TH’HABAH

Kuwait Petroleum Corporation and subsidiaries
Golden Pages
Narrating Your Stories
Introduction

This is the third issue of Th’haba, but the first to include employees from the entire Kuwaiti Oil Sector. This time, we aimed to gather our employees of different companies in one place to get to know them more, benefit from their experiences and share their success and accomplishment stories. Through these pages, we summarise unique and special stories that leave a profound impression, and remind us of the connection we all share as employees in one sector. Although we are not physically in the same location, we have common goals and aspirations, which gives us a sense of attachment, even if we only meet through the pages of Th’haba.
Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) is a corporation of economic character, run on a commercial basis and fully owned by the State. It is one of the world’s major oil & gas companies and its activities are focused on petroleum exploration and production, refining, marketing, petrochemicals, and transport. KPC’s mission is to manage and operate these integrated activities worldwide in the most efficient and professional manner, in addition to growing shareholder value whilst ensuring the optimum exploitation of Kuwait hydrocarbon resources.

Values
Motivating Environment
Customer Satisfaction
Teamwork
Trust
Commitment to HSE
Honesty, Integrity and Transparency
Quality and Excellence
Innovation/ Responsiveness

Mission
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The Other Side

This section delves into the other side of prominent leaders in the oil sector, giving people insight into a side of their personalities that not everyone gets to see.

Mohammad Al-Mutairi        Chief Executive Officer KNPC
Hosnia Hashim                     Vice President Operations KUFPEC
When he was younger, he had no specific dreams or aspirations related to his future career, but he was inclined towards scientific and engineering subjects. This drew the attention of one of his high school teachers, especially when he saw his style of writing and fine drawing techniques, and told him: “your future will be in engineering”. From that point onwards, the idea was established in his mind, and his ambition of becoming a successful engineer to serve his country and society was ignited.
Engineer Mohammad Al-Mutairi, CEO Kuwait National Petroleum Company, says he spent his entire career at KNPC, climbing up the ladder to reach his current position.

From Al-Mutairi’s perspective, a successful leader must have a clear-cut vision, be skilled in leading their employees and adapt to the obstacles that appear during work.

Practicing sports occupies a large part of his free time. He explains: “I consider sports my breather from work stress and I believe exercise, along with other skills I formed and developed during work and time management, contribute to relieving the pressures I endure during my work.”

**Defining Moments**

Al-Mutairi describes the brutal Iraqi invasion as the biggest challenge:
“It required fundamental solutions and quick decision-making to process destroyed units and supply them with the latest technologies. This entailed being dedicated to the issue, and diverting from my primary duty until everything was under control again, which is when I went back to my position.”

He further elaborates on that period: “The invasion had the greatest impact on my life personally and professionally. As a Kuwaiti citizen, the daily occurrences that displayed determination, social solidarity, vigour and working amid severe conditions deeply influenced me. Seeing people’s will to clean the streets and distribute food along with other things to help each other was moving. On the professional level, there was a huge challenge after the invasion; the amount of destruction that affected units and location across Kuwait took huge amounts of time and effort.”

Al-Mutairi says that his role model in life is the Former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad: “I’m very impressed with his exceptional ability to advance his country through a vision that elevated Malaysia from rock bottom to a first world country,” he explains.

In the end, the CEO concludes with a piece of advice to the youth: “I advise the youth to read. Unfortunately, I have noticed that books are being greatly neglected by the new generation. I also advise the youth to be devoted to work, and keep Allah and Kuwait in mind during their time at work, without regard to positions, monetary returns or popularity, and Allah shall reward you.”
Meeting a powerful woman who occupies a leadership position in the oil sector and has received numerous international and regional accolades for her accomplishments over the years could easily intimidate anyone. However, Vice President Operations Kuwait Foreign Exploration Company Hosnia Hashim’s warm and welcoming personality instantly puts one at ease and makes them feel that they have known each other for a long time. Hashim truly captured us with her genuine and unreserved answers and her willingness to open up about any issue put forth.
Her passion for engineering began at a very young age

She says scientific experiments always intrigued her and thus chose chemical engineering as her major when she was accepted into Kuwait University. Hashim describes her university years, although challenging, as some of the best years of her life.

KOC ... The Beginning of a Career

Upon graduating in 1982, she was immediately offered a job by KOC. Beginning, Hashim was focused on making a mark and proving that men and women are of equal strength in the workforce. She says she found pure joy in the process of constant learning that came with her job and when a golden opportunity presented itself in 1989, she took it without hesitation. At the time, Kuwait University was offering engineers in the oil sector a chance to earn a second degree in Petroleum Engineering to increase the number of Kuwaiti petroleum engineers. Hashim, along with 20 other engineers in the oil sector applied to study for two years but in a devastating twist of fate, in the last term before graduation in 1990, the Iraqi invasion happened.

The Iraqi Invasion

The mother of two wears a somber look as she recounts memories from that time. On the day of the invasion, she was supposed to return to Kuwait from a conference she was attending in Vienna. Eight months pregnant with her second son Talal, Hashim had travelled with her husband to attend the event, leaving her older son Nawaf with her mother. “We were getting ready to go to the airport and I recall we were running late. I turned on the television while I was waiting for my husband to get ready and saw what was happening on the news. It was a nightmare, we couldn’t believe what we were seeing. All I could think about at that time was Nawaf,” she said.
Hashim proceeds to describe the state of panic she and her husband were in – rushing to call their families but with no response; they had no way to get in contact with them and all flights to Kuwait were cancelled. They were later flown to Dubai and her husband decided to travel to Kuwait by car from there. Having lived in complete terror the next couple of days, Hashim was overjoyed to see her husband return safely to Dubai with Nawaf and her mother.

**Back to the Beginning**

Following the liberation, Hashim and her family returned to Kuwait and she immediately went back to work as Chief Engineer to become one of the main people who played an active role in getting the oil wells back to operation in 1991. Hashim and her team worked around the clock to save the country’s economy and get all oil wells back and running in full capacity and indeed they did: the Kuwaiti oil sector was back to producing two million barrels per day one year later.

From that day onwards, she continued to make great strides in the oil sector and became the first female Deputy Managing Director in KOC in 2005.

**The Northern Oil Field: A Prominent Milestone**

Recalling a pivotal moment in her career and identifying it as one of accomplishments that she takes great pride in, Hashim was faced with a tremendous challenge in 2007: developing the North Kuwait oil field to increase production from 500 thousand to one million barrels per day without the help of foreign partners or consultants by 2017. Hashim says she gathered her entire team at the time which included engineers and consultants from KOC to devise a plan that would enable them to double the field’s production.

“Before I left KOC in June 2013, production had reached 730 thousand barrels per day, surpassing expectations in a short period of time. Another challenge was also to develop the heavy oil field in order to produce 60 thousand barrels per day. We took that challenge head on and designed a concept that allows Kuwait to produce that amount of oil,” the Vice President says.

As she recounts the great memories she had in KOC, her face illuminates with a smile as she proceeds to say that some of her fondest moments in the company was when she used to wear her uniform on the second day of Eid every year to visit the oil fields and spend some time appreciating the employees who were working around the clock. Hashim says she loves being close to her employees and rejoices in team work and collaboration.

