



# UKH ALUMNI ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2



SPECIAL EDITION  
**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**  
MARCH 8<sup>TH</sup>, 2024



I am delighted to introduce this special edition of the UKH Alumni Newsletter which commemorates **International Women's Day** by showcasing the achievements of successful women associated with the University.

We are very proud of all our graduates, but the outstanding achievements of our **female** graduates deserve special mention.



Dr. Keith Sharp  
President

## HELEN MOAYED BAKER

**Advocacy, Campaigns, Communications, and Media (ACCM)  
Manager at Save the Children**

My journey is one of unwavering determination and a passion for making a difference, culminating in my recent appointment as the Advocacy, Campaigns, Communications, and Media (ACCM) Manager at Save the Children. Yet, this milestone is merely the latest in a series of steps along a path that has been both challenging and rewarding. My story is not just about where I am today but about the journey that brought me here.



From the very start, my educational experiences laid the foundation for my aspirations. The University of Kurdistan-Hawler (UKH) was more than an institution; it was a crucible that refined my skills and ignited my ambition. Here, I didn't just learn; I transformed. UKH wasn't merely about acquiring knowledge; it was about learning to lead, to communicate, and to inspire. It was here that my academic language skills were honed, and my leadership abilities were nurtured, allowing me to engage in and lead various activities confidently. This environment emboldened me to dare, to dream, and to take my first professional opportunity in a prestigious government office—a place many fresh graduates aspired to join.

Further advancing my academic pursuits, I was honored to be selected for the Chevening Scholarship program, which enabled me to complete a Master of Arts in International Studies and Diplomacy from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. This prestigious award not only recognized my past achievements and potential but also allowed me to deepen my understanding of global affairs, diplomacy, and international security. It was also an adventure in intellectual growth. My career trajectory from a local staff member to a regional role, and now to a managerial position at a globally recognized organization, is a testament to my commitment to growth and impact. Each role I have embraced was driven by a passion for advocacy and a belief in the power of communication to drive change. My journey is marked by continuous learning, adaptation, and an unwavering commitment to the causes I believe in.

As I stand today, ready to embrace the challenges and opportunities of my new role, I reflect on the journey that has brought me here. It is a story of perseverance, growth, and the relentless pursuit of making a difference. I am continuing a path that I have

been carving out for years, fueled by the belief that we can indeed make the world a better place for humans. My journey, from the classrooms of UKH to the global stage in an international organization, is a vivid testament to the power of dedication, vision, and the relentless pursuit of one's dreams.

## RAGAZ ABDULLAH

**Senior Academic Support Unit Officer/UKH**

My time at the University of Kurdistan Hawler (UKH) has been a journey of growth, learning, and a profound sense of belonging. It's a story about how my role as an administrative officer and my studies as a master's student have seamlessly converged to shape who I am.

Upon joining UKH, I never anticipated it would become such an integral part of my identity. Each day at work transcended mere tasks; it was an immersion into the captivating world of university life, where I gleaned wisdom from exceptional educators and gained insights into the synergy between education and administration. Now, entering my 13th year at UKH, I reflect on a trajectory that feels more like a life mission than just a job. UKH is akin to a second home, a place that I find difficult to contemplate leaving, even when presented with other opportunities.

Opting to pursue my master's program at UKH felt like a natural progression. Yes, it presented challenges, but it also unfolded as an exhilarating journey of self-discovery and continuous learning. At UKH, education extended beyond the confines of the classroom, encouraging us to broaden our perspectives, adapt to an ever-changing world, and gear up to make a meaningful impact. UKH acted as a gateway to a realm brimming with opportunities, urging us to dream big.

What holds immense significance for me is UKH's commitment to community service and responsibility. It's one thing to grasp the concept of instigating change and another to actively partake in it. UKH provided numerous opportunities for me to contribute, be part of something larger, and comprehend the essence of community involvement. Over the years, I've had the privilege of positively influencing the lives of many students.

Looking ahead, I carry with me not just the knowledge acquired, and skills honed, but also the ethos of UKH, a place that nurtures dreams, ignites our spirits, and equips us to face the future with hope and confidence.





## BAREZA BABAN

**Executive Manager of Human Resources  
at Kurdistan International Islamic Bank  
for Investment and Development.**

My journey to success began with UKH. It is a story of chasing dreams, seizing opportunities, and embracing challenges. It all began as a young girl's simple dream: to attend a top-leading university post high school, with my focus targeted on UKH as the doorway to unlocking my future.

