

review

MBI Foundation

Spring 2006

In this Issue

Promoting literacy in
the Arab world

The Olive Tree

Alumni news

A Soldier's Tale

The Light of Hope

An exhibition of works by Vaseem
Mohammed

Calligraphy exhibition

The MBI Foundation
78 Wigmore Street, London W1U 2SJ
United Kingdom

Tel: + 44 (0)20 7725 0986
Fax: + 44 (0)20 7725 0997
Email: info@mbifoundation.com

www.mbifoundation.com



Promoting Literacy in the Arab World



In November 2005, Sesame Workshop, a not-for-profit educational organization, convened a conference on Arabic literacy & language acquisition in early childhood.

A group of twenty-one educators, researchers, and media specialists from Jordan, Israel, Egypt, Palestine, and Lebanon joined Sesame Workshop staff and representatives of Sesame Street's Jordanian, Palestinian, Egyptian and Israeli co-production teams at the Dead Sea, Jordan, to discuss an array of issues related to the use of multi-media to promote literacy skills. In addition to their geographic diversity, the meeting participants reflected a range of professional backgrounds including: linguistics, media production, education, research, and developmental psychology. During the two days of meetings, presentations, and continual discussion, the conference participants engaged in a dynamic dialogue exchanging ideas, opinions and plans for new innovative projects and proposed partnerships. Funding for the conference came from two sources: the MBI Foundation and from an anonymous donor. The conference succeeded in meeting its stated objectives, identifying several issues and serving as a springboard for future media-based literacy interventions.

The Olive Tree

The Olive Tree scholarship scheme at City University aims to support talented young Israelis and Palestinians during their degree studies, to encourage mutual understanding and to create a community of graduates committed to the pursuit of human rights and economic welfare. Sheikh Mohamed Bin Issa Al Jaber is a founding patron and the MBI Foundation a sponsor. Current Olive Tree scholars are now working on the design of joint projects aimed at helping the two communities to work together in the future. Projects include: an educational scheme whereby Israeli and Palestinian teachers of literature develop a new school syllabus promoting mutual understanding; an arts project encouraging young people from both sides of the conflict to participate in acting, photography and music master-classes; and a commercial project that aims to set up an inclusive company for the benefit of the local community producing a range of products using indigenous olive oils. Recruitment for a second cohort of sixteen scholars is now underway and potential students will be interviewed in May.

Welcome to the latest Newsletter from the MBI Foundation.

Welcome to the latest Newsletter from the MBI Foundation. In this edition we survey some of the Foundation's recent activities and also catch up with some of our Alumni from across the Arab world.

The aim of the MBI Foundation is to build bridges between the Middle East and the wider world through educational and cultural activities, and this Newsletter includes a focus on some of the cultural projects and activities we have supported, from theatre to both traditional and contemporary art. You can find out more about our projects and Alumni on our website: www.mbifoundation.com

The patron of the MBI Foundation is His Excellency Sheikh Mohamed Bin Issa Al Jaber, UNESCO Special Envoy for education, human rights, tolerance and cultures to build peace and democracy. He is also the founder and Chief Executive of MBI International. For further information see www.mbialjaber.com



NEWS

Alumni

The MBI Foundation has a network of Alumni stretching from Morocco to Iraq. Each one has been the recipient of a scholarship from the Foundation and is now contributing to their country or region. We receive regular updates from our Alumni - here's a selection:



Heba El Araby, one of the MBI Fellowship Alumni who had the opportunity to take her Masters' Degree at AUC.

"Currently, I am the Marketing Manager at MSA University.

MSA University is one of the leading private universities in Egypt. I am proud to say that I was the building block of the Marketing Department at the University. I am responsible for all the marketing communication activities, marketing material and public relations events. I have been in the university for almost 2 years now and I have been successful to take MSA University to be of the top 5 private universities in Egypt.

I have to say that my masters degree was a competitive edge to my personality and skills and that what I have learned during my masters are all tools that I have used to reach what I reached today."



Sara Mansouri of Saudi Arabia studied at City University, London and is now working in banking.

"I'm currently working as an Investment Analyst in NCB - the Saudi National Commercial

Bank which is the biggest bank in the Middle East in terms of capital. I'm based in Bahrain in the Capital Markets division - Alternative Investments Management. Our work mainly deals with Hedge Funds. It's been a great year where I learnt a lot and I have had good exposure by attending different conventions and meeting global managers. In addition I have a great team that I enjoy working with. I'm also seeking to get a certification in portfolio management by taking the CFA (Certified Financial Analyst)."

Congratulations



Congratulations to Doaa Gawish (AUC 2002/4) who got married in December 2005. Since completing an MBA at AUC, Doaa has been working at Proctor & Gamble Egypt as the Distributor Team Logistics Manager.

Abdulmonem Suleiman was the first Sudanese student to study for an MBA at INSEAD in France.



