

Beat: Business

New Corporate Scholarship to American Companies in Middle East

Making Social Impact

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USPA NEWS - s college students across the globe are beginning to return to universities after Covid-19 put so much on hold, a few select university students at the American University of Iraq in Sulaimani (AUIS) are starting their college careers with new hope, thanks to a new scholarship campaign called "We Share the Future."

AUIS, a not-for-profit university and operated for the public benefit, is aiming to improve the lives of students and their families through a new scholarship campaign called "We Share the Future." The scholarships are intended to provide an American-style education to young people from all over Iraq and its Kurdistan region, regardless of their social, ethnic and sectarian background.

"I returned home to Baghdad after my graduation and accepted a position with a major bank where I serve as a compliance officer," according to Basma, an Iraqi, AUIS female graduate who recently received her Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration. "The strong ethics and discipline that I acquired during my studies at AUIS have helped me to succeed on the job."

The scholarships are intended to help support AUIS students like Basma.

According to UNICEF, in recent years, Iraq has allocated less than 6% of its national budget to the education sector, placing it at the bottom rank of Middle East countries. Currently, \$3.2 million school-aged Iraqi children are out of school: a disproportionate amount of them girls. For those students who do graduate from high school, access to higher education can seem out of reach or impossible. To address gender disparity of those receiving a higher education, half of the scholarships will be allotted to women college students.

How Your Company Can Help ?Seeking further support for the scholarship fund, any company working in Iraq is eligible to contribute to the scholarships as part of their corporate social responsibility campaign. The goal is to help students prepare for quality, high-paying jobs in Iraq's commercial and government sectors.

"Recipients of the scholarships not only have their lives, but their families' lives, change for the better," according to AUIS President Bruce Walker Ferguson. "The investment in an educated workforce from corporate community support is key to enabling AUIS to attract students from diverse backgrounds and creates a powerful engine both for student success and for the country's economic growth, social benefit, and regional security," Ferguson said.

Creating Impact ?Caliburn International, a U.S.-based company which has had a long-standing presence in Iraq with its subsidiaries Sallyport, Janus Global Operations, and Comprehensive Health Services, has become the first to fund the "We Share the Future" campaign with an initial commitment of \$250,000.

Caliburn CEO Bob Stalick said, "The new scholarship program is another way we can give back to the people of Iraq, where we have worked for many years and have established deep relationships and a respect for the people." He noted that to help develop and support the future workforce in the region, it is critical for the next generation to have the academic and technological background, as well as the critical thinking skills and the collaborative mindset needed to grow.

Caliburn announced in April that they intend to break into two independent companies, Acuity International and Valiance Humanitarian. The company expects the separation into two companies to be completed by fall of 2021.

Seeking Additional Support ?The campaign is seeking additional U.S. companies doing business in Iraq to follow Caliburn's lead and support new undergraduate scholarships that will further develop the educated and skilled workforce needed to rebuild and sustain the country.

Having corporations working in Iraq, like Sallyport and Janus (part of the Caliburn family), partner with the University provides job prospects for AUIS students upon graduation. Graduates of AUIS have the skill sets and worldview to benefit both their employers and their country. AUIS alumni are among the most sought-after university graduates in Iraq, with 80% employed full-time, overwhelmingly in the private sector, or pursuing graduate studies in the U.S., Europe, and beyond.

How to Contribute ?To learn more about how your company can join Caliburn in donating to support the education of Iraq's future workforce, contact AUIS VP Advancement Liza O'Connor-Stroud at liza.oconnor@auis.edu.krd

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