Upon joining UKH, countless opportunities unfolded. Throughout my undergraduate years, the university provided abundant academic and personal development resources, preparing me for a competitive job market. I chose to study Business Management. Professors, well-connected in their fields, guided my studies, and diverse research opportunities allowed me to contribute to real-world projects. The university's offerings even qualified me for a transformative student exchange program in the USA, enhancing my experiences in community development and leadership.

Beyond academics, vibrant student life with clubs and societies facilitated networking and extracurricular engagement. Professional development workshops and career services ensured students were job-ready. Mentorship programs, led by professionals, offered invaluable guidance, while modern facilities and a diverse student body enriched the overall educational experience.

Following graduation, benefiting from the high demand for UKH graduates in the job market and despite the challenges in Kurdistan, I promptly obtained a position with a Japanese International humanitarian NGO, applying my knowledge to contribute to the international industry and aid a population affected by wars.

Later, I pursued the EMBA program at UKH, proving to be an invaluable experience that bridged academic theory with real-world application. It refined my leadership abilities through relevant courses and activities, preparing me for executive positions. Interacting with

industry professionals during the program provided valuable networking opportunities and insights into the job market. Overall, the UKH EMBA program significantly boosted my confidence and played a crucial role in my career advancement. The program equipped me with practical skills and marked a significant shift in my career, helping me attain a leading role at a prominent bank as Executive Manager of Human Resources.

As a female leader in the banking sector, my aim is to implement my unique perspectives that go beyond traditional expectations. I am dedicated to shaping policies for equal opportunities, implementing empowering mentorship programs, and fostering an inclusive workplace culture.

The evolution of my story progressed from managing small responsibilities to leading significant projects in NGOs, paving the way for a shift to the banking sector. This transition was more than just a career change; it represented a strategic curve built on transferable skills, leadership ability, and a global perspective. My success story embodies the blend of diverse skills into the strategic realm of HR in banking. This chapter stands as a testament to the transformative impact of education, resilience, and the ability to craft a narrative of success across varied professional landscapes.



## NEWS

### THE STATE OF HERITAGE CONSERVATION PRACTICE IN IRAQ

On Friday 16th February 2024, UKH Centre for Environmental Studies (CES) partnered with the Grantmakers in Cultural Heritage Protection (G-CHeP) and the Academic Research Institute in Iraq (TAR-II) to organize a special full-day workshop and panel discussion titled “The State of Heritage Conservation Practice in Iraq”.

The Convening brought together members from the G-CHeP as well as local experts and partners to reflect on the past decade of conservation practice in Iraq, and the Kurdistan Region. The panel discussions, presentations and keynote speeches served as an opportunity to discuss current challenges in heritage protection, regional collaboration as well as new horizons in Iraqi Heritage.

Local speakers, from Basrah to Erbil, as well as international experts and funders reflected upon the past decade of conservation practices, delved into the current challenges faced in protecting heritage in Iraq, and explored opportunities for regional collaboration, and envisioned new horizons for Iraqi heritage. The event started with opening remarks from UKH President Prof. Dr. Keith Sharp, Dr. Ali Obaid Shalgham, General Director of Iraqi State Board of Antiquities and Heritage, Kaifi Ali, KRG Directorate General of Antiquities and Heritage and Will Raynolds from the G-CHeP Network.

Before closure, UKH CES signed a memorandum of understanding with TARI. This collaboration marks a significant step towards fostering academic excellence, research innovation, and environmental sustainability. The MOU encapsulates our shared vision for advancing academic research, cultural heritage preservation, and environmental initiatives. Its provisions outline the mutual commitments and responsibilities that both institutions pledge to uphold in the pursuit of excellence.

### UKH’S DIRECTOR OF PEEC IS HONORED AS ONE OF THE TOP 10 MOST INFLUENTIAL WOMEN BY THE LONDON STRATEGY CENTRE

The London Strategy Centre, in its celebration of International Women’s Day, advocates for success and honors women, recognizing their accomplishments with distinction. Dr. Sherine Chaar has been identified as one of the top 10 most influential women by The London Strategy Centre, following an exhaustive analysis conducted by their research team, thereby granting her a prestigious position on the shortlist.

She has been selected for her substantial contributions to society through her roles in academia, research, and the financial sector. As an Assistant Professor and Director for Professional and Executive Education at the University of Kurdistan Hewlêr (UKH), she has played a key role in shaping the business education landscape in Erbil, Kurdistan.

