

MBI Al Jaber ● Foundation

# review

Winter 2007

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## Welcoming Iraqi Scholars to London

Our Iraq scholarship programme came to fruition this Semester with the enrolment of Iraqi MBI Scholars at partner institutions across London. Applications had been invited from Iraqi nationals to apply for full scholarships to undertake a Masters' Degree, and after a good response and shortlisting, interviews took place in the region. The successful candidates have taken up places at UCL, Westminster and SOAS, and are studying a wide range of subjects from medical sciences to journalism and financial law. The MBI Scholars were chosen not only for their academic prowess, but for their desire to return to their country and make a contribution.

The interview panel, which included Iraqi academics and representatives of the Iraq Higher Education Organisational Committee, remarked on the high quality of all of the candidates.

One of our new scholars, Dr. Othman Al-Helli, writes:

"While sitting chatting in our medical school residence hall during our final year, one of us asked, 'Where do you wish to do your postgraduate medical studies?' The vast majority answered 'London'. So studying in the UK is the dream of the majority of Iraqi medical students.

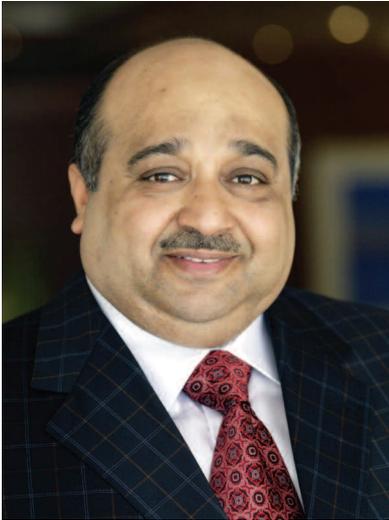
When I heard about the MBI Al Jaber Foundation offering scholarships for Iraqis and the selection being based on objective academic and professional criteria, I felt optimistic. So I applied and was accepted! When I was called by the MBI Al Jaber Foundation Director herself who informed me that I had been selected for sponsorship to study for a Masters degree in Neurology at UCL I asked myself "Why are these people paying so much to help me achieve my dream? The answer I received was very simple - it is their aim, "Forging links through education". Sheikh Mohamed Bin Issa Al Jaber has realised that although there is a significant gap between the Arab and Western Worlds, if we manage to narrow this gap, cooperation between these two worlds will become much easier.

So this is what I will be trying to achieve during my year in the UK. I will do my best in my studies and impress my professors. I will try to convey the genuine Arab spirit of goodness and tolerance by attending and participating in social events. I will try my best to represent the real soul of Islam which simply means peace and love for all humanity. In short, I will never let those people down who have made this life dream come true."

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**MBI AL JABER**  
Foundation



*H.E. Sheikh Mohamed Bin Issa Al Jaber,  
Patron and Chairman*

## Welcome to the Winter Edition of our Newsletter

A warm welcome to the latest news from the MBI Al Jaber Foundation. It has been a busy time for us, with the emphasis on our scholarship programmes in London and Vienna. In these pages you can read about past and present recipients of our scholarships, and also learn about some of our other activities. The MBI Al Jaber Foundation is a UK registered charity, governed by a Board of Trustees. In addition to our scholarship programmes, we also support projects of an educational or cultural nature, in particular those which make links between the Middle East and the wider world.

In this we are led by our Patron, H.E. Sheikh Mohamed Bin Issa Al Jaber, a self-made businessman and philanthropist dedicated to education, peaceful coexistence, tolerance and democracy in the Middle East.

You can find out more about our many projects and activities at our website: [www.mbifoundation.com](http://www.mbifoundation.com).

## Advancing Higher Education In Iraq

As part of the MBI Al Jaber Foundation's broader support for Iraq, and following Sheikh Mohamed Bin Issa Al Jaber's generous support of the 2004 conference, the Foundation is sponsoring The International Conference on Higher Education in Iraq taking place in Erbil, Kurdistan, in December, 2007 under the patronage of the President of the Kurdistan Region, H.E. Masoud Albarazani.

The mission of the conference is to foster partnerships for the development of higher education in Iraq in order to achieve international standards and recognition. It aims to bring together representatives of universities and other interested parties from the UK and other countries and their Iraqi counterparts, in order to define viable strategies for partnerships in courses, research, academic assessment and quality assurance. Furthermore, it aims to explore avenues for investment in the higher education sector.

The Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Baghdad, all Iraqi universities, higher education institutions and research centres will be represented at senior level. The aim is to achieve parallel representation from other countries and some international bodies. It is planned that visiting academics will make keynote speeches in plenary sessions and workshops, and participate fully in the work of the conference.

The themes of the conference are: Modalities for the organization of a socio-economically responsive higher education sector; Capacity building and personnel development for academic and higher administration staff; Development of curricula and teaching/learning methods; Accreditation, evaluation and assessment; Impacts of new technologies in teaching and research.

*Dr Abbas al-Hussaini of IHEOC meets with Carolyn Perry of the MBI Al Jaber Foundation and Professor al-Musawi, Cultural Chancellor of the Iraq Embassy, London*



# Alumni Updates

## Studying Tourism in Vienna

Our students have been taking up their places on the BBA in Tourism and Hospitality Management at MODUL University Vienna, in Austria. This programme is open to all Arab residents of the Middle East and has attracted interest from a wide range of countries from Mauritania to Iraq, and from individuals as well as nominations from Ministries. The first student to arrive in Vienna was Ahmed Shaath of Saudi Arabia. Ahmed had heard about the programme from his cousin Reem Shaath, one of our 2001/2 Alumni!

