

# UKH ALUMNI ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

## PROFESSOR KEITH SHARP President, UKH

I am delighted to write the introduction to our first edition of the UKH Alumni newsletter. One of the most important measures of the success of any university is the success of its graduates and at UKH we are very proud of the huge achievements of our



alumni in so many fields. Through this newsletter we celebrate some of these success stories and encourage our distinguished alumni to keep in touch with each other and their University.

Under the excellent leadership of Ararat, our Alumni Relations Officer (himself a double 'UKH-ian'), you can look forward to many developments in our Alumni Association over coming months, including an innovative App (being developed, of course, by one of our gifted alumni!) which will allow you all to communicate easily with your fellow alumni and the university and which will have many other exciting features. We will publish this newsletter regularly and through it we will share success stories as well as new developments at UKH and ways in which our alumni can become involved in the work of the University.

UKH is your university, and every one of our alumni is a valued member of the UKH family. We are always grateful to receive your feedback, suggestions, and comments on how we can further develop the University and its role in educating the future leaders of the Kurdistan region and beyond. I look forward to meeting you all in person at future events or whenever you have time to visit us at the UKH campus.

## ARARAT ABDOLLA UKH Alumni Relations Officer

My name is Ararat Abdolla Abdolghafur, and I got my BSc and MSc in Petroleum Engineering from UKH in 2016 and 2020, respectively. I am currently working as Alumni Relations Officer at UKH. I believe in diligence and commitment, and that is why I have taken on this position. The mission of the UKH Alumni



Association is to maintain a mutually beneficial and prolific relationship between the university and its alumni. On the other hand, the vision of our association is to promote a sense of community between past, present, and future students. Our association endeavours to develop a strong communication bridge between the university and its alumni. We aim to inform our alumni of any development, success, and achievement made by the university.

We plan to publish UKH Alumni Association Newsletters that aim to get our alumni connected to each other more than ever. The newsletters shed light on the success story of our alumni along with the latest developments made by the university. In addition, we aim to provide our alumni with digital membership identification cards so that they can comfortably benefit from a variety of discounts that will be available. Moreover, occasional reunions are going to be orchestrated to renew the bond of togetherness and friendliness among our alumni. Numerous various activities and programs are being probed and will be communicated to our alumni once approved. It is worth mentioning that what our association does require two-sided collaboration from both the university and the alumni, and the existence of our association relies solely upon the co-existence of the two bodies. Our association would necessarily reach out to our alumni to be part of the summer training provided by our career development centre (CDC) and other centres. We hope we can achieve prosperity through the support of the university and its benevolent alumni. Our Alumni are cordially called on to send us their suggestions and advice to the following contact details:

- Email: [Alumni@ukh.edu.krd](mailto:Alumni@ukh.edu.krd)
- Phone Number: 009647518530204

## ZANA AHMED MAHMOUD

Founder and CEO of Enlightors

My name is Zana Ahmed Mahmoud, and I am a computer engineering graduate from the University of Kurdistan Hewler



(UKH) in 2016. During my academic journey, I was the head of the university's chess club and education department, organizing several activities with stakeholders inside and outside the university. In addition, I have undertaken a variety of additional training courses and workshops such as leadership programmes, journalism, tech for kids, project management and volunteerism which widened my knowledge and experiences enormously.

In the summer of 2014, I started working as a news assistant with the Associated Press, and a variety of other international agencies covering the war against ISIS. Then I worked as the

## SHKO NAWROLY

CEO of Petroserve

Back in 2007, I had the chance to study dentistry at a public university in Erbil, but instead, I opted to study BA and MA in Business and Management at UKH.

At first, I was not certain if I had made the right decision to choose Business and Management over Dentistry. However, after the first year I thought "Yes I have made a good choice" and even now, if I could go back in time, I would definitely choose UKH again. What UKH gave me was more than degrees and grades. It was a process of preparing us for greater good.

We were taught critical thinking, debates, presentations, essays, academic writings, questioning, analysis, evaluation, and teamwork. I remember we had students from urban and very remote villages of Kurdistan, and we all learned from each other. For the first time, we had an independent, politically free, and elected student union body. I had the honour of being Public Relations Representative and President the year after. The leadership and teamwork we learned was just exemplary.