**KUFPEC: The Road Towards Globality**

In KUFPEC, Hashim says she met with employees and made sure to set a plan for their career path – a notion that was unfamiliar in the company previously but will now help employees navigate their career with a more clear vision. The biggest challenge she cites for KUFPEC is working on turning it from a partner in its operations to an operator and this is the vision for 2015, Hashim says.
**Hosnia: The Woman, The Mother**

When asked how she was able to balance work and family life, the mother of two points to her husband’s constant support throughout her career as the driving force of her success. “Without an understanding and supportive husband, no married woman can have the best of both worlds. I have been blessed with a husband who has always encouraged my ambitions,” she adds.

By simply glancing at the corners of her beautifully decorated living room, one could see the close connection she shares with her sons, Talal and Nawaf, and how important family life is to her. In every corner, Hashim has touching family photos of her sons’ early school years to their graduation with high honors from university, showcasing how proud she is of their accomplishments. Interestingly enough, both Hashim and her husband are engineers and her sons have followed in their footsteps; one became a petroleum engineer and the other a chemical engineer.

Looking forward, Hashim says she is excited to achieve KUFPEC’s vision in becoming an operator in 2015 and in further developing the Professional Women Network (PWN), a committee which she founded in 2007 in KOC to empower female employees in the oil sector through organizing meetings and events with women leaders.

The network is the first of its kind locally and has already garnered the interest of multinational corporations in the oil and gas industry. The group has expanded its reach recently to include the entire oil sector and has submitted a paper for the 2014 Abu Dhabi International Petroleum Exhibition and Conference (ADIPEC) Awards and has been placed on the short list.

It is noteworthy to mention that Hashim also heads the Society of Petroleum Engineers - Middle East.
Under the Spotlight

This section is dedicated to outstanding employees who go above and beyond; we met with them to learn more about what motivates them to keep giving.

Mohammad Al-Basri               Information Team Leader   KOC
Eng.Lulwa Al-Abdullah           Sr. Systems Network   KNPC
Bader Qali                                     Sr. Analyst Marine Operations   KPC
Abeer Al-Essa                             Sr. Administrator Public & Media Relations   KPC
Eng.Dana Al-Sarhan                     Sr. Planner Performance Management   KPC
Eng.Mohammad Abdullah                Petroleum Engineer Fields Development Group   KOC
Mohammad Al-Basri
A Man Who Makes the Difference
He is a go-getter, a quick decision maker and a great supporter of creative ideas. In a short period of time, Mohammed Al-Basri was able to form an integrated media team that honorably represents the oil sector.

Al-Basri, who comes from a scientific background after attaining a degree in Marine Sciences from the UK, recently moved to the Media Department at KOC after spending many years in the Marine Department and HSE Department afterwards. He has a great deal of determination, will power and loves challenges, which enabled him to understand his job and control the reigns of media work within only one month after he was assigned his current post.

Al-Basri adopts the leadership style of being close to his employees and makes sure to dedicate five minutes of his day to one of them to discuss off-work matters. “7 A.M. is a sacred time for me. I like seeing employees in the morning and make sure their day starts with smiling and being energised. I don't leave them until they smile,” with this, a family atmosphere and team spirit became fundamentals that Al-Basri set in place.

When he speaks about his employees, one can sense the pride and gratitude he feels for being surrounded by creative individuals.

“They don’t know the word ‘impossible’, and defend their suggestions until they are realised”. This is to be expected after being entrusted by Al-Basri - he says he profoundly believes in their capabilities. Recently, his team’s hard work was acknowledged by KPC CEO Nizar Al-Adsani who asked to meet the social media team of KOC, a moment Al-Basri says gave them a huge boost that empowered their creative flare and pushed them to give more.

Al-Basri’s giving personality isn’t confined to the oil sector; he has also been volunteering since he was a student and the first impetus was the Iraqi invasion: “I was studying in Britain, so I joined the Kuwaiti army via the British Military. I then realised the importance of unconditionally giving to our homeland because it is precious, and deserves all that we can give. And I have instilled this in my children. My daughter prepared a campaign for cancer patients.

She planned a major charity event that included a fashion show with her personal efforts and raised a great amount of money. I consider this my most important personal achievement, albeit indirect, because this means I’m a role model for my children,” he says.

On the professional level, the Clean Up Arabia Project is his most notable achievement. It is a campaign organised in cooperation with Masdar, so that this event is carried out concurrently in Kuwait and the UAE. More than 1400 kids from different Kuwaiti schools his team cooperated with gathered. Participation wasn’t limited to Kuwait and UAE, but rather, all Gulf countries made sure to take part. As for his personal wishes, he dreams of seeing an integrated city dedicated to newly-wed couples which the oil sector would contribute to establishing. The city would depend on alternative energy and would have all the required facilities and means of comfort.

When asked about the drive for giving more, his love for Kuwait shines through his words: “My Kuwait, which I see as living being with an entity, body and soul, with sons, concerns and problems, along with ambitions and dreams. Almost like a human with great deals of good within his heart, who grants you more whenever you give him.”

Al-Basri concluded the interview with a piece of advice for employees who seek to become more motivated: “Work diligently and be devoted, the secret of satisfaction and having peace of mind is working to the best of your ability to satisfy Allah. Never stop giving suggestion to leave an impression in your environment. People who leave no trace don’t deserve to be part of this life.”
An exceptional KPC employee for 12 years who constantly works to better himself without being pushed by others to do so, Bader Qali’s attitude is truly a breath of fresh air. His calm and collected demeanor is reflected in his work method as he believes hard work will eventually be noticed through patience and constant motivation from within.

• What motivates you to come to work every morning?
My motivation comes from my eagerness to accomplish something every day and that I am always putting forth my optimum effort. To do this, I believe you have to adopt a certain lifestyle which enables you to come to work with a fresh and attentive mind. Plus, I feel that I work in a place that enables me to represent KPC and Kuwait at large to our external customers from foreign countries.

• Walk us through your typical day at work.
The department I work in relies heavily on speed, accuracy and dealing with intense pressure at times. We try to maintain a “zero-mistake” work environment because we deal with the corporation’s assets which are worth millions of dollars, as well as the cash-out invoices that we have to be very careful with.
I really wouldn’t identify my work day as typical because my job does not always entail routine work; every day is a different day.

• What do you like most about your job?
I like that my work is dynamic and constantly changing. I’ve been working at KPC for 12 years but my job still allows me to work on things that are new to me. I also love the people I work with; the team I’m in is very harmonious and that is exactly what anyone needs to achieve success.

• What do you believe is/are your biggest strength(s)?
I believe one of my biggest strengths is that I try to always update my information through reading the latest happenings in my field of work. If you keep doing what you have been doing for the past 10 years, there wouldn’t be much room for improvement. New ideas come through constant exposure to the latest information. For example, we are currently working on a new idea called “E-filing” or
electronic filing because we really waste a huge amount of papers printing daily reports and documents which sometimes exceed 2000 pages in one day. E-filing will decrease print-out and filing time which will result in error minimization and more productivity time.