Applications are now invited for the 2008 programme: for further details visit [www.modul.ac.at](http://www.modul.ac.at) and our website.

*We would like to share with you some news from our Alumni, who continue to achieve and contribute to the knowledge and economies of the region and beyond. Our Alumni network stretches from Morocco to Iraq, and includes practitioners, academics and entrepreneurs, each of whom has been the recipient of a Foundation scholarship.*



### **Dr. Ammar Al Naimi**

Congratulations to Dr. Ammar Al Naimi (UCL 2006/7) who earlier this year gained a distinction in his Masters' Degree at UCL. Ammar, who trained as a Doctor in Baghdad, took an MSc in Prenatal Genetics and Foetal Medicine. Ammar carried out original research in the field of genetics as part of his postgraduate degree and the research findings will be published in a number of papers. He has also been invited to participate in the Annual Meeting of the Institute for Women's Health in London this December by presenting a poster based on his research.

### **Ziad Shaaban**

Ziad Shaaban (LSE 2001/2) has recently moved to Dubai, where he is working for EFG-Hermes, the premier investment banking, and fund and portfolio management company. He is currently running the credit desk there. Ziad is originally from Lebanon, and studied Finance and Economics at LSE as an MBI Scholar. His career path has taken him from Beirut to London, where he worked for JPMorgan in credit derivatives, and now back to the region. He also qualified as a Chartered Financial Analyst last year. We wish him every success in his new position!

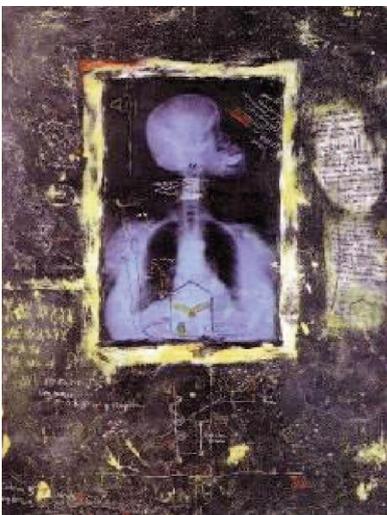
### **Noura Mansouri**

We are also very happy to announce a new addition to the family of Noura Mansouri (City University 2003/4). Noura and her husband Ammar Yousef are very proud of their beautiful daughter Aya who is now four months old. Noura studied an MBA in Technology Exploitation & Management at City University, before moving to Queen Mary College to enroll for a PhD in the School of Engineering and Material Science on the subject of Carbon Management for Sustainable Development with particular reference to her home country, Saudi Arabia. She is now in the third year of her research and at the writing-up stage.



# Future Activities

We are already planning our support for Projects in 2008. These will include further support for Connecting Cultures, which in 2008 will celebrate the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue with two journeys in Oman, one for all girls in February, and one for all boys in April, involving 36 young people from Europe (UK, Italy, Germany, Spain, Netherlands, France and Austria) and the Arab states (Oman, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, UAE and Jordan). The Soqatra Training Centre, Yemen, has been awarded a further grant to help provide facilities for Soqotran students to learn English and to be introduced to basic computer skills. New initiatives include support for Offscreen Education's exhibition Edge of Arabia, Art and Identity in the Land of the Prophet, and a conference marking the 60th anniversary of the end of the Mandate, hosted at King's College London on May 14th and 15th 2007. Look out for more details in our Spring 2008 Newsletter.



## Seminar for Arabian Studies

The Seminar for Arabian Studies was held recently at the British Museum and once again the MBI Al Jaber Foundation was the major sponsor.

The Seminar, which has been running for over 30 years and attracts participants from all over the world, was an international success. During the three day period, the latest research on the region was debated and 45 papers on all aspects of pre-modern Arabia were presented including 6 papers which were deliberately solicited for inclusion in a Special Session entitled Defining the Palaeolithic of Arabia. The resulting Seminar proceedings are to be published, providing an indispensable resource for all scholars interested in the Arabian peninsula.

This year's topic for the Evening Lecture (open to the public) was on 'Green Arabia: Climate and Archaeology from Prehistory to the Incense Trade' and was presented by Professor Tony Wilkinson of the University of Durham. Attendance at this year's Seminar has increased and was well above the average. In addition, the committee was very happy to report a substantial increase in student participation and in posters, including one from the MBI Al Jaber Foundation. For more information on the Seminar, visit [www.arabianseminar.org.uk](http://www.arabianseminar.org.uk).

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## Conference on Higher Education in the GCC States: building economies, societies and nations, Tuesday 13th November 2007

The 'Higher Education in the GCC States' conference, organised by the London Middle East Institute at SOAS and sponsored by the MBI Al Jaber Foundation, investigated how the different GCC states are responding to the challenges of shaping higher education to meet economic, social and political objectives. Nowhere in the world is higher education expanding as rapidly as it is in the six member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Accompanying the expansion of tertiary level education has been a growing awareness by GCC decision makers of the challenges confronting higher education and alternative approaches to dealing with them.

Professor Paul Webley, the Director of SOAS, and Professor Robert Springborg, the MBI Al Jaber Chair in Middle East Studies and Director of the LMEI opened the conference, which went on to provide an overview of the current state of tertiary education in the Gulf and identified the common objectives of higher education, specifying what the policy choices/issues involved are with the implementation of those objectives. It concluded by examining how different GCC states have constructed policy mixes for their tertiary educational sectors. Bill Rammell, Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education, rounded off the event with remarks at the conference dinner.

*Left, an image by Saudi artist Ahmed Mater*