

MBI Al Jaber ● Foundation

# review

Autumn 2008

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## Trialog Institut “Person of the Year”

H.E. Sheikh Mohamed Bin Issa Al Jaber was named “Person of the Year” by the Trialog Insitut in Vienna. Trialog Insitut, an interfaith and intercultural organization, held their first Christian Jewish Muslim Peace Concert at the Hotel Marriott Vienna on 24th June 2008.

The highlight of the evening was the award for “Trialog Person of the Year 2008” presented to His Excellency Sheikh Mohamed Bin Issa Al Jaber in honour of his activities at the MBI Al Jaber Foundation in support of peace, tolerance and democracy in Middle East. The award was presented by Karl Blecha, the former Federal Minister of Interior and the Home Secretary of Austrian Retiree Alliance and the Austrian-Arabic Association, who said it was a great honour to be chosen to present the award.

Among the attendees were Karin Gastinger, former Minister of Justice and Dr. Werner Fasslabend, former Federal Minister of Defense and current member of Parliament, who each spoke about the important contribution of the work of H.E. Sheikh Al Jaber to interfaith and intercultural dialogue, education, tolerance and peace.

Trialog Insitut, founded by Michael Galibov and Alexander Karakas, organized a conference entitled “Common Values within Three World Religions: Christianity, Islam and Judaism,” with the US Embassy Vienna last June featuring keynote speaker Under Secretary Karen Hughes, Department of State and a panel discussion by Jewish Muslim and Christian youth.

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**MBI AL JABER**  
Foundation

# Conferences

## MBI Al Jaber Lecture at The British Museum, Seminar for Arabian Studies

**The MBI Al Jaber Foundation once again sponsored the Seminar for Arabian Studies which was held at the British Museum in London from Thursday 24th - Saturday 26th July 2008.**

The Seminar is the only international forum which meets annually for the presentation of the latest academic research in the humanities on the Arabian Peninsula (including archaeology, epigraphy, ethnography, language, history, art etc.) from the earliest times to the present day or, in the case of political and social history, to the end of the Ottoman Empire (1922).

The highlight of the conference was the MBI Al Jaber Lecture on Thursday 24th July organised by the Seminar as part of the British Museum's public programme. It was the third of the Seminar's Annual Special Lectures, which are now entitled the MBI Al Jaber Lectures in honour of

the Foundation's sponsorship. Professor Dan Potts of Sydney University gave a lecture entitled 'Cartography and Cantatas: Arabia and the European Enlightenment' to a large audience, including some of the MBI Scholars currently in London.

The Seminar meets for three days - Thursday to Saturday - in the third week of July each year and is attended by over 180 people from all over the Middle East, Europe, and North America as well as India, Pakistan, Australia and Japan and up to 50 papers are presented. The papers are published annually in the Proceedings of the Seminar.

For further information, visit:  
[www.arabianseminar.org.uk](http://www.arabianseminar.org.uk)



*MBI Scholars and Director Carolyn Perry at The British Museum following the MBI Al Jaber Lecture*

## **'Do We Understand the Middle East?'** Conference of the British Society of Middle East Studies

**Friday 18th & Saturday 19th  
April, 2008**

The focus of this conference, organised by the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies and the London Middle East Institute, and generously sponsored by the MBI Al Jaber Foundation and the British Academy, was on bringing together academics, policy makers, cultural and media commentators to address possible answers to the question: 'Do We Understand the Middle East?' The 'we' in the title was left deliberately indeterminate – it can refer to the British, to Europeans, to Middle Easterners in diaspora, and to others. BRISMES is currently developing three Research Networks which explore the ideas linked into the conference theme and which provided the conference with particular foci:

1. Globalisation – has this changed the nature of the Middle East's relationship with the rest of the world and altered the character of its contribution?
2. Conflict and Trauma – how have the conflicts within the Middle East and those between Middle Eastern countries and outside powers been reflected in diverse cultural expressions?
3. Alternative Muslim Voices – What is the distinctively Middle Eastern contribution to the development of Muslim alternatives both within Muslim works and in minority Muslim contexts?