"I am now based in Sudan as an Operations Manager for a global logistics company. Before I came to Sudan, I

worked for a few months on the business plan. Before I knew it, I had the go-ahead from management to start up our operations there. I re-located at the beginning of this year and since then got quite busy setting things up. Everyday, I find myself wearing multiple hats: I'm a painter, interior decorator, IT person, salesman, politician, recruiter, accountant and lawyer! The pressure is intense as, although we are part of a large company, we are still a start-up. It's very exciting, yet very challenging at times. You have to keep your energy levels up and be agile to deal with what every day brings you. INSEAD has given me an outstanding education and I find myself constantly going back to all those business cases that we took. Obviously it's far more complex in the real world once you throw in people issues, politics and the challenges of a third world country. But it's also more rewarding and you feel your impact on everything you touch. I love it!"



The Adventures of Alaadin!

Alaadin Rady is perhaps our most adventurous Alumnus. On leaving INSEAD, Alaa became a consultant for Bain & Company, but in 2004 he traveled the world working on development projects in places as far flung as Maniapure, a city in the Amazon of southern Venezuela, where he led a camp for local children, Mongolia where he worked on a cultural restoration project in Baladan Bairavan and Africa working with a project to breed lions whilst living with indigenous tribes. Alaa then went back to work with Master Foods as a Market Manager for Algeria, starting-up a business from scratch. But he will not be at his desk for long: here is a message from Alaa about his latest venture:



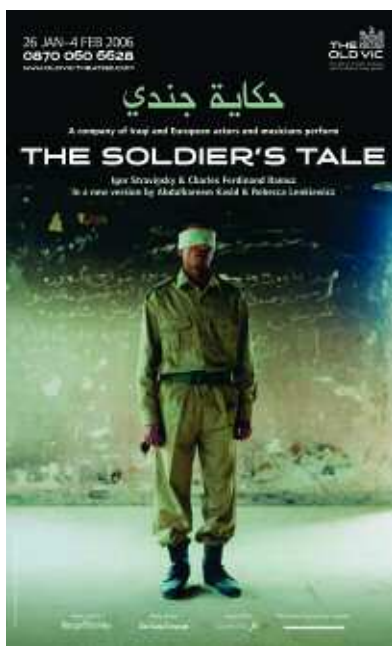
"Dear Friends, I'm excited to be traveling to Chile as a volunteer with Habitat for Humanity's Global Village program. I'll be working side-by-side with people who need a decent place to live, helping to build simple, affordable houses. Please visit my Habitat Web page, where you can learn more about my trip: www.habitat.org/gv/mytrip/9099-5106. Also, I'm raising money to support my team's work, and I'd be grateful if you would consider making an online donation. Thanks for helping me build houses and hope in Chile!"





The Soldier's Tale

In January 2006 The Old Vic Theatre Company and The Motion Group presented Stravinsky's *The Soldier's Tale* in a remarkable new version by renowned Iraqi poet, Abdulkareem Kasid, and Rebecca Lenkiewicz, the acclaimed writer of *The Night Season*.



This world-first collaboration of Iraqi and European actors and musicians wove together new Arabic and English texts with Stravinsky's evocative music and new compositions by Ahmed Mukhtar. The MBI Foundation played host to the Motion Group in their offices for the months leading up to and during the production, and also helped to bring actors and musicians from Iraq. Andrew Steggall directed veteran British actor Julian Glover, together with Martin Marquez and Ciaran McMennamin, three talented Iraqi actors, Deaa al Deen, Falah al Flayeh and Alaa Rasheed, and nine musicians who joined the onstage action. Andrew Steggall hopes to take the production, in a modified form, on a tour of the Middle East, and indeed plans at some point to take it to Baghdad.

Light of Hope

In November the MBI Foundation sponsored 'Light of Hope' an exhibition of works by Vaseem Mohammed at St. Botolph's Church Aldgate, London.

Vaseem grew up within sight of the church, thus it was a natural venue for a show of his paintings. The unusual facet to the exhibition was provided by the fact that Vaseem's work features Arabic calligraphy, including verses from the Qur'an. St. Botolph's was the centre of operations following the July 7th bomb at Aldgate and, though the exhibition had been planned as interfaith activity prior to the tragedy, it gained extra poignancy in the light of those events. The Rector of St. Botolph's, the Revd. Dr. Brian Lee, remarked "This exhibition, as its name suggests, stands as a beacon of hope for our common future. For years this place has stood at the cross roads of all the major waves of immigration into this country. We value our close links with the local Muslim community, and I hope this exhibition will be a symbol of learning, tolerance and solidarity." The exhibition was a great success, and all partners are planning another for July 2006.



Arabic Calligraphy at The British Museum: Making of the Master

In 2005 the MBI Foundation supported a temporary exhibition at The British Museum called 'Making of the Master' which looked at the long tradition of Arabic calligraphy.

Arabic calligraphy is taught today in the same way that it has been for over 1000 years, and it takes years of study. One must start as an apprentice, tutored by a master who is himself part of a chain of calligraphers traditionally going back to the Prophet Muhammad's son-in-law, Ali ibn Abi Talib, well known for his mastery of the art. Making of the Master highlighted this living tradition by displaying the ijaza or calligrapher's certificate of the master calligrapher, Hasan Çelebi and those of a number of students who have graduated from him including HRH Ali bin Nayef of Jordan.