Furthermore, her 16 years of banking experience and role as a Sworn Expert in banking at Lebanese Judicial Courts underline her significant impact on the financial sector, contributing to its stability and expertise. She led projects at ESA Business School Research Center (CRED), developing an Audit Tool for assessing Governance, Human Rights, and Ethical Practices of NGOs in the MENA region.



As a researcher at the Union Arab of Banks, Sherine conducted banking-related research. She holds Islamic Finance qualifications from the Securities & Investment Institute, UK, and is a certified trainer at the London Institute Finance and Banking (LIBF), UK. Sherine’s dedication and experience drive her contributions to academia, research, and professional development in management and finance.



## THE SECOND MEDICAL KURDISTAN CONFERENCE

28 FEBRUARY – 01 MARCH 2024

The International Medical Kurdistan conference is a trademark annual conference of UKH's School of Medicine (SOM). For the second year in a row, the Second International Medical Kurdistan conference was successfully held between February 28 and March 1, 2024.

The conference which lasted for 3 days, kicked off with a remarkable opening ceremony attended by high profile officials and doctors from Iraq and beyond.

Over three days, more than 500 individuals participated in the conference in Rotana Hotel in Erbil. 50 national and international speakers delivered lectures, workshops and presentations on public health, general medicine, surgical specialties and more.

The conference also included 10 workshops to enhance participants' skills on oxygen therapy, stroke emergency management, tackling obesity and more.

Influential speakers dived into insightful panel discussions on medical ethics, oncology sessions and diabetes care.

## ARA ZOZAN MIRAN

Lecturer at Lebanese French University

I am a proud alumna of the University of Kurdistan, Hewlêr. Currently, I serve as a lecturer at Lebanese French University and am pursuing a Ph.D. in information technology. My time at UKH exemplifies the ambition and resilience fostered within our esteemed university. Having obtained a Bachelor of Science in 2016 and a Master of Science in 2018, I have subsequently built a successful career that underscores my professional skills and reflects the principles and education provided by UKH. UKH has guided me in spearheading innovative ideas in the field of Information Technology, participating in community development programs, publishing papers in national and international journals, and engaging in academic courses and workshops.

The exceptional professors and the academic environment at UKH have inspired me to pursue a career in this field. Following graduation, I planned to remain in the education sector to emphasize the significance of effective leadership and influence the growth of future generations. Each day presents fresh challenges for me as a lecturer, particularly in information technology. Thanks to my solid academic background and the self-confidence that I have gained from UKH, I am overcoming them all.

UKH is renowned for creating a welcoming and open atmosphere that promotes diversity and fosters strong bonds among individuals while maintaining high academic standards. At UKH, individuals from various origins and cultures collaborate to form a dynamic community marked by mutual respect, understanding, and support – exactly what I have experienced. The welcoming atmosphere at UKH is a fundamental aspect of the university's character, ensuring that each student's experience is enriched with positive



encounters, assistance, and a sense of belonging that extends far beyond their time at the institution.

My experience underscores the lasting influence of a quality education, reinforcing my pride in my academic journey and my dedication to making a positive impact in the field of education. It reflects the significant impact my university has had on my life.

## AHANG KAWANY

CEO and Founder of Mountain Nest

Project Manager and Owner Representative at Kown Capital



Embarking on my professional journey as a Kurdish woman, enrolling in an Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) presented a distinctive challenge, prompting an academic reassessment of the role of women in Kurdish culture. This decision not only reshaped my career but also significantly broadened my perspective. Through a rigorous curriculum and immersive learning experiences, I gained invaluable skills and insights that have steered me towards success.

Historically, Kurdish women played a vital role in managing household and societal issues alongside men. In a source by Mala Mahmoud Bayazidi titled "Kurdish Customs and Traditions," it is mentioned that during conflicts between two Kurdish tribes, a woman often served as a peacemaker, using her headscarf to symbolize reconciliation. As a Kurdish female, my objective in pursuing an EMBA was to expand my professional network, engaging with diverse industries and backgrounds.

Furthermore, the EMBA program equipped me with advanced leadership and management competencies, crucial for navigating complex business environments. I refined my strategic thinking, acquired effective decision-making techniques, and mastered the art of leading high-performing teams. Implementing these skills within my organization streamlined operations, optimized resource allocation, and fostered a culture of innovation and excellence.

As a project manager and owner representative for a large project, I derived significant benefits from the knowledge gained in EMBA courses such as Change and Knowledge Management and Project Management. Additionally, applying this knowledge proved enlightening in the success of my own business mission, enabling me to establish and manage a successful, unique business called Mountain Nest.

