



University of  
**KURDISTAN**  
Hewlêr



UKH Alumni  
Association

# UKH ALUMNI ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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## HUDA SARHANG

Founder and Owner of Lala Candles

I am Huda Sarhang Abdulrahman, a proud alumna of UKH and the current Founder and Owner of Lala Candles.

I wish to share my humble story, stating, "Applying to UKH was



the first step to building a strong personality and learning how to make independent and difficult decisions in life." In 2010, I had the opportunity to apply to UKH while also being accepted by another prominent university for engineering. While family and relatives expected the latter, I chose to study Politics and International Relations at UKH and later pursued my MA studies in the same field. Throughout my academic years, I cherished each day, gaining valuable opportunities to learn, nurture my personality, and develop skills. I graduated not only with high-quality degrees but as a responsible individual capable of effecting change within my community.

Armed with the tools from my education, I worked for esteemed organizations and held high-level positions. After 8 years, I decided to establish my own business. Today, I proudly stand as the founder of the first candle-making brand and startup business in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. Our brand, officially registered by the government, promotes culture and nature through products and services inspired by our heritage. Five years since its establishment, Lala Candles' products span the Kurdistan Region and Iraq. We supply culturally inspired candles to diplomatic missions, consulates, and major companies. This sustainable business has not only provided opportunities for other women but also offered them job prospects. As a UKHian, I am confident in managing a business and leading my own team. This stems from the years spent with exceptional instructors and professors. I take immense pride in UKH, not merely as an educational institution, but as a brand. If you are fortunate and work diligently, you can carry that brand's label with you for life.

## REBAR ALI

Marketing Specialist

This is Rebar Ali, a marketing specialist at Gateway ICT Solutions, with seven years of diverse experience. I'm grateful for the chance to share my story here.

In 2011, I received a call from my cousin, an engineering student in Hawler. At the time, I was completing my first year in English language at a Sulaymaniyah university. He informed me that a reputable university in Hawler was accepting applicants from various cities. Despite challenges, I finished the year and promptly applied to the new university, driven by my commitment to personal and educational growth.

Initially, my decision to switch universities and cities was bitter-sweet for my family, but they offered unwavering support. I joined the University of Kurdistan-Hawler (UKH), renowned for its academic excellence.

During my five years at UKH, I gained much more than words can express. The first two years of the English language program significantly improved my skills, aided by multimedia resources, online platforms, and library access. As I progressed, internships and research opportunities enriched my experience. The university's industry connections prepared us for the competitive job market. An internship at a reputable company allowed me to apply classroom knowledge to practical situations. With international recognition for its academic reputation, UKH graduates are highly regarded by local and international companies. What stood out at UKH was its diversity and inclusivity,

welcoming students from all backgrounds and fostering an environment of respect and equal opportunity.

For me, UKH is undoubtedly a place to chase dreams and earn a respected degree. It nurtures curiosity, personal growth, and lasting connections. It will forever hold a special place in my heart as a transformative chapter in my life.



## ALI ZUHAIR

**Medical Doctor**

In 2012, I first encountered the University of Kurdistan Hewler (UKH) when they hosted a TEDx Talk event, and I was a speaker. Interacting with the students and staff, they encouraged me to consider UKH for my university studies. At that time, however, I was passionate about studying medicine, and UKH didn't offer a medical program. Little did I know that I would eventually become one of the first seven graduates of UKH's School of Medicine.

Two years later, in 2014, after graduating from high school, I learned that UKH had announced they were opening the School of Medicine. My journey toward becoming a doctor had just begun. I can still vividly recall the day when all accepted students were assembled, and we were told that we would be moving to Austria for our first year. We were venturing into the unknown, stepping into a new and different educational system—a leap of faith that would later become the hallmark of my experience at UKH.

Being among the first students of a newly established medical school was challenging. The uncertainty of how things would turn out weighed heavily on us. However, UKH's unwavering support, reputation, and relentless efforts made our six-year journey manageable and fruitful.

In 2020, I graduated and began practicing as a medical doctor in various governmental and private hospitals in Erbil. Concurrently, I embarked on the daunting task of obtaining my medical license to practice in the UK. This process was intimidating, but with the continued support of my mentors from UKH, I successfully passed three different exams and obtained my license earlier this year.



UKH's support didn't end upon graduation. After getting my license, I approached Dr. Teshk, the Dean of the School of Medicine at UKH. With his extensive experience in the National Health Service (NHS) in the UK, he helped secure a clinical attachment for me there. For four weeks, I had the chance to understand how the medical system operates in the UK, learning firsthand about the differences in medical practice between Kurdistan and the UK. This experience has provided me with invaluable insights before starting work there.

Reflecting back, every challenge and difficulty we faced was worthwhile. They shaped me and my career. The memories we created during that time hold a special place in my heart. UKH will always be a proud and cherished chapter in my story.

## NOOR IKRAM

**Learning and Development Specialist at Taurus Company**



Looking back to 2011, I entered the University of Kurdistan Hewler (UKH) with numerous worries and uncertainties. The field of engineering wasn't my true passion, yet I was unaware of the valuable skills awaiting me. Despite the challenges, my time there was rich in learning and experience. The leadership abilities instilled in us during university have proven to be priceless.

