

# *UKH* **ALUMNI ASSOCIATION** *NEWSLETTER*



Founder of Access Point

# MUDHAFAR ABDULLAH



**My name is Mudhafar, and I am proud to say that the University Kurdistan Hewlêr (UKH) played a pivotal role in shaping who I am today, both personally and professionally.**

I graduated in 2016 with a bachelor's degree in business and management, a milestone that marked not only the completion of my academic journey but also the beginning of an extraordinary personal and professional transformation.

Studying at UKH was a life-changing experience. It was here that I developed the personal, social, and academic skills that have been crucial to my success. UKH taught me how to believe in myself, stand on my own feet, and think and act independently. I am confident that no other university in the region could have offered me such a rich environment to grow, learn, and lead. UKH didn't just teach us theories; it shaped us into leaders ready to serve Kurdistan and beyond.

Shortly after my graduation, the skills and confidence I gained at UKH opened doors for me internationally. I received a job offer from Evergreen Company in Canada and made the bold move to a new country in 2016. Working in Canada for several years, I applied everything I had learned at UKH: critical thinking, professionalism, leadership, and perseverance. Each challenge I faced abroad only reinforced the strength of the foundation that UKH had built in me.

***“UKH played a pivotal role in shaping my personal and professional identity.”***

In 2021, driven by a vision to connect students with global educational opportunities, I established my own company, Access Point. Access Point is an education agency committed to providing high-quality services both Business-to-Consumer (B2C) and Business-to-Business (B2B), not only in the Kurdistan Region but also on an international scale. Today, Access Point has grown into a truly global venture with branches in Canada, Pakistan, and Erbil, and we are excited to soon open our fourth branch in Baghdad.

Every milestone I have achieved carries the spirit of UKH with it. UKH did not just prepare me for a career; it gave me a mission to lead, inspire, and give back. I remain deeply committed to supporting UKH in every way I can, ensuring that future generations have access to the same transformative education that changed my life.

As proud UKH alumni, it is now our turn to serve Kurdistan and uplift our communities. I will always be grateful to UKH for believing in me, for shaping me into the leader I am today, and for igniting the passion within me to create meaningful change. Wherever I go and whatever I achieve, I carry the name of UKH with pride.

Thank you, UKH, for being the foundation of my dreams.

Journalist

# STELLA MARTANY

## Looking back, UKH was more than just an academic experience, it was where I found my voice.

Looking back, UKH was more than just an academic experience. It was where I found my voice. It was in those lecture halls, presentations, public speeches, and countless assignments that I discovered what I was capable of. UKH taught me to speak up, to question, to write boldly, and to believe in the value of my perspective. It laid the foundation not only for my career, but for the courage I needed to shape an unconventional path. One that would take me from lecture halls to war zones. From student to storyteller.

When I first signed up for Business Management Sciences, I never thought I would one day be an award winning journalist reporting for some of the largest news agencies globally. At the time I didn't appreciate the thousands of words UKH demanded us to write for our academic assignments every week, but today I am deeply grateful for it. Writing turned out to be a vital skill that I use almost every single

day as a journalist. I have won several international awards for my reporting, including the Fetisov Journalism Award (FJA) for excellence in environmental journalism and Covering Climate Now (CCN) Award for best climate report.

After graduating from UKH, I hit the ground running. I was immediately hired by an international NGO, and I also started freelancing, and volunteering at the same time. It was an intense period of growth and exploration. I also found successful UKH alumni everywhere I worked, who inspired and motivated me at all times.

In 2016, I became one of the few female fixers in Iraq, working with international media outlets covering the ISIS war. This experience opened the door for me to pursue journalism professionally. Over the years, I developed my skills and built relationships across the media world, eventually becoming a freelance

journalist. Today, I report from Iraq for the Associated Press, covering stories that matter, from conflict to resilience and everything in between.

Even though I studied business, the versatility and mindset UKH implanted in me allowed me to combine my academic background with on-the-ground experience. That combination gave me the courage to pursue my passion for storytelling.

Alongside journalism, I have also worked with international NGOs for the past ten years, both full-time and as a consultant, across projects related to human rights, accountability, and post-conflict recovery. UKH was where I first learned to think independently and trust my voice. It empowered me to take risks and follow a path that was anything but conventional. For that, I remain truly thankful.

## THE UKH ALUMNI GIVING PROJECT

We are excited to launch the UKH Alumni Giving Project, an initiative that empowers our alumni to give back and support the next generation of leaders. Your contributions will directly support academic programmes, research projects, and other initiatives that enrich student lives.