• What is the accomplishment you are most proud of?
You will be surprised with my answer. I was reviewing my resume the other day and one of the questions I had to answer was what were some of my achievements. The achievements that I am most proud of were some done through team work and some accomplished individually. As a team, we were once faced with a great problem: one of our tankers had technical problems at sea and we had to find a way to discard some of the products on board the ship (which cost more than 50 million dollars at the time) and through a team brainstorming session, we were able to come up with a solution that saved KPC more than 500 million dollars in losses. That was a very proud moment for me and that goes for any accomplishment or addition I made to the department over the years. It is really a wonderful feeling to see your ideas put to work.

• What creates stress for you and how do you deal with it?
A while ago, I took part in KPC’s HSE Challenge and since then I discovered that exercise and going to the gym every day really helps in relieving stress and aggression. Plus, I enjoy fishing as it teaches you how to be “in the moment”.

• Where would you like to be in your career in five years?
This is a very good question. I believe my sky is the limit and I think whenever there’s an opportunity to give more and develop yourself further you should always strive to attain that opportunity. True, anyone can dream but what governs us is reality and even though certain dreams may remain just that one should always aim to reach his or her highest potential instead of using reality as an excuse or barrier to their goals.

• Who inspires you?
My motivation comes from within. I don’t look at people; each one has their own mentality and goals. I am inspired by my environment and by new ideas not necessarily by an individual.

• What advice would you give to employees who’d like to be more motivated or become a “person to watch”?
Very simple rule: don’t look at others – work on yourself and always put a goal for yourself. Find a passion that gives you joy and allows you to think more clearly. Expand your knowledge and always keep yourself updated, there’s never a limit to how much you can learn.
Lulwa Al-Abdullah

Exceptional Performance

Lulwa Al-Abdullah asserts the importance of building a responsible competent team that can deal with any emergency, and declares her affection with the technology world where there's something new every day.

- **What motivates you to come to work every morning?**
  Being part of KNPC family and working on important projects gives me a deep sense of fulfilment, coming to work every day and feeling that I have contributed to the success of my company is the big motivator.

- **Walk us through your typical day at work.**
  My day starts with the magical hour from 7:00 – 8:00 where there is no interruption. During this hour, I check system status report making sure that everything is in order. Then, I plan the rest of my day through checking my calendar, then my e-mails. At 8:00 I go for a walk to each of my team member to review the important tasks which need to be accomplished through the day. Most of the days, I attend meetings to discuss running projects, exploring new technologies or to go through other business related issues.
• What do you like most about your job?
Working in the technology world where every day there is something new and exciting.

• What do you believe is/are your biggest strength(s)?
I am a good listener; I learn from others and can work under pressure.

• What is the accomplishment you are most proud of?
As you are aware, IT is a supporting department serving all KNPC users. Nevertheless, there was a gap between IT and the other departments in KNPC especially the core business users in the refinery, which was a concern to IT management. Therefore, I came up with an initiative to minimize the gap. The initiative was conducting visits by IT employees to users from different levels and different departments to get their feedback about IT services, discuss challenges we can overcome together and to listen to their suggestions.

• What creates stress for you and how do you deal with it?
In general, being responsible of critical systems, which should be up, and running 24/7 and serving more than 5000 employees is a daunting task. Knowing that any interruption in these systems could lead to financial loss. I deal with this, by being proactive whenever possible to reduce the technical glitches and I emphasize on building a highly qualified accountable team, which can professionally handle the work.

• What are the things you don’t like to do/work on?
Well, I am lucky that I am doing what I like and there is nothing that I don’t like to do or work on.

• Where would you like to be in your career in five years?
I aspire to be in a leadership position with more responsibilities and wider scope.

• Who inspires you?
I am big fan of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum. A true leader with a vision, who had a dream and made it a reality.

• What advice would you give to employees who would like to be more motivated?
Do what you love and love what you do.

• What’s your favorite word or quote and why?
"Your time is limited, so don’t waste it living someone else’s life. Don’t be trapped by dogma -- which is living with the results of other people’s thinking. Don’t let the noise of others’ opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary” (By Steve Jobs).

It is a great advice to follow your own path and believe in yourself and your capabilities.

• What do you do in your spare time?
There is nothing I’d love to do more than spend a quality time with my family and especially my three kids.
Abeer Al-Essa

A Passion for Networking

It takes a certain type of person to be successful in the Public Relations field; a person with an engaging personality that finds pleasure in meeting new people and making connections wherever they go. A self-proclaimed “people-person” who not only networks because it is part of her job, but genuinely enjoys interacting with others and making new friends, Abeer Al-Essa truly fits her role and is a force to be reckoned with in the PR world.

• How does it make you feel to be part of the fast track list? It's a privilege to be part of the list and be part of a Selective Few. It's something to look forward to. It's a great program that will help levitate the degree of job satisfaction and it's considered a plus in case of promotion, to me personally am looking at it as an amazing opportunity for further learning.

• What motivates you? I love and enjoy my job – I love what I'm doing, my work is like a part of me and I really care about any project I get involved in.

• What do you like about your job? The thing about PR people is that we are regarded facilitators; We are the link that connects KPC to the outside world that's why the nature of our work interchanges and that's what fuels my days as am not a fan of routine. Dealing with different people from different places, which gives you opportunities to constantly learn new things. Variety in the workplace is exciting.

• What is your biggest strength? I motivate myself and never wait for someone to reward me; I pat myself on the back constantly (laughs).

• What is your biggest accomplishment? I have managed Many projects related to my field and thorught my experiences I have developed on the flow of these process and created and either an easier way to reach the end result, with less the efforts. As I have stated earlier we are in a variable world, things change constantly. Therefore what might worked then may not work now in order to go back again and adapt to change and figure a way to run things even smoother. There is always a way to enhance how things are being accomplished.

What causes stress for you? I wouldn't call it stress. I would say I lead a hectic life. For example, being a working mom – and just like any mother in the oil sector - you spend eight hours a day at work and then you go back home to deal with the kids and their homework and other needs. Then in my case most of our exhibition activities are evenings so that's not a plus on a personal level. But with time you come up with ways to manage all these challenges with a smile.

What do you like to do for fun? I Love anything outdoor, from a walk on the beach to diving. Spending time biking with the kids or walking my dogs. Again, going back to PR, social media consumes a chunk of my time weather its Instagram or Facebook
and yes I still use Facebook it’s not dead yet in a way it’s good to keep yourself update with the latest specially in our field of work, you get to make connections and friends wherever you go and that’s a plus for someone who loves to traveling.

**Where do you see your career in five years?**
In five years, I’d love to have increased my skill level enough and learn more in order to pass it and to train others how to do this work so they can take over one day. Am not sure when is my next step will be but am excited about it already.

**What or who inspires you?**
Challenges inspire me most they make our life more stimulating and your personality more resilient. So always accept a challenge with an open arm.

**What’s your favorite word/quote and why?**
Better to burn out than rust out.
The way I interpret it is that it encourages moving forward and innovating, and that you should try to stay ahead of the persistent attack of time lets remain dynamic and «rust free».