While at UKH, I acquired not only an education and life skills but also met the love of my life, who is now the father of our two children. Therefore, the memories of UKH will remain etched in our hearts and minds permanently.

I started my professional journey just 20 days after completing my final exams, and have never stopped working since then. Interestingly, many employers, upon learning of my UKH background, waived some tests, recognizing the comprehensive skills that we have received in UKH.

Balancing motherhood and being a wife while striving for success is not easy. However, the self-assurance and resilience instilled in me during my time at UKH have enabled me to tackle challenges with ease. Presently, I've discovered my true passion and success as a trainer and learning field. Now I am working as a learning & development specialist at an Oil and Gas company. What is worth noting is that during our time at UKH, we didn't just focus on our chosen fields of study. We also acquired a wide range of skills that are applicable to various professional fields. This is evident from the fact that many Alumni are currently employed in areas that are different from what they initially studied.

Finally, I've had the privilege of getting to know three remarkable women during my time at UKH, all of whom have achieved prominent positions in their careers. This year, we celebrate our 12th anniversary of friendship.





## NEWS

# IGNITING EXCELLENCE: UKH'S NEWEST INNOVATIONS IN PROGRAMME OFFERINGS

### SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING (SSE)

- BSc in Games Development and Media Design GDMD
- MSc Artificial Intelligence
- PhD in Computer Science and Informatics
- PG Diploma in Mathematics
- PhD in Computer Software and Engineering
- MSc in Water and Environmental Engineering
- PG Diploma in Petroleum Engineering

### SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES (SSS)

- BA in English and Digital Media
- BA in English and Translation
- PhD in Applied Linguistics
- Postgraduate Foundation

### SCHOOL OF MEDICINE (SOM)

- BSc in Pharmacy
- MSc in Medical Education





## REZHIAR KAMAL MUHAMAD

Head of Data Management at  
UN WFP-Iraq

I'm delighted to share my story as a proud alumnus of the University of Kurdistan - Hewlêr (UKH). My name is Rezhiar Kamal Muhamad, and I have been heading the Data Management Unit at the United Nations World Food Programme (UN-WFP) in Iraq since March 2017.

When I joined UKH in 2010, I had no inkling of the profound impact it would have on my life, both personally and professionally. Initially unsure about my major, I enrolled in the two-year access program. Subsequently, I earned a BSc in Computer Science, despite a shift from my initial aim of becoming a computer engineer. My dedication paid off, culminating in finishing as the top student in Computer Science, an accomplishment acknowledged by the Vice Chancellor in 2015.

For me, UKH opened a door to a new world. It commenced with honing my English skills, facilitating my acceptance into the Iraqi Young Leaders Exchange Program in the US to study social media and IT at Virginia Commonwealth University in 2014. This opportunity significantly contributed to my growth.

Post-graduation, I embarked on my professional journey at Rudaw Media Network, a prominent media establishment in Kurdistan and Iraq. Simultaneously, I worked as a technical supervisor at Newroz Telecom Company, overseeing 17 staff members across all KRI showrooms.

While this double shift was challenging, it transformed my life. Transitioning, I joined humanitarian organizations and commenced my tenure at UN-WFP in 2017 as a Data Management Associate. After two years, I was promoted to Data Management Officer in 2019 and eventually became the head of the unit overseeing data management staff across country offices from 2020 to the present.

UKH's dedication and support, manifested through a nurturing environment, adept teaching staff, and adaptive learning methods, enabled me to excel in various local and international industries and organizations. I am immensely honored to have had the chance to study and learn at UKH. I attribute my achievements to the university's guidance and divine grace.

## TANYA SAHEBQRAN

### Customer Care Training Specialist at Korek Telecom

As Tanya Sahebqran, a Customer Care Training Specialist at Korek Telecom, I am pleased to share my journey to success, starting from my application for the Master of Arts in Business Management program at the University of Kurdistan Hewler to my current role. The two years spent studying my Master's at UKH have been a pivotal step in propelling me to my current professional standing, enabling me to achieve my career and personal life goals.

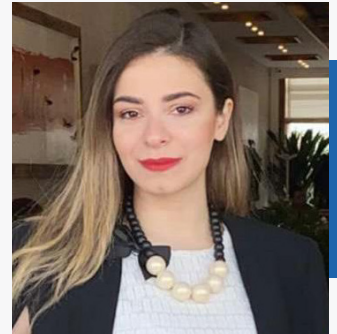
When I decided to pursue my Master's Degree in Business Management at UKH, my goal was to enhance both my learning and thinking perspectives within my career. The program provided me with a plethora of academic resources, establishing an ideal foundation for acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge in my field. It granted me a comprehensive understanding of various business aspects, including marketing, human resources, finance, and accounting.

A significant outcome of the Master's program was its emphasis on practical learning. Through diverse case studies and group projects, I cultivated critical thinking skills and honed my ability to make informed decisions in a dynamic business environment.