The conference was well attended on both days and a reception was held at the British Academy during the evening of the 18th.





*Conferences funded by the MBI Al Jaber Foundation cover topics such as education and media. Recent conferences include the Conference on Palestine, Britain & Empire: 1841 – 1948 (attended by HRH Princess Anne, here greeting Trustee Mashael Al Jaber) and LMEI conferences on Arab media and education in the GCC states.*

## **Palestine, Britain and Empire c.1841-1948**

**Wednesday 14th & Thursday 15th May 2008**

**A two-day public conference to mark the 60th anniversary of the British withdrawal from the Palestine mandate, held at King's College London.**

The Palestine, Britain and Empire (1841-1948) conference was held during May at King's College London to mark the 60th anniversary of the British withdrawal from the Palestine mandate. The conference, organised by King's College London, The British Empire & Commonwealth Museum and the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, was supported by the MBI Al Jaber Foundation, and brought together senior scholars and younger historians exploring new approaches to the long-standing connection between Britain and Palestine up to May 1948.

In the context of imperial power and a highly complex Palestinian society such themes as religion, mandatory administration, economic development, insurgency and counter-insurgency, art and culture, and decolonization were considered.

With some extraordinary personal testimonies also presented, a wide range of perspectives and interpretations were brought to bear on the background to one of the most intractable problems in the post-imperial age.

HRH the Princess Royal, Chancellor of the University of London, attended on the first day, and at lunch was introduced to speakers and guests. The conference was well-attended during the two-day period.

## **Setting the Arab News Agenda: Who, How and With What Consequences?**

**12 May 2008**

The purpose of this one-day conference held on the 12 of May 2008, organised by the London Middle East Institute and generously sponsored by the US Embassy and the MBI Al Jaber Foundation, was to seek some preliminary answers to the questions of who sets the Arab news agenda, how they do it, and what consequences this media has, especially on Arab politics.

Although in one day no definitive answers could possibly be provided, selective case studies were offered through which broader issues and trends were illustrated. Every effort was made to ensure that different interests and viewpoints were represented by those participating in the panel discussions.

Participants included media professionals and analysts as well as representatives of interests engaged directly with the Arab media. The conference was well-attended and a post-conference reception and dinner was kindly sponsored by the MBI Al Jaber Foundation.



**LONDON  
MIDDLE EAST  
INSTITUTE  
SOAS**

# MBI Scholar Updates

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



**Reem Shath, Saudi Arabia,  
LSE, 2001**

“I moved back to Riyadh to join the family business to head the female section of our organisation, Saudi HRD. I have been mostly involved in upgrading the HR & Management Consulting services and opening channels for training & development

of women in Saudi Arabia. I have also been involved in promoting and raising funds for a truly unique project for children between the ages of 12 and 15 called the Arab Digital Expression Camps. The main idea behind it was to develop the skills of Arab youth so they can create their own ideas, identity and hopes, through the use of advanced digital technologies. I believe in change, if it's for the better, and this is what I aspire to achieve in the future. Change in attitude, change in vision and change that will impact the society we live in.”



**Mohammed Yehia Zakaria Ahmed,  
Egypt, MODUL University, Current**

“I graduated with a Bachelor of Tourism and Hotel Management from Cairo University in 2001. I was in the group of the top 20 students granted employment at the Egyptian Tourism Authority as a form of distinction for educational achievements. I am also a postgraduate student at Fayoum University where I will obtain a Master's degree in Tourism as soon as my Master's thesis "Tourism and Travel in Ancient Egypt and how to benefit from it to promote tourism in Egypt" is finished. Once I graduate from MODUL, I will perform better at my job in my country at the Egyptian Tourism Authority, trying to transfer the great experience that I gained from MODUL to my colleagues at work, teaching tourism & hospitality courses in different private tourism institutions and using the same academic methods.”