**What advice would you give to employees who would like to be more motivated?**
Don’t let anything or anyone bring you down, never.
There’s a lot of unconfirmed reports that happens in the workplace, don’t let yourself get dragged into that.
Be above and beyond all this. Trust yourself and what you’re doing; and be your own star.
Dana Al-Sarhan

Kuwait Is Her Driving Force

A Petroleum Engineer at KPC, who uses her free time to read. She says: be a good listener to be a tactful speaker. Kuwait’s love is her grandfather’s well, who put his country first and foremost.
• How does it make you feel to be part of the “Fast Track” list?
I feel proud to be chosen to represent the Planning Sector in this new program, which aims to develop and polish high-level employees' skills, which in turn will create a new qualitative shift towards distinguished levels. I would like to thank Shaikha Shatha Al-Sabah, Managing Director Training and Career Development, for dedicating her attention to outstanding KPC employees.

• What motivate you to come to work every morning?
My love for Kuwait, and my late grandfather Ahmad Zaid Al-Sarhan's advice, who was very keen on encouraging us to work sincerely, and instil a sense of perseverance and hard-work, as well as putting the interest of Kuwait above all else.

• What do you like most about your job?
Working in the oil sector, which is the mainstay of Kuwait's national income, commands great responsibility towards your home country and this drives me to persevere.

• What do you believe is/are your biggest strength(s)?
Honesty, integrity and transparency are my most significant principles and form my way in life. I'm optimistic, and firmly believe that whatever Allah has chosen for us is good. I am somewhat calm and strong at the same time. I love socialising but I like staying at home too and consider family life sacred; family is my number one priority.

• What is the accomplishment you are most proud of?
Graduating from Kuwait University with a high GPA and joining KPC. Additionally, attaining the balanced performance card which is considered one of the significant and distinguished certificates: applicants attend intensive workshops and advanced tests, and thus is considered a milestone in my career. This certificate is strongly related to my current job duties as a senior planner in the Performance Follow-up Administration.

• What creates stress for you and how do you deal with it?
When deadlines are close to each other, I make sure to keep the quality and precision of my work results at the top level. I usually plan and prioritize according to importance and deadlines.

• Where would you like to be in your career five years from now?
I believe everything that Allah chooses for me is good, I don't know where I will be in five years, and I'll cross that bridge when I come to it.

• Who inspires you?
My late grandfather Ahmad Zaid Al-Sarhan: he was very proud of me and I was influenced by his healthy lifestyle and punctuality, whether it pertains to sleeping, eating, working or practicing sports. He was also attentive to elegance and I have inherited his leader personality.

• What advice would you give to employees who would like to be more motivated?
Keep Kuwait's best interest in mind and manifest its love through action and deeds, which translates into devotion since we must give Kuwait as it did us.

• What's your favorite word or quote and why?
"Be a good listener to be a tactful speaker". Being a good listener is one of the best discussion techniques and really resonates with others. Listen more than you speak as a successful person knows when to stop talking and to listen before people speak.

• What do you do in your spare time?
I'm currently reading "The Beginning and the End" authored by Ibn Kathir, which consists of ten parts and discusses creation, prophets and past stories. I like to exploit my free time by reading everything new and beneficial.
Engineer Mohammad Bader Abdullah from the Fields Development Group North Kuwait is an outstanding young engineer who is making a difference and living his passion. With a simple conversation we could recognize how bright of an individual he is and that he will undoubtedly become one of the next generation of leaders in the oil industry.

Having just been freshly employed by Kuwait Oil Company less than two years ago, Abdullah’s accomplishments in such a short period of time speak volumes about his great capabilities. His excellence in his field and due diligence has always impressed both his peers as well as his superiors, but most recently his work was admired by the entire oil industry worldwide in The Abu Dhabi International Petroleum Exhibition and Conference 2014 (ADIPEC). Abdullah was presented with the prestigious Young ADIPEC Engineer Award 2014 in ADIPEC this year for his submission “Living a Dream”.

“Future leaders are those who have the eagerness to learn more, the innovative skills to work more, and the audacity to take challenges,” said Al-Abdullah, who was the first Kuwaiti to receive a scholarship from the multinational oil and gas company Total S.A to obtain a graduate degree from the French Institute of Petroleum (IFP School).

Upon graduation and following his return to Kuwait in 2013 with a Master’s degree in Reservoir & Geoscience Engineering, Abdullah was recruited by KOC to work on the first Chemical Enhanced Oil Recovery Project in Kuwait.
"I love this project because I believe it is Kuwait's future. I am very passionate about it and I have a dream of becoming a specialized leader in Enhance Oil Recovery in 20 years," he said.

From the first assignment, working in the north oil fields during the extremely hot July weather in Ramadan, Abdullah realized that tasks would be challenging but did not think twice about the long hours under the sun because he says he is very fortunate to have “hands-on experience”.

Abdullah adds that he had plans to continue studying to pursue a postgraduate degree but decided to continue working on the Enhanced Oil Recovery projects because he enjoys learning new things through practical experiences versus theoretical explanations.

His most recent accolade proves he made the right choice of honing his skills on the field as it really shined through to his superiors; Abdullah’s Deputy CEO, Manager, Team Leader and Mentors believe in him greatly and decided to enter him in the submissions for the Young ADIPEC Engineer Award without his knowledge.

“I had no idea that they had planned anything like that. I was just surprised one day with an email saying I was shortlisted for the award. I was very happy to see how much they believe in me. I truly appreciate and respect their constant support. It is actually the team work which makes the dream works," he said.

On winning the award out of 400 other participants from about 29 countries, Abdullah says he did not expect it but tried his best.

“Of course, I was overjoyed about the accomplishment; it was a great opportunity to meet with leaders in the industry,” he adds.

Abdullah says his motivation comes from his upbringing and his sense of responsibility towards his country. Abdullah’s family are all engineers in KOC and KNPC - his grandfather Najem Habib Abdullah was a wielder in the early years of KOC, his father Bader Najem Abdullah is a Team Leader at KOC and his three sisters are also engineers in KOC and KNPC.

“Being part of a “KOC family” is something that I really cherish. On my desk I have a picture of my grandfather being honoured by His Highness the Amir after 50 years of oil production, my father being honoured for 25 years of service, and my son when he was a few weeks old sleeping in a KOC helmet,” he explains with a smile.

Another passion that Abdullah tells us about is his volunteer work as a certified trainer for the Ministry of Youth Affairs where he regularly conducts various courses. This passion also extends to his personal life; Abdullah set up a diwaniya named “Diwan Najem” where he invites inspiring personalities from the Kuwaiti society to talk to a small audience about their journeys of success.

A young man with unlimited ambitions, Mohammad Bader Abdullah is truly one to watch.
Unforgettable Experiences

We all are shaped by the various experiences in our lives. And the memories, good and bad can permanently alter our outlook towards our lives and future. All our experiences and interactions help us grow and introduce us to new ideas, but a few hit the next level and become life changing, bringing along memories that forever become a part of who we are.
Al-Quds...  
The Prayer City
Our life stories vary along with the different events we have lived through. Each of us has lived a story that opened a new door to this world and enriched our overall experience. But some of us get the chance to live through unforgettable, precious days which leave us with the most beautiful bitter-sweet memories. Having the opportunity to visit occupied Palestine and Al-Aqsa Mosque is one of those extraordinary experiences that allows you to come back home carrying a greatly touching story that must be shared with others.