After graduating from UKH, professionally, I had the liberty of choosing between high profile government offices, inter-

head of digital media at the Kurdistan Regional Government - DMI where I supervised the team that built new social media branding and guidelines for the official pages of KRG and its entities. This era ended by providing social media training to 37 KRG ministries and entities.

In 2015, I ranked first in the Iraqi Young Leaders Exchange Programme (IYLEP), and a social media & IT course at Virginia Commonwealth University. In 2016, I became the head of social media for the first MERIT 360 programme in New York and Pennsylvania.

I am the Founder and CEO of Enlightors; a company based in Erbil, Iraq providing full-services, digital marketing service to small and medium sized businesses. I won the first place in the first Iraqi Accelerator Programme with my One Connect It start-up, registered in Delaware 2020. Also, I am a co-founder of Prsyar; a market research app established in 2022. In addition, I am Northern Coordinator with World Learning; helping to review and interview applicants. Additionally, we provide operation and logistics assistance for US exchange programmes such as IYLEP and ELITES.



national companies, and NGOs, as well as the biggest local companies. UKH had given me that free pass, that access code, that password where I could unlock doors.

In brief, I started working with the DFR, KRG as coordinator between KRG and Turkish Consulate General in Erbil. I had a very pleasant and challenging 5 years' experience.

In early October 2017, I received an offer I could not refuse. I became CEO of the largest local oil transportation and trading company in Kurdistan and Iraq. When I accepted the job, the chairman told me, I knew you would do it. I said 'How?' He said you are a UKH graduate, and I can imagine your capabilities. I became CEO at the age of 29. After 5 years, I am still associated with the same group of companies, and I have two titles. I am CEO of Petroserve and the Director of Sales and Marketing of Four Bridges Company: a leading construction and investment company in Kurdistan and Iraq.





## UKH ACKNOWLEDGES ALUMNI WHO EARNED THREE DIPLOMAS

On Tuesday 31 January 2023, UKH President Prof. Dr. Keith Sharp, Vice President Prof. Dr. Dana Mawlood and Alumni Officer Ararat Rahmiy received a group of UKH alumni comprised of Aryan Adnan, Shahan Salah and Mahmood Sidiq, who earned three different academic diplomas from UKH.

UKH president warmly welcomed the alumni and extended UKH's congratulations to them, underlining how UKH is proud of its alumni, their achievements and prestige. He also gave an overview on the current status of the university, the strategic plans and the expectations for the future.

Professor Sharp voiced the importance of strengthening the bond between the university and its alumni, and that UKH will not spare any efforts to continue supporting the alumni.

The guests thanked the university for acknowledging their efforts and their unique journey at UKH. They explained how the degrees they earned from UKH helped them shape their careers and find jobs easily.

Aryan Adnan and Shahan Salah are graduates from the first cohort of UKH, Class of 2010 and Mahmood Sidiq is a graduate of the class of 2016.





**YERIVAN  
DILSHAD**  
Certified Human  
Resources Manager

I am Yerivan Dilshad, a professional certified Human Resources Manager. My educational background includes BSc. in Information Technology from University of Kurdistan-Hewler 2011, and higher diploma in Information Technology from Duhok Polytechnic University 2021. I am currently seeking my master's degree in Executive Master of Business Administration from University of Kurdistan-Hewler. I have been holding the position of Group Human Resources Manager; working in different sectors within the group, from oil and gas to construction since March 2017.

My life is divided into three directions: working, studying, and motherhood. Keeping balance between the three is challenging yet rewarding and satisfactory. Being a working mother who pursues her studies is difficult and tiring, but in the end, it is all worth it. I am committed to continuing my professional development and growth, and I am excited to bring my knowledge and skills to new challenges and opportunities in the future. I hope to inspire other working mothers to pursue their dreams and believe that with dedication and perseverance, anything is possible.

## MUSTAFA KAMARAN

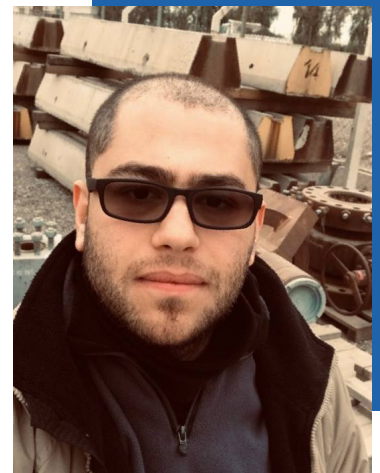
**Completion/Workover and Well Intervention  
Supervisor at TAQA**

The University of Kurdistan Hewler is the sole place from which I say: "I owe it all to UKH". I'm Mustafa Kamaran and currently working as Completion/Workover and Well Intervention Supervisor at The Abu Dhabi National Energy Company-TAQA, in a team of Local and International experts here in Kurdistan, on Drilling and Completions Projects. I'm involved in leading daily operations related to D&C campaigns starting from a field point of view and covering the planning, organizing, managing, execution, adhering to QHSE policies and regulations, cost control, and maintaining operation records.