In conclusion, my journey through the EMBA program was genuinely transformative. It empowered me to become a more effective leader, a strategic thinker, and a visionary entrepreneur. Leveraging the knowledge, skills, and network acquired during my EMBA journey not only elevated my business to unprecedented levels of success but also paved a promising path for my future career endeavors.

## NAWA JANGI SHAWKAT

Medical Doctor

In 2020, I graduated as the top-ranked student in my class, earning the academic excellence award. As part of the inaugural graduating class, we encountered challenges until government employment ensued. However, my passion for the field endured, leading me to work in advanced hospitals, accumulating valuable experience that proved beneficial throughout my internship. During that period, I also seized the opportunity to share my knowledge by taking on a teaching role at my alma mater. This experience not only allowed me to contribute to the academic environment but also served as a platform for refining and enhancing my skills. Engaging with students became a rewarding aspect of my professional journey, fostering a deeper connection to the educational landscape.

My dedication to teaching not only endured but evolved, guiding me to a role as a facilitator in the World Health Organization (WHO). In this capacity, I have the privilege of instructing health-care professionals in the essential aspects of Basic Emergency Care, contributing to global efforts to enhance medical preparedness and response.



As my internship began, my days were immersed in work, allowing only brief intervals for meals and short respites for sleep throughout two intense years. Despite the relentless schedule, I adeptly managed my time, dedicating moments between shifts, and sometimes during my studies. This commitment paid off as I successfully passed both PLAB exams, qualifying me to practice medicine in the UK.

## HAZHA SAEED YAHIA

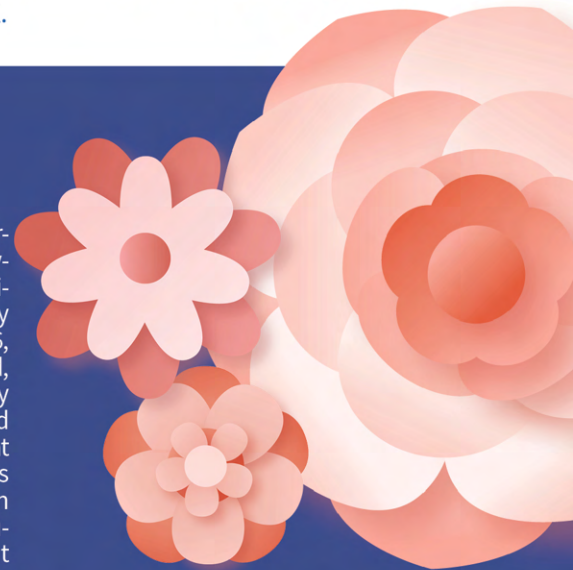
Senior Chief Programmer - Kurdistan Parliament



Joining the alumni community of the University of Kurdistan-Hewler (UKH) is a great privilege that fills me with nostalgia and gratitude. I am honored to have the opportunity to share my story with you today. In 2006, when news of a new university emerged, like many of you, despite UKH being a very new institution, I followed my intuition and applied to study Information Technology at UKH. I can confidently say this decision was the best I have ever made. I graduated in 2010 as part of the first group of undergraduate students at UKH, marking a significant milestone that opened a new chapter in my life. I then applied for the first master's program at UKH in 2014 and earned an MSc in Computer System Engineering in 2016 as part of the first group of graduated students.

Pursuing a bachelor's and master's degree at UKH was a transformative experience that broadened my knowledge and skills, equipping me to approach IT problems comprehensively. I learned fundamental technical skills, critical thinking, and analytical abilities required to solve and manage complex issues and develop innovative solutions.

Beyond the technical skills, studying at UKH gave me the courage to think differently, approach challenges in unexplored ways, and follow my unique path. The supportive and collaborative learning environment at UKH encouraged my creativity and innovation,



empowering me to explore my interests and passions. I developed lifelong friendships and professional relationships that have continued to inspire and support me in my career.

Now, with a Ph.D. and many years of experience in both the public and private sectors, including lecturing at different private universities for over six years, training hundreds of government employees, participating in seminars and workshops, and publishing numerous research papers, I can say that everything reflects the skills, knowledge, and education I received at UKH. In conclusion, I am very appreciative of the chance to have attended UKH and to be a part of the active alumni community. My experience at UKH has shaped me into the person I am today, and I am proud to be a UKH alum.