Meshari Al-Humoud’s experience is one that cannot be summarised in a few lines, as it has many events and details that reside in one’s mind.

Engineer Meshari tells us the story of his visit to Occupied Palestine (the West Bank) and its ever-lasting details:

“I have a passion for public and voluntary work. After my involvement in student and work unions during my studies at Kuwait University (Faculty of Engineering and Petroleum), I continued post graduation and became active in one of the most prominent civil society establishments in Kuwait, the Kuwaiti Graduates Society, and I was elected as a board member in 2007.

The events of this experience started after we received an invitation from the Cooperation Foundation (based in Ramallah) to visit the West Bank in April 2013. It is worth mentioning that it is a prestigious civil institution that has been supervising many developmental works in the Palestinian territories for more than 30 years. Which in turn support the persistence of the Palestinian people. The Kuwaitis for Jerusalem Committee (which is a mutual committee between the Kuwaiti Graduates Society and the Women’s Cultural and Social Society) organised a joint journey for the Kuwaiti civil society institutions. The Kuwaiti Graduates
Society, the Women’s Cultural and Social Society and the Red Crescent all took part. After preparing the necessary arrangements, we notified the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that we intend to do this journey.

We travelled to Amman on April 10, 2013. A day after that, we visited one of the Cooperation Foundation branches in Amman where we received an entree permit signed by the Palestinian Authority. We travelled to the land borders (Ariha/Jericho borders) where there was a big group of about 60 participants all from Palestinian roots from different countries, in addition to our delegation consisting of six Kuwaitis. After passing the Jordanian borders, we reached a border point that follows the Israeli occupation set illegitimately at a Jordanian-Palestinian location named Alhadeed. The moment we reached there, we felt provoked as a result of the followed security procedures, although there was nothing to be afraid of since we were invited by an official Palestinian side for entirely peaceful and civilian purposes. Each passport must be checked by the Israeli security border, and when it was my turn, I noticed there was something suspicious about my situation in particular. There was extra scrutiny and I was the only one called to an interrogation room, where I was subjected to a behaviour provoking interrogation in terms of the way questions were asked and their type. I made sure not to answer any question with two different answers as I was advised by one Palestinian young man who was part of the organising side. After almost an hour, the interrogation was over and I was permitted to leave. However, I was stopped yet again because my passport number was different compared to the one in the permit since I renewed it after deciding to go on the trip. After another interrogation, I was given my passport along with additional official permits that I was asked to return upon leaving Palestine.

After passing the check point, we reached Ariha borders where we were warmly welcomed, and then we went to Ramallah and stayed there between four to five nights. Every night, we had a different activity and many meetings with sides that work peacefully to resist the Israeli occupation. We also visited many Palestinian regions in the West Bank including Tolkarm, Berzet, Janin, Antaba, Bait Jala, Bethlehem, Nablus and Al-Khalil, as well as important landmarks in them such as the Ibrahimi Mosque, Church of the Nativity and the Resurrection, in addition to visiting the Palestinian refugee camps which were displaced during the catastrophes of 1948 and 1967.

One of the events that impacted me personally was a tour with an American activist who lives in Ramallah named Steve Sosebee. He met a Palestinian woman
named “Huda Al-Masri”, they got married and had two girls. The Palestinian people rights became their most important concern, and through their activity, Huda decided to raise donations to build the first centre dedicated to curing pediatric cancer at Bait Jala. Kuwaitis for Jerusalem committee and many Kuwaiti families contributed to establishing this medical centre. Unfortunately, Huda was diagnosed with leukaemia and passed away before completing the needed amount of money. But her husband Steve kept on raising funds and fulfilled her dream by establishing “Huda Al-Masri Pediatric Cancer Centre”.

On our third day, we decided to go to Jerusalem. But it needs a different permit and we decided not to seek getting it from the Israeli occupation. We wondered: what’s the worst that could happen? A Palestinian lady from the Palestinian Red Crescent Society helped us to visit Al-Quds unofficially and pray in Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Visiting Al-Quds draws real images of what you had imagined before going there. No words can describe the grandeur and holiness of it. Your heartbeat accelerates the closer you get to Qubbat As-Sakhra. It is difficult to believe and recognise that you’re at that holy location. It is also aching to see the occupation atrocities, acts of harassment and intended destruction on grounds of exploring Jewish antiquities, which in turn will cause collapse of parts of the mosque if drilling continues below it.

The colonies built on Palestinian lands, which Israel admits to their encroachment, the racial separation wall of inhuman nature, barbed wires and electric barriers are all new to your concepts and imagination. The media tries not to publish the horrors of this occupation. What is astonishing about the same experience is that despite the hard life circumstances that affect the Palestinian people, the genuine welcome and gracious hospitality make you forget what you have encountered. You also feel flattered by the good impression about Kuwait and its contribution to the Palestinian cause.

At the end of our journey, the Kuwaiti delegation decided to back to Ariha and then Jordan. But after we reached the Israeli checkpoint where I was previously interrogated, I discovered that I had lost my entry papers I was told I could not leave without them. I was informed then that the Israeli forces can confine me for two weeks until a new permit is issued since I lost mine. Many calls were made to allow me to pass without taking any additional security measures. Finally, after several hours of trying, I was called to an interrogation that lasted another hour until I was allowed to pass to the Jordanian borders.

At the end, there are many details that I haven’t mentioned like visiting Al-Khalil, Janin camp and other places. Despite all the life experiences I had, visiting occupied Palestine will be my deepest memory.”
Remembering fond memories intensifies yearning to the places where they were made, and for people we shared them with, so what if journey was to “a whole new world”? This is how Faisal Al-Sabah describes his ten-day journey to Japan.

Al-Sabah was chosen to represent Kuwait along with five more young individuals from different sectors in the “2013 Youth Leaders Program”. He started his relationship with the Japanese side after accompanying a Japanese delegation headed by Japan’s Minister of Economy to an oil conference in Kuwait. One year later, he was surprised to receive an official letter from the Japanese Embassy inviting him to take part in representing the Kuwaiti oil sector within the Youth Leaders Program, which aims to “introduce Japan’s culture and its people’s resilience”.

As for program preparations, Al-Sabah explains: “The Japanese side took care of all the details, and sent us before travelling a set of forms and questions to understand our requirements, and what activities and events we want to avoid, even food types, and they did not have any conditions. The Japanese are understanding and respectful, have great interaction ethics and delicacy that makes you feel shy as one doesn’t deserve such an honored welcoming.

Through an intensive program that started at early morning until 9 p.m, we were able to visit many areas and special places where regular tourists aren’t permitted, like damage areas hit by the Fokushima reactor incident, as well as regions hit by tsunamis and the most recent earthquake in 2011.

Al-Sabah says he always reminds himself of the life lessons learned in this atmosphere. Such atmosphere rich with culture and history stating that the Japanese people are content and satisfied with what little they have made and made him reconsider his position on many matters that he thought were of value in the past. Faisal says that now he realizes that material possessions are simply accessories that don’t bring happiness.

