposing different projects compatible with the aims of the MBI Foundation with a view to signing a UNESCO protocol early Autumn. The main objective of UNESCO is to contribute to peace and security in the world by promoting collaboration amongst nations through education, science, culture and communication.