With just one tap, you can donate easily through the UKH Alumni App via First Iragi Bank (FiB) and RT Bank, ensuring a seamless and secure process. Every contribution, no matter the size, brings us closer to our shared vision for UKH.

As proud graduates of the University of Kurdistan Hewlêr, we all recognize the profound impact UKH has had on our lives. It equipped us with the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to succeed in the job market and beyond. Many of us have reached remarkable milestones, and it all began with the foundation built at UKH.

Through this project, we aim to support the next generation of UKH students. Your contribution, no matter the amount, can make a real difference in the lives of students who need it most. Together, we can open doors, fuel dreams, and empower future leaders.





## Finance Officer at UKH

# RABAR DLAWAR

My name is Rabar Dlawar Talib, and I am a finance officer at the University of Kurdistan Hewlêr (UKH).

My educational journey began in 2011 with the Access Programme, marking the start of my path towards learning the English language. After completing this programme, I enrolled in the Foundation Level and later pursued a bachelor's degree in economics and finance at UKH. Economics offered me a framework for understanding how individuals, businesses, and governments work. My growing interest led me to focus my thesis on diversifying the Kurdistan Region's economy, exploring sustainable alternatives to its dependence on oil.

After earning my bachelor's degree, I continued my academic journey by pursuing a master's in economics. My thesis focused on predicting entrepreneurial intentions among business students in the Kurdistan Region, an area of vital importance given the region's need for entrepreneurship.

Upon completing my studies, I began as an intern at Coca-Cola and was later retained as an Accounting Assistant, where I gained hands-on experience supporting daily accounting operations. This experience provided my first exposure to the corporate world, helping me refine my skills in accounting and finance. I then moved on to become an accountant at Erbil International Airport, where I further developed my financial reporting, auditing, and compliance skills in a fast-paced environment.

Seeking to expand my expertise, I joined RIGT, a fintech company, where I worked as an accountant. This role gave me valuable insights into the evolving world of financial technology and its potential to transform industry. In 2024, I returned to UKH as a finance officer, contributing to the university's financial operations. This role has allowed me to give back to the institution that played a significant part in my own development.

Throughout my career, I've faced numerous challenges, including balancing part-time work with my academic responsibilities. Learning effective time-management strategies, such as planning my weeks in advance, has been essential in helping me meet my goals.

Now, as a Finance Officer at UKH, I am committed to ensuring the university's financial sustainability and optimizing its financial operations. My long-term goal is to add significant value to UKH, the institution that has supported my growth. To anyone pursuing a career in finance, my advice as a finance officer with nine years of experience is to stay focused on your goals, embrace challenges as learning opportunities, and continuously seek out experiences that expand your knowledge. Stay curious, keep learning, and don't be afraid to step outside your comfort zone.



## Project Cargo Executive at Almas Group Logistics

# JOUAN BRADOSTI



My journey with the University of Kurdistan Hewlêr (UKH) began in 2021 when I enrolled in the master's programme in business and management. Looking back, this decision was one of the most pivotal choices of my life. UKH offered more than just an education; it provided an environment that challenged me intellectually,

pushed me out of my comfort zone, and equipped me with the skills and mindset I needed to grow both personally and professionally.

My academic experience at UKH was deeply enriching. The high standards, international curriculum, and emphasis on research and critical thinking helped shape my professional perspective. I was fortunate to conduct my research on a subject I am truly passionate about: female leadership in Kurdistan. I explored the critical role women play in shaping society through leadership positions and the importance of encouraging their involvement in decision-making spaces. This research not only deepened my academic interests but also solidified my belief in the necessity of greater gender equality in our region.

Today, I work in project cargo handling within the logistics industry; an area that is both highly specialised and male dominated. This field involves the coordination and movement of heavy and oversized cargo, demanding precision, strategic thinking, and resilience. Entering and succeeding in this space as a woman has been far from easy. However, the strength

and confidence I gained at UKH provided the foundation to step into this challenging industry with determination. I am proud to be among the few women in this field and to serve as a small example of what is possible when we challenge norms and believe in our potential.

UKH played a vital role in preparing me for the real world, not only through academic knowledge but also by instilling in me the values of perseverance, discipline, and leadership. It became more than just a university; it became a launching pad for my future.

To the younger generation, I want to say this: do not hesitate to dream big, and don't be afraid to enter fields or spaces where you don't often see people like you. UKH is a place where you will be challenged, supported, and transformed. For anyone serious about building a strong academic foundation and a meaningful future, UKH is the right place to begin that journey.