Recounting one of the memories that had a great influence on him: “When we were visiting the area impacted by the Fokushima incident, we met an elderly woman who survived. When we asked her what she needs and how the Gulf countries can help the city, she surprised us by saying they want nothing, and that they have what can guarantee a decent life at the moment”. He also stresses the Japanese people’s delicacy: “They respect your humanity no matter your race or religion, and believe everyone is a good person who can give and achieve. During our visit, officials organized a trip to a famous bakery in Tokyo where 95% of employees have physical and mental disabilities. There’s also a special pedestrian walkway in all the city streets for blind people”.

Al-Sabah concludes that Japan to him is a dream come true. “I was accompanied during my childhood by Captain Majid and Super Mario. Panasonic, National and Toshiba made our teenage years easier, and now that that I am older, I got to witness the deeply rooted history behind the Japanese culture. It might have been my first visit, but there’s definitely going to be a second, a third and a fourth,” he says.
Faisal Al-Sabah

Japan: Between the Past & the Present
One of the employees who reached her position in a special manner. She was among participants of in a Kuwait Petroleum International’s program for new graduates, which aimed to qualify them to attain a position after passing several stages and tests. Sharifa Al-Sulaiti, who likes learning and self-development, took part in The protégés program in 2010, and became one of its activists. She didn’t know the exact nature of “The Protégés”, and says she participated without a specific goal. But the positive and encouraging environment, as well as being among inspirational personalities who share the same interests was a goal in itself.

Sharifa talks about her experience with The Protégés stating that the program aims to widen the participants horizons from different aspects under the leadership of distinguished people who have added great value to society - people who are considered mentors. The program attracts the youth aged between 16 - 24, and works on developing the participant’s personality and awareness. It focuses on three basic concepts: appreciation, acceptance and tolerance. Sharifa joined its first cycle and has been a project manager since its second cycle. Her role lies in providing aid, and being involved in the different preparatory meetings of this program.

She tells us about some of conceptions before and after joining the project: “Before this program I used to say I know everything in a small world, but after joining I discovered I knew nothing in a big world. The program didn’t widen my horizons in one domain only, but in many domains and on different levels.”

Regarding this six-month program’s details and enrollment conditions, she explains: “The only condition is the age, and after the participant is qualified, they go through several interviews, tests and discussions to choose the best in terms of compatibility as members in one group, and the final number is 25 participants. The program organises visits to other countries with different locations every cycle. The first year’s location was Dubai, then Nepal, London and in the last cycle participants visited Dublin.”

About her participation in the first cycle, Al-Sulaiti talks about the project she presented with her team: “It was a monument from a patriotic Kuwaiti song; there was a scene where a group of Kuwaitis are shown during the liberation day, and each one of them stood on another’s shoulder to raise the flag. This scene has an important symbolic and touching value of respect and diversity. It renews feelings of brotherhood and national unity that were evident during the invasion and liberation. This monument project is underway after it attained H.H. the Amir Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah approval, and the sponsorship of Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences.”

Sharifa had her family’s full support as they believed in her
choices, even if they weren't the best, will benefit her. She asserts: “They made sure I kept on learning, and I had their support in every decision that could give me more knowledge.”

Al-Sulaiti’s experience aided her in understanding her personality more, and forming it in accordance with her goals and ambitions. She expressed her gratitude to the trainers who inspired her to choose the best options. She summarises her experience: “After my participation, I knew the value of everything I do.”

Sharifa dreams of being a voluntary activist in Kuwait, and calls that “Giving back” to the community and the nation. She advises everyone from all nationalities and backgrounds to participate in the program and says it’s a life changing experience that enables participants to get to know people from outside their social bubble.
Initiatives

Without them, our lives wouldn't renew but rather, continue at the same pace without any addition or diversity. In this part, we interview entrepreneurs who present new ideas that enriched Kuwait and served society.

Nada Al-Misfir
Senior Engineer Well Surveillance   KOC
Noura Marafi
Dietitian Al-Ahmadi Hospital   KOC
Fahad Al-Faresi
Senior Reservoir Engineer   KOC
Al-Misfir made us believe that when we are determined to achieve a certain goal, all obstacles and difficulties disappear.

Her journey in the union field speaks volumes about her: she was the head of the Female Students’ Assembly during highschool, General Coordinator for the engineering roster in the Engineering Faculty. Then, she established a union for the private oil sector on her own to start a new concept that influences the lives of employees positively.

Engineer Nada Al-Misfir, whose goal was to change the negative idea linked to Kuwaiti employees, explained that at the beginning, there wasn’t a union for the Oil Sector, but rather, separate unions for every company. She graduated as a mechanical engineer in Kuwait University, and didn’t want to work in governmental companies, but in the private sector: “I used to work in Schlumberger, where getting employed was a long story in itself”.

Through an ad she saw at Kuwait University, she liked the idea of working for this company since it depends on field rather than office work. She went to the company and asked about the employment procedure. She met the General Manager who explained that working in the field will be hard for her, but she didn’t mind. Al-Misfir agreed to all work difficulties he described to her, but at the time, she was still studying and needed one more year to graduate. She was asked to improve her English language skills, and apply after graduation. After coming back, she went through several interviews. Nada says: “They were surprised by my determination to work in this field as the manager’s offer wasn’t appealing at all. I had to work abroad at the beginning to understand how to accomplish field tasks, and to determine whether I was able to adapt with exhausting work mechanisms. I was offered to work in Oman in an area called Fuhood where I saw a different world. Fuhood was a remote area with no connection to the world,” she says.

The First Kuwaiti Female Engineer in Schlumberger

Al-Misfir says that she considered working in Schlumberger as a challenge and wanted to prove that Kuwaitis are able to achieve anything. After returning, she agreed to remain at the company to become the first female field engineer in the company at the time. Afterwards, Al-Misfir started to wonder why Kuwaitis were not occupying higher positions in private oil companies: “I was amazed by their training and operations, so I wondered why Kuwaitis don’t choose to work in private companies,” she adds.
The Idea

Following her thought provoking question, Nada came up with the idea of establishing a union for the private oil sector to ensure that Kuwaitis are given the same rights in these companies. Al-Misfir did not want useless solutions stating that “in Kuwait, we set temporary solutions for permanent issues”.

She started by researching mechanisms of establishing a union and embarked on her journey in 2003. The union was not officially announced until 2007. She describes the details of her experience by saying that she had to deal with people who were absolutely set in their routines and tried to hinder her progress. Nonetheless, Al-Misfir says her “passion for challenges” drove her to stay determined and continue.

Establishing the Union

Al-Misfir had a clear-cut vision for this union: she wanted Kuwaiti competent employees to reach the private oil sector and prove their aptitude and right of occupying managerial positions. After she set her plan, Nada said she suffered a great deal of turmoil. The dilemma was knowing which government agency was concerned with establishing a union for a private oil company. The first demand she faced as a prerequisite of officially recognizing the union was having 100 Kuwaiti members, a requirement no private company was able to meet. Kuwaiti employees in her company were 11 only, thus her idea started to take shape, and become a union for the entire sector instead of for a single company.