**Barakat Jassem,  
Iraq, SOAS, 2008**

“I completed my MA degree in Liberal Studies in 2006 at Dartmouth on a Fulbright Scholarship Grant. I returned to Iraq because I was committed to contribute to a better Iraq. I wanted to give back to my

people and my community the educational and cultural experience I had in the U.S. I arrived in Baghdad in July and in August, I started working with Adam Smith International, an international economic consultancy, as a local consultant for their economic reform program in Iraq. Given my work in a financial consultancy, I wanted to get a more specialized degree in finance to strengthen my professional and practical knowledge. I secured admission into an MSc in Finance and Financial Law at SOAS. I want to continue my career in finance and financial consultancy after graduation. London as a world financial centre offers great career opportunities in finance but I still want to go back to Iraq to pursue my career there.”



**Ahmed Alhomiqany, Yemen,  
LSBF, Current**

“After completing my undergraduate education, I returned home to work as an Exporting Administrator in Al- Saeed Trading Company for five months. Working in the biggest exporting company in Yemen made me realize how different professional career life is from the academic knowledge I have, and that attaining a master degree which provides a combination of both academic and practical experience is essential. Subsequently, I applied to the MBI scholarship programme to pursue a Master of Science degree in Finance at the London School of Business and Finance and to benefit from being in such a diverse society. I am very glad to have been chosen for this scholarship and I feel I owe it to the MBI Al Jaber Foundation, my family, and my country to study as hard as I can and seize this opportunity, which is very enviable, and try my best to positively contribute to my society upon obtaining my degree.”

# Scholarships

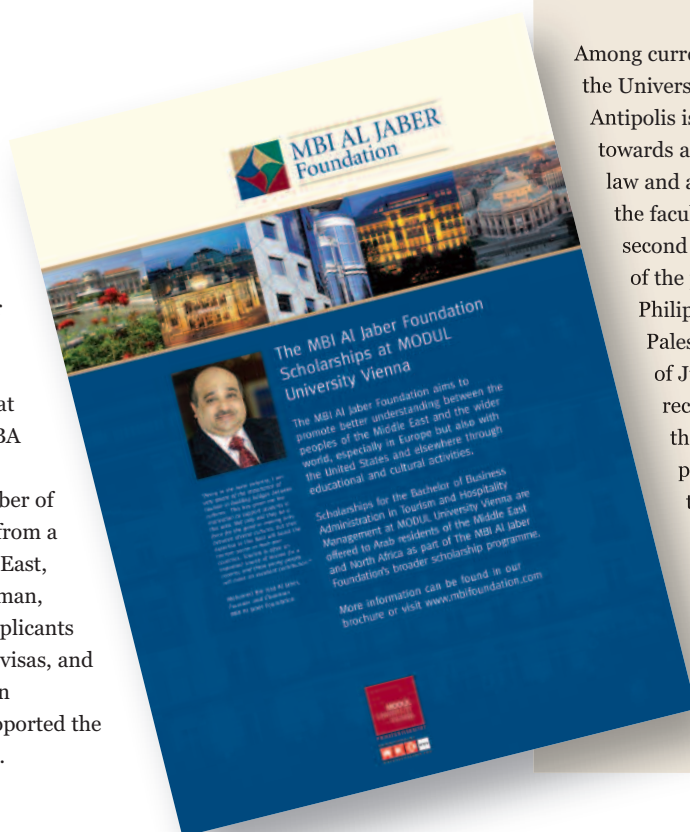


## Scholarships for the Yemen

The focus for this year's postgraduate scholarships has been the Yemen. As with our MODUL University programme, there were a large number of highly qualified applicants which made selection very difficult. The successful applicants come from a variety of academic backgrounds including Medicine, English Language, Political Science and Economics, and have been accepted at some of the UK's most prestigious universities including the London School of Economics and University College London. As with the MODUL undergraduate scholarship programme, the MBI Al Jaber Foundation scholarships include payment for fees, travel, food and accommodation but for Masters programmes this extends to cover a full twelve-month period.