While pursuing my Master's, I held several positions. I was the Head of the International Relations Department at Kurdistan International Bank, took on a role in the Rwanaga Foundation as an Employment Specialist for a UNDP project, and worked in administration at Erbil Manpower Co. These experiences laid the groundwork for my current

position at KOREK Telecom as a Customer Care Training Specialist.

The Master's program prepared me thoroughly for this role by equipping me with a robust foundation in business management principles and strategies. I utilize my knowledge to design and implement comprehensive training programs, focusing on enhancing customer service skills, communication techniques, prob-



lem-solving abilities, leadership skills, and, notably, critical thinking. The latter has been particularly beneficial to me, influencing my daily decision-making and leading to numerous accomplishments in my career.

In conclusion, my journey from applying to the Master of Arts in Business Management program at the University of Kurdistan Hewler to becoming a Customer Care Training Specialist at KOREK Telecom has been immensely rewarding. The program has provided me with an exceptional foundation, practical skills, and a robust network, all of which have been pivotal in achieving my professional aspirations and contributing to the success of my organization. I extend my gratitude to my family for their unwavering support, and I express thanks to everyone who played a role in my education and personal growth.

## SAMDAR MUHAMMED

### Administration and Human Resources Manager



In 2011, I embarked on a life-changing journey as a student at the University of Kurdistan - Hewler (UKH). Little did I know that this prestigious institution would not only provide me with exceptional academic experiences but also shape my future in ways beyond my imagination. In this narrative, I proudly share my successful story at UKH, a transformative chapter that laid the foundation for my personal and professional growth. From the very first day at UKH, I was greeted by an inspiring academic environment that nurtured intellectual curiosity and encouraged the pursuit of knowledge.

The university's distinguished faculty and cutting-edge resources empowered me to embrace a diverse range of subjects, fostering a multidisciplinary approach to learning that transcended the confines of textbooks. Throughout my journey at UKH, I had the privilege of acquiring a comprehensive set of skills and competencies that have been instrumental in shaping my career path. Critical thinking, problem-solving, effective communication, and leadership abilities were some of the invaluable attributes instilled in me, positioning me as a formidable candidate in the professional world upon graduation.

Upon graduating from UKH in 2017, I was armed with the confidence and expertise needed to embark on the next phase of my life. Equipped with the knowledge and skills honed during my academic tenure, I confidently entered the job market and secured a position that matched my aspirations, allowing me to make a meaningful contribution to my chosen field. Beyond academic achievements, UKH became the catalyst for a serendipitous encounter that forever changed my life. During my time at the university, I found not only intellectual growth but also love. It was at UKH that I met my soulmate, my fiancé, and together, we embraced the journey of life hand in hand, bolstered by the shared experiences and memories that UKH gifted us.

Fueled by my UKH experiences and thirst for knowledge, I decided to pursue a master's degree in Poland, expanding my horizons and embracing international education. The foundation laid at UKH gave me the confidence to face new challenges, adapt to different cultures, and excel in my academic pursuits. While pursuing my master's degree, I simultaneously embarked on an entrepreneurial venture, establishing my own business. Drawing on the skills and entrepreneurial spirit fostered at UKH, I navigated the complexities of business ownership with determination and innovation, creating opportunities for myself and contributing to the community through job creation and economic growth.

In conclusion, the University of Kurdistan - Hewler (UKH) has been a lighthouse of inspiration and empowerment on my journey of success. From fostering a love for learning to equipping me with the tools to thrive in various spheres of life, UKH has been the cornerstone of my achievements. As I look back on my time at UKH, I am filled with gratitude for the transformative experiences, opportunities, and relationships that have molded me into the individual I am today. The impact of UKH on my life is profound and enduring, and I remain forever proud to be a part of its illustrious legacy.





## 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)

## CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES (CES)

Environmental issues are among the most pressing ones facing humanity. The presence of environmental problems in urban areas is associated with numerous factors. Cities in Kurdistan Regional of Iraq (KRI), particularly Erbil, the capital and most populated city in the KRI, are suffering from serious environmental issues and risks in the fields of water, land, noise, and air pollution. However, a significant part of the environmental issues has a lot to do with the lack of fundamental infrastructure (e.g., sewerage system and wastewater treatment plant, industrial wastewater treatment plant, municipal solid waste transfer station, solid waste management, medical and hazardous waste management, air pollution monitoring and control, etc.), public environmental awareness, and a shortage of comprehensive environmental research studies done in these areas. For this purpose, to prevent, reduce, and treat environmental pollution, which has a direct impact on public and human health, and to promote environmental awareness, the University of Kurdistan Hewlêr (UKH) aimed to establish a Centre for Environmental Studies (CES).

### Vision of CES

- Collaborating with leading international research institutions and universities on environmental research programmes.
- Broader understanding of practices, policies, and systems in education.
- Acting as a valuable element for solving complicated environmental issues on a local, national, and Middle Eastern scale.
- To be nationally and internationally recognized as a premier environmental research center.

### Mission of CES

- Developing scientific knowledge in environmental fields (water, air, and land pollution) and later, biodiversity, environmental sustainability, environmental economics, and environmental law and policy.
- Providing professional and strategic advice to the KRI authorities and scientific communities on a national level.