“The idea met huge resistance, but I personally followed the matter and met officials to prove that establishing the union differently this time under a sublime and important banner of serving Kuwaitis, which will benefit Kuwait someday”.

Nada Al-Misfir carries on: “The union was established in 2007 after all these disputes, and I was elected as a union head for three years until 2010. The union received support from the government oil sector as it carried a new and vital idea, and the oil sector was the upper hand of the union interests. We received many complaints, and I used to carry out thorough research and investigation of both parties to confirm information sources. This was the policy I followed. The union was of key importance for aggrieved employees. However, I didn’t want it to encourage non-activity or production, and receiving unjust raises. The union methodology had to be focused on the benefit of Kuwait”.

Then, Nada says she had to travel for two years and leave the union for others as she was busy with a job abroad. She believed that continuously occupying her position at the union was not fair to the union or to herself and she wanted to give others an opportunity. Today, Al-Misfir says the union is still present, but she considers it to exist only on paper. “People have changed, and surely the union will change also,” she says.
Noura Marafi

The Journey towards a Healthier Life

Marafi, Clinical Dietitian at Al-Ahmadi Hospital, children’s book author, and mother of three has made it her mission to take a no-nonsense, no-holds barred approach in helping children get on a path toward better nutrition.
Marafi’s journey towards “eating clean” started when she was battling obesity herself and realized that she had to make a change if she were to have a breakthrough in her life, as well as her career, she says.

“We all know the drill: we get married, get a job, become more “sedentary”, and start eating more junk foods, especially during work hours. I fell into that trap as well, and found myself stuck in a whirlpool. I didn’t know how I managed to gain 30kgs in such a short period of time, and even worse, I didn’t know how to get myself out,” Marafi explains.

Marafi says that her own weight loss experience helped her understand the real meaning of healthy eating and natural foods and that it basically means avoiding processed foods and eating foods the way they are found in nature.

“That was when I realized that I should use my passion – writing - to spread my message about healthy eating to children,” she says.

Marafi decided to write story books with the great help of her sister Sherifa who is her dedicated partner in this project. Marafi has combined her experiences with the experiences of her sister, a passionate mother who also advocates healthy eating to her two sons. Marafi considers her children as her inspiration to become a healthy person and thus thought it would only make sense to write about her adventure in teaching them to follow the healthy path. She also wanted her message to be realistic and easy to follow so that people don’t find it challenging to shift their lives to a healthier one.

“It took a whole year to get the book done, believe it or not. Although it is a simple children’s book, the work that goes into it is far greater than it appears. A lot of collaboration has to go on between the writing and the illustrations and we were very lucky to have such a co-operative and professional illustrator by our side,” she says.

What’s unique about Marafi’s book, “Hanan’s Playdate”, is that she paid particular attention to the kind of wording used to describe nutritional aspects and says that she was conscious of the fact that she had to “write in a way a child would understand without getting bored”. The book has been receiving positive reviews so far and Marafi says “this is just the beginning” as she plans to extend it into a series of five story books focused on healthy eating.

In addition to publishing children’s books to encourage proper nutrition, Marafi regularly takes part in events for children about healthy food. Recently, Marafi held two events at Q8 Bookstore and Kuwait English School where she taught children about the importance of fruits and vegetables through creative activities and explained the negative effects of consuming sugary foods regularly, and where we can find those sugary foods in our daily lives. Marafi says she was excited to see the children learning about avocados being healthy for the brain and listening to them repeat that dates have potassium which is healthy for the heart after the session has ended.

“As she reflects on her journey, Marafi says she is thankful that she is no longer “addicted” to junk food and that she decided to make such a shift in her life to become a better example for her children.

“During their early years, my children were not taught to “eat healthy”, as I myself was not a healthy eater and was in the midst of my obesity situation. When I decided to make a change in my life, they quickly began to notice,” she says.

“I allow my kids to eat whatever they want. My role as a parent is to educate them as much as I can, and it is their choice in the end if they choose to eat healthy or not. If you want your kids to eat healthy, all you need to do is model it. They will follow you eventually. Practice what you preach. These things come slowly, with repeated exposure and time,” she says.

In her spare time, Marafi also enjoys cooking, baking and gardening – she makes sprouted organic breads from different grains that she sprouts and mills herself and plants organic fruits and vegetables in her beautiful garden at home.
Fahad Al-Faresi

A Harvest that Yielded
Two Books

In this diverse environment, creativity and innovation never stop, and entrepreneurs never cease to present their best to develop and raise the professional bar. From one field to another, we reach the engineering world full of challenges and innovation to meet a young man full of entrepreneurial spirit, so he wouldn’t be like any other person passing an idle spot without adding anything to it through his knowledge and experience.
He has 10 years under his belt at Kuwait Oil Company and two important publications in geology and engineering sciences. This is the experience of Fahad Al-Faresi who attained his petroleum engineering degree from Colorado School of Mines, one of the best worldwide in terms of petroleum engineering. Additionally, Al-Faresi has a master’s degree in the same specialisation from Heriot-Watt University, which qualified him and supported his distinct abilities to produce good content based on solid scientific foundations, and a hands-on experience.

His first book “Being a PE in the Greater Burgan Field”, which he published in English, has information related to petroleum engineers projects at KOC. Al-Faresi says that he thought of publishing a book that would serve as reference for newly appointed engineers. The book is based on his passion for teaching and training, as well as the experience he accumulated by mentoring trainees at the company.

After sensing a need for a reference related to petroleum engineering in general in a simple, yet comprehensive style, he planned to publish his second book “Introduction to Petroleum Engineering”. His second book took nine months to complete, and although Al-Faresi says he “didn’t reinvent the wheel as engineering science has been around for over a hundred years” but he arranged and collected information in a modern style and drew important data and basic equations in a clear-cut manner so that his readers can easily understand the content.

Al-Faresi preferred to publish his second book in Arabic since Arabic books specialised in this field aren’t readily available. He then printed 1000 copies at his own expense, and made sure to distribute it well via libraries in Kuwait and most Arab countries.

“Introduction to Petroleum Engineering” consists of 120 pages, and five chapters which are: petroleum economics as well as its formation history and locations, exploration and extraction means, in addition to the three petroleum specialities which are drilling, production and reservoir engineering.

Al-Faresi faced many difficulties during the different stages of publishing the book as it is of a scientific nature and carries specialised information. Hence, the book had to be divided in an organised manner and be scientifically coherent. On the other hand, the time factor was a focal point as he was busy keeping pace with his job and taking care of his family, but he spent additional hours at work to write.

In the end, Al-Faresi was able to make a book of a high-value scientific content used by engineering students in Kuwait and Arab countries as a fundamental reference in their studies.

As for his passion for reading and its influence on the book, Al-Farisi adds: “I like reading scientific and religion books, and I have read introductions and indexes of several books in order to benefit from their way in presentation.”

Al-Farisi also feels indebted to his parents, especially his mother, who linguistically reviewed and audited the book after he finished writing it.
It’s All Relative

The Oil Sector takes great pride in the accomplishments of its employees' relatives as much as the employees themselves. Here, we introduce you to personalities who have made a mark in society and inspired others to do so.