## Scholarships at MODUL University, Vienna

It has been another successful year for the MBI Al Jaber Foundation scholarship scheme for young people from the Middle East awarded places at MODUL University, Vienna, on the BBA degree in Tourism and Hospitality Management. There were a large number of applicants of high academic standing from a variety of countries across the Middle East, including the Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Lebanon and Egypt. The successful applicants will now proceed to applying for their visas, and commence their degree programmes in September. This year we have also supported the one year MBA programme at MODUL.



## FRANCE

### Scholarships at the University of Nice Sophia Antipolis

#### MBI AL JABER FOUNDATION FRANCE

The ongoing scholarship scheme for both undergraduate and postgraduate students at the University of Nice Sophia Antipolis offers scholarships to students from the Francophone countries of North Africa, such as Mauritania and Algeria, for whom study in France is a more suitable option but for Masters programmes this extends to cover a full twelve-month period.

Among current MBI scholars at the Université Nice Sophia Antipolis is a student working towards a PhD in international law and a student studying at the faculty of law for her second year. Administrator of the programme Professor Philippe Saunier was in Palestine in the beginning of July this year to recruit students for the scholarship programme, including two scientists wishing to further their studies in their specific fields.



# Alumni Competition

## The MBI Al Jaber Foundation is pleased to announce our first ever Alumni Competition!

*All Alumni are invited to apply for a grant of up to \$10,000.*

*Deadline for the submission of proposals is the 1st of January '09.*

### **Who Can Apply:**

All MBI Foundation Alumni are eligible to submit a proposal for funding for a specific project to The MBI Al Jaber Foundation. Projects are required to meet the agreed aims of the Foundation. We welcome the ingenuity and initiative of our former scholars!

### **How to Apply:**

Projects should be submitted to The MBI Al Jaber Foundation via post or email to [projects@mbifoundation.com](mailto:projects@mbifoundation.com).

They should include a full proposal with costs, and applicants should be prepared to give a presentation to the Director and, if necessary, the Trustees. Proposals will then be submitted to the Trustees for consideration and approval.

We are looking for proposals from applicants that will use this opportunity to help not only themselves but, most importantly, the people with whom they live - that is, their country, their region, their community.

## “Offering Reconciliation” Bowl

*The MBI Al Jaber Foundation has acquired a new piece of artwork for its offices: Our Chairman, H.E. Sheikh Mohamed Bin Issa Al Jaber, successfully bid for a bowl created by Israeli artist Münz Rafi that bears an underlying message of peace and reconciliation.*

The Parents Circle - Families Forum (PCFF), an organization of bereaved Palestinians and Israelis that promotes reconciliation, initiated the “Offering Reconciliation” Project, to spread their message of peace through the universal platform of art. The organization invited 135 Israeli and Palestinian artists, sculptors and photographers to use a

large clay bowl as a blank canvas onto which they could convey their message of reconciliation. Each bowl is unique and reflects the individual interpretation of the artist of the message of reconciliation, their personal narrative

and what hope and peace in the Middle East mean to them.

All revenues from the auction of the bowls benefited ongoing educational activities in Israeli and Palestinian schools.



# Projects Updates

## The Socotra Training Centre

At the beginning of 2008 the MBI Al Jaber Foundation provided funding towards the updating of the Computer Room at the Soqotra Training Centre in Yemen, adding new computers and ancillary equipment. This continues the support given by the Foundation in the previous academic year. The Training Centre, teaching English and Computer Studies has been operating on the island for 7 years.

In the academic year 2007/08 a total of 120 students received training in English at 5 different levels while a further 18 students took part in Computer classes. With the rapid growth of the tourist industry the demand for places at the school continues to outstrip supply. As well as finding employment as tourist guides, in the hotel industry and within Government departments a number of students have already gone on to higher

education at Universities in mainland Yemen and Saudi Arabia.