I enrolled in summer internships with the support of UKH and not only that, but I also worked as a field interpreter with an international drilling contractor, Viking Oilfield Services, while studying in my third year. UKH equipped me with essential knowledge and theoretical background that allowed me as a Natural Resource Engineering and Management (NREM) - Petroleum Engineering student to easily cope with the actual demands of the industry and work in an exceedingly challenging environment.

At UKH, I did not just learn what a typical five years of academia can bring and what the School of NREM could offer. The learning

curve allowed me to touch other grounds and expand my knowledge base, my skill set, and hence my story. For example, working for International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) on multiple disciplinary projects, and I confidently achieved what was required of me and became a valuable member of the team for the quality of the



work that I was able to provide, and that all goes back to the strong foundation that UKH gave me and allowed me to work on, on a day-to-day basis.

All those moments have not just come out of the blue. The strong foundation that UKH provided, helped me to grow and learn from it, and the process of learning did not stop there. I'm continuously working to adopt more dynamic practices and ideas in terms of learning and staying an active learner.



## ARYAN BARZAN

My name is Aryan Barzan, one of the first students and graduates of UKH. I have obtained three degrees from UKH, and I haven't decided about the fourth yet. As an alumnus, I am very glad and proud of what I learned and achieved with this esteemed educational institution. UKH taught me the importance of teamwork, self-dependence, the art of searching and digging for new things and different subjects, the art of making a change, the art of writing and presenting.

During my MA in Business and Management, I was a full-time mother, an employee and a student. When I look back, I must have been very excited to finish my degree in UKH that I was bearing all these difficulties. And yes, I did it!

My daughter was only one and a half years old when she attended my graduation ceremony. I was telling myself that once I finish my MA, I will start concentrating more on my professional life, but it didn't go as planned. After two years, in a calm morning, I received a phone call from my father telling me to go and apply for another master's degree announced recently at UKH. This time, it was Software Engineering. I still recall how my feelings were at the time, but today I am very happy and proud of myself that I applied that day.

Of course, nothing comes easily, some nights after I was putting my daughter to sleep, I had to stay up and prepare myself for assignments, projects, exams, and presentations. She would wake up when it was time for me to sleep. Sometimes I was taking her to my weekly meetings with my supervisor. Thankfully, he was very understanding of my situation. Away from all of that, I was ranked to be the second among my classmates.

As I'm writing this story, I can remember all the difficulties I faced during my educational prowess which makes me proud of UKH and myself. Hopefully, my story will encourage others that nothing comes easily in life. My special thanks to all my beloved teachers, supervisors and UKH staff from my very first degree to the last. My thanks to my own family as well for all the support they gave me during my educational journey.



## UKH CENTRES

There are four centres available at UKH, we will cover a centre in each newsletter:

- Career Development Centre (CDC)
- Creativity Entrepreneurship Centre (CEC)
- Centre for Environmental Studies (CES)
- Centre for Peace-building and Dialogue (CPD)
- Professional and Executive Education Centre (PEEC)

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTRE (CDC)

In line with the UKH's objectives of being a place of excellency in the region, this centre was established to help UKH students and alumni to plan their career paths and discover career opportunities during college and after graduation. The centre offers career and professional development workshops, seminars, and programs to guide students to discover the career path that interests them. The mission of the centre is to build professional relationships and engage our students and alumni with employers in the region. The UKH Career and Professional Development Centre will assist to link students with employers by helping students to develop leadership and communication skills. In addition, the vision is to prepare our students and alumni for a lifetime of professional success.



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**The following services are provided by the CDC:**

- Career advising.
- Connect UKH students to internship and employment opportunities.
- Interview and networking strategies and techniques.
- Résumé guidance and cover letters.
- Internships and job postings.