Fahad Al-Nashmi  Former DMD International Marketing  KPC
Faisal Al-Nashmi  Chef and Owner of Almakan Street
He supported his son from the very beginning and encouraged him to build a bright future for himself based on strong foundations. He fully entrusted him to move forward with steady steps as well as guided him towards the best decisions, motivating and championing him along the way.

His Father Fahad Al-Nashmi is his First Supporter

Former Deputy Managing Director International Marketing at Kuwait Petroleum Corporation Fahad Al-Nashmi’s, relationship with his son Faisal is deeply special, rooted in a great friendship and distinguished by mutual understanding, wisdom and profound appreciation. In this feature, we talk to Chef Faisal Al-Nashmi about his admirable culinary and photography experience and the secret behind his surprising experimental recipes that many have come to know and love.

Education and Early Beginnings

From Miami, a multicultural city, Al-Nashmi started studying photography and directing, then moved to the culinary field. His father was keen on him attaining a degree based on his passions and desires, but at the same
time preferred a degree that can pave successful future for him in Kuwait. However, his father never insisted on him to join the Oil Sector.

Faisal returned to Kuwait after graduating from Miami, and at the time, the culinary field was not as widespread in the country. He started small and worked in different places, moving from one place to another to transfer a new and different cooking culture to Kuwait, but at the same time customizing it to the society’s general taste. Al-Nashmi was able to integrate what he had learned and innovate something that distinguishes him from others. He combined photography, directing and cooking and presented recipes that were photographed in a professional way as he had mastered these arts. He started producing attractive and interesting short films about cooking which quickly became very popular.

Describing his beginnings, he says: “I built a base in Kuwait through my Instagram images. I took part in Qout Market and sold all my products in less than four hours. With this experience, I came to know how to target my audience and what their preferences were”.

Nonetheless, Al-Nashmi asserts that he has just begun and hence cannot call himself a success story, although he always tries to seize the golden opportunities. He asserts that he’s just begun, and can’t call himself a success story, although he always seizes opportunities.

Al-Makan: The Concept

After immense efforts, along with continuous preparation and research, Faisal was able to come up with a creative idea – establishing a restaurant that does not focus on one specific cuisine or theme but instead made diversity and inventiveness his style at his restaurant Al-Makan. Al-Makan is located in the heart of Kuwait City and is “a place where art, creativity and innovative energies collide”. This is how Faisal introduces his small restaurant with superior taste and art. He built it to be a place that encourages cultural diversity and promote artistry using a new and influential style.

It is noteworthy to mention that Al-Nashmi did not rely on common marketing strategies and opted against concentrating on bloggers and social media stars – which he considers a contemporary marketing way to attract visitors. Instead, Al-Nashmi wanted to create a customer base with regular visitors who would come back for the restaurant’s food quality and service. In his opinion, this is what brings his customers back.

Al-Nashmi’s Taste

Faisal does not accept criticism as he believes those with no experience in cooking or ingredients have absolutely no right to criticize, but says he faces this problem almost
daily at his restaurant “Almakan”. However, he awaits his father’s criticism even if it is particularly harsh, as it serves more like guidance rather than criticism. Al-Nashmi says that although he does not tolerate criticism, he always follows his father’s critiques which used to anger him a bit. But at the end of the day, he says they are “correct and beneficial to his recipes’ evolvement.”

**Family First**

“I always resort to my father to find a solution for any problems I face”, Al-Nashmi says. Adding that despite not following his father’s footsteps in joining the oil sector, he gathered from him any expertise he can use in his business, stating that they were the most valuable asset he acquired. Faisal considers his family the closest people to him through thick and thin and says they are the ones who have always stood by him no matter how many friends he has, and they are the most understanding of his situation when pressured at work.

**His Main Influence**

Al-Nashmi was influenced by Korean Chef David Chung, a professional in Miami who owns a restaurant that serves unique Asian dishes with an American twist. Faisal has always admired Chung’s remarkable ability of transforming Asian food into delicious recipes customized to American tastes. Al-Nashmi read his autobiography and learned how his success was a mere coincidence, which inspired him to alter his cooking style and made him think of new ways that would differentiate him from other chefs in Kuwait. As for his favorite flavors, Faisal considers garlic and sesame oil essential ingredients but loves experimenting with different tastes to get the best recipe.

“Everything happens for a reason”

Al-Nashmi remembers his school days in London, where he faced an unforgettable situation that profoundly impacted his life. He was in a very big shock after he and his friend were robbed by a street gang. After that incident, he never left his house alone for a year, although he was almost 18, but he panicked and was intimidated. This led to spending more time with his mother, who loved watching cooking programs. He used to sit with her and watch cooking shows constantly which sparked his willingness to learn and apply what he saw on television in the kitchen. For that reason, Faisal believed that specific period of his life affected him immensely in terms of forming his ambitions, desires and passion for this field. “Everything happens for a reason”, he says.
Diversity in the Oil Sector

Our different backgrounds and multiple cultures have created a great diversity of us in one place.
Having been offered the position as the Change Management Lead by KOC in Kuwait in Nov 2012, to that date I had heard and been told many things about Kuwait; some told me I wouldn’t make any friends, others said I would be facing a huge cultural shock, but I didn’t pay any real attention to what was said.

During my the 35 years in the Oil & Gas industry, from a hands on maintenance and operations engineer with Chevron UK to Senior Country Manager of some 1000 multi-disciplined personnel in Colombia, I have crossed and touched different continents, countries and the cultures. I have made many fond memories pertaining to each culture from the humbleness of the Japanese, the fire of the Scotsmen, the laughter and joy of the Colombians, the need of the Nigerians and now the respect, loyalty and trust of the Kuwaitis.

It warms my heart to talk about the friends I have made in Kuwait as I see my time here not as a challenge but as an opportunity to learn and at times teach and coach. If I were to be asked about the difference between Kuwait’s culture and my own, I have one thing to say: Who am I to judge your culture or in fact talk about your culture, it is your culture and within that culture there is beauty and challenges, “khalas”. The key is to have an open mind a good heart, always looking for the good in the culture its country and the people within.

In my first few months in Kuwait, I was invited to a “dewaniya” and although the concept was new to me, when I was sitting there I realized that it’s no different than the gatherings we have in restaurants or cafes in the UK.

I made friends in a very short time and was invited to a number of family functions and traditional events, where I saw clearly the spirit and love of the family, the absolute complete loyalty to the family, its history, its traditions and its way of life, refreshing to say the least, we in the western culture have lost many aspects of this and could in fact learn many lessons here.

I have found the Kuwaitis are some of the most friendly, generous and intelligent people I have encountered and my work at Kuwait Oil Company has allowed me to meet many bright Kuwaitis from the younger generation.

My job of work essentially deals with coaching and integrating change within the ground breaking KOC Digital Oil Field Project. In fact I was hired by KOC to coach KOC employees to alter and change their way of thinking in order to enable them to understand how to work within the KOC Digital Oil Field.

Far from the culture and environment being strained I myself have found it enjoyable, refreshing and life changing, of course it has daily challenges, but that