## Youth Initiative for Progress in Iraq

This year, the MBI Al Jaber Foundation made a contribution to the Youth Initiative for Progress in Iraq, a non-partisan conference that brought together 16 Iraqi and 16 American participants between the ages of 16-19, aided by 11 student facilitators, to King's Academy boarding school outside of Amman, Jordan, from July 14th to July 25th, 2008. The conference provided Iraqi and American youth with a voice and the tools necessary to make concrete progress toward a sustainable and peaceful future between the two countries. A large part of the Youth Initiative for Progress in Iraq Conference is for the participants to develop their own projects aimed towards academic and recreational improvements in Iraq.

The Woodrow Wilson School of International and Public Affairs and several other departments at Princeton University along with the United World Colleges, headed by Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordan and Nelson Mandela, also endorse and support the goals of the Youth Initiative for Progress in Iraq.



## Connecting Cultures

Connecting Cultures was formally endorsed by UNESCO by the Director General Koichiro Matsuura this year, and, selected as a flagship venture, was invited to make a presentation at the inaugural UN Alliance of Civilisations Forum in Madrid in January 2008. The MBI Al Jaber Foundation has supported the Connecting Cultures programme each year since its establishment in 2004.

This year, to celebrate the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, Connecting Cultures hosted 36 young people from Europe and the Arab world to undertake one of two journeys in Oman in the Sharqiya Sands and Jebel Akhdar. Previous support has been granted for the Connecting Cultures Arctic expedition and the Desert Safari in 2007.

Connecting Cultures is a unique educational initiative that promotes face to face dialogue with young people from the western and Arab world via short wilderness journeys. The aim of this dialogue is to celebrate cultural diversity, break down stereotypes, identify shared values and in so doing promote understanding and help reduce the polarisation of cultures.



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

## Welcome to our Autumn Edition!

Our latest Newsletter highlights some of the MBI Al Jaber Foundation's recent projects and activities and catches up with more of the Alumni from our long-standing scholarship programmes.

As usual, we also introduce you to our current scholarships schemes, this year a continuation of the MODUL University scheme and a new programme for Yemeni scholars. The MBI Al Jaber Foundation continually strives to build bridges between the Middle East and the wider world and our various projects and activities are testament to this goal – one new project is our first ever alumni competition, offering our past students the opportunity to gain funding for projects designed to contribute to their community. Other activities include successful and well-attended conferences supported by the MBI Al Jaber Foundation and held in collaboration with LMEI, the British Museum, BRISMES, and King's College. This past year has been very eventful for our Patron and Chairman, H.E. Sheikh Mohamed Bin Issa, having been named "Person of the Year" in Vienna, meeting with the President of the European Parliament and visiting the Council of Europe in Strasbourg.

## Visit to the European Parliament

In July, Mr. Hans-Gert Pöttering, President of the European Parliament invited H.E. Sheikh MBI Al Jaber to



the European Parliament in Strasbourg to congratulate him on the achievements of the MBI Al Jaber Foundation and to hear of future plans.

President Pöttering thanked Sheikh Al Jaber for his efforts towards the advancement of education in the Middle East and for supporting projects aimed at building bridges between Europe, the broader Middle East region and the wider world. President Pöttering is shortly to embark on an official visit to the Middle East, reflecting his own particular interests in the region.

## Visit to the Council of Europe

*Last month, H.E. Sheikh Mohamed Bin Issa Al Jaber visited the Council of Europe in Strasbourg to receive the newly released White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue entitled "Living Together as Equals in Dignity".*

Ms. Gabrielle Battaini-Dragoni, Director General of Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport and Coordinator General for Intercultural Dialogue, and Mr. Ulrich Bunjes, Director of the Council of Europe Campaign against Discrimination received the Chairman of the MBI Al Jaber Foundation at the Council in Strasbourg and presented him with the newly released White Paper before engaging in a discussion of areas of mutual interest.



**For further information on all Foundation activities, projects and scholarships, please visit our website [www.mbifoundation.com](http://www.mbifoundation.com)**