## HAWKAR MOHAMMED

Studying at the University of Kurdistan-Hewlêr (UKH) has been the foundation of my academic and professional success. I completed both my bachelor's degree in politics and international relations and my master's degree in international studies at this prestigious institution.



As an English-medium university, UKH provided a rigorous environment that significantly improved my English language proficiency, opening countless doors for my future. Throughout my studies, I actively participated in numerous seminars and training courses, including an Excellent Leadership Course that greatly shaped my leadership and organisational skills.

During my time at UKH, I was a proud member of several student groups and clubs, most notably the Politics Club, where we engaged in lively debates, discussions, and initiatives that enhanced our academic understanding and teamwork.

After graduating, the skills and confidence I developed at UKH allowed me to quickly find employment with international NGOs, United Nations organisations, and humanitarian agencies, where I gained over nine years of professional experience. The strong academic background and soft skills I acquired were key to navigating these competitive environments.

Eventually, my academic journey came full circle when I was offered the opportunity to become a university lecturer at Qaiwan International University. This role has allowed me to apply my academic knowledge and share my experiences with the next generation of students, a truly rewarding chapter in my career. To current and future students, I offer two important pieces of advice. First, gain practical experience while you study, join clubs, attend training sessions, and volunteer.

Second, work on your communication skills; UKH offers many resources to help you improve. Do not wait until graduation; when the time comes, your skills will be as important as your degree.

## MEDYA SHEXANY

My name is Medya Shexany, and UKH is not just the place where I studied, it is the place that has truly shaped me. I was an undergraduate student majoring in English with a minor in German, and I am now proud to be continuing my academic journey as a master's student in Applied Linguistics while also working in the admissions office.

Being both a student and a staff member has given me a unique perspective, allowing me to experience the heart of this university from all sides. In 2023, during my graduation internship, I never could have anticipated how much this opportunity would change my life. What started as an internship became a full-time role in the heart of the university, the beautiful main building! Now, each day, I look forward to going there to serve applicants, helping them find their way to our wonderful campus. UKH isn't just a university campus; it's a home, a turning point, and for many including me, it's the beginning of something truly great.

The sense of community here is incredible, and I'm honoured to be part of it, both as a student and a staff member. The support I've received from my professors, colleagues, and fellow students has been invaluable. I can confidently say that UKH has provided me with the tools and environment to grow, both professionally and personally.

My advice to current students is simple: "Trust the process." You have no idea how many wonderful opportunities are waiting for you, and UKH is guiding you towards the most successful paths. Study hard, do well in your academic life, and remember that every bit of effort you put in will help you achieve your dreams in ways you may not yet understand.

I've seen first-hand how UKH can change lives, and that's why I am determined to stay here and help future students find their own path, just as I have found mine. If you ever wonder where your success story begins, look no further than UKH. It is the place where your journey starts.





# UKH ALUMNI REUNION 2025

The UKH Alumni Reunion 2025 was held on Saturday, 19th April 2025, at the Erbil International Hotel. This special event marked the third official UKH alumni reunion and brought together graduates from the Class of 2010 to the Class of 2024 for an evening of connection and celebration. RT Bank proudly served as the Diamond Sponsor of the event. The reunion began at 6:45 p.m. and concluded at 9:30 p.m., offering a warm and engaging atmosphere for alumni to reconnect with former classmates, faculty members, and the wider UKH community.

The reunion served as an important reminder of the strong bonds formed at UKH and the impact the university continues to have on its graduates. It provided a platform for networking, sharing professional experiences, and strengthening the sense of belonging among alumni. Events like these play a vital role in advancing lifelong connections, celebrating achievements, and strengthening the UKH spirit across generations.



# A Glimpse of UKH Alumni Reunion 2025





Academic Researcher

# ASO M. ALI



Throughout my life, there have been times when I quietly felt that my pursuits were driven more by passion than by potential. This inner conviction particularly applies to my decision to apply for the master's programme in the Department of Political Science at UKH in January 2007. It was my Rubicon moment; my dream of pursuing a master's degree at Salahaddin University had not materialised. Yet, I was determined not to yield to setbacks.

During my undergraduate studies, I had been recognised for my abilities in English translation classes; an area I continued to develop after completing my bachelor's degree, albeit with the limited resources available at the time.

The opening of the first English-style university in the region was, for me, a case of preparation meeting opportunity. Admittedly, at the outset, I, like many of my classmates, struggled to cope with the volume of assignments. This challenge was compounded by our relatively limited proficiency in English. Aware of the issue, the university organised a class to improve our writing skills. By the end of the course, my English had significantly improved; on at least one occasion, the instructor even distributed one of my essays to other

students as a model to follow.

By October 2009, I had submitted my thesis, well ahead of the deadline; an achievement that earned me unofficial recognition as "the first product of UKH" by Dr Othman Tar, a member of my thesis committee. He remarked that I had become the first student to complete all the requirements of a programme at the newly established university.

Fast forward to 2012, I travelled to the United States to pursue a PhD. Upon enrolling in my new institution, I came to appreciate the value of my educational background at UKH; it served as a solid foundation on which to build a more advanced intellectual framework. After completing my doctorate, I focused on academic writing for publication.

In January 2023, I published my first book, *State Failure, Power Expansion, and Balance of Power in the Middle East*, with Palgrave Macmillan. Admittedly, the book did not bring me great financial returns, but it endowed me with a deep sense of fulfilment and confidence. Motivated by that experience, I decided to write more. I am currently working on my second book, which is thematically related, and I hope to see it published by the end of the year.

Teacher at Cambridge International School

# SHVAN MOHAMED

My name is Shvan Mohamed, and I am a graduate of the University of Kurdistan, where I earned both my bachelor's and master's degrees in petroleum engineering and management. My academic journey at UKH provided me with a strong foundation in engineering principles, project management, and problem-solving, helping me develop not only a technical mindset but also the ability to take on leadership roles.

After completing my master's degree, I embarked on a career in education, joining Cambridge International School, where I have been working for the past eight years. Although my academic background is in engineering, I discovered my passion for teaching and mentoring the next generation.

As an educator, I interact with students daily, guiding them not only in their studies but also in developing critical thinking, discipline, and a sense of responsibility. This role has given me the opportunity to influence young minds and help shape their futures, something I consider both a privilege and a responsibility.

Throughout my journey, I have learned that success is not solely determined by academic achievements, but also by the ability to adapt, grow, and seek out meaningful experiences. Professional growth stems from continuously improving oneself, being open to new challenges, and embracing opportunities beyond one's initial career expectations. It is essential



to develop a strong work ethic, maintain curiosity, and stay committed to lifelong learning. No matter the path one follows, having a clear vision, persistence, and the willingness to step outside one's comfort zone will ultimately lead to both personal and professional fulfillment.

Education and experience together shape our future, and those who approach their careers with dedication and passion will always find ways to make a meaningful impact.

# BRIDGING CULTURES: THE ROLE OF THE AMERICAN CORNER ERBIL

The American Corner Erbil (ACE), launched on February 27, 2017, is a partnership between the University of Kurdistan Hewlêr (UKH) and the U.S. Department of State. Located on the second floor of the UKH library, ACE serves as a dynamic resource center promoting mutual understanding between the American people and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. It offers a range of programmes aligned with six core pillars: English language learning, U.S. education, American culture and values, alumni engagement, soft skills development, and inclusive cultural events.

ACE is widely known for programmes like the English Conversation Club, Book Club, and Reading Club, which foster language practice and cultural exchange. It also provides valuable support for students through sessions on studying in the U.S., including scholarships and visa information, delivered by the U.S. Education Adviser. By promoting critical thinking, global citizenship, and cross-cultural dialogue, ACE continues to serve as a vital link between communities and plays a significant role in academic and civic life at UKH.



## Vacancies

# CURRENT JOB VACANCIES AVAILABLE ON THE UKH ALUMNI ASSOCIATION MOBILE APPLICATION

Full details of the job vacancies listed below can be found on the UKH Alumni Association Mobile Application.

Company Name	Job Vacancy Available
Fastlink	Sales Supervisor
Sardar Group	Hospitality Coordinator
Medya Diagnostic Center	AI & Automation Specialist
Newroz Telecom	B2B Sales Representative
Fastlink	Shift Team Leader
Medya Diagnostic Center	Deputy Operations Manager
Dijla Factory (SuliKim)	Sales Representative
Stepture	Marketing Manager
Newroz Telecom	Settlement & Cash Collection Supervisor
Fastlink	DevOps Engineer
Medya Diagnostic Center	Marketing Officer
Fastlink	Contact center Agent
Harkat Company	HR Assistant
Elryan.com	HR Officer
Ghabbour-Al Qalam for General Trading	Marketing Specialist & Coordinator
Gateway ICT Solutions	Content Writer
BIM Company	Computer Engineer
BIM Company	Electrical Engineer
BIM Company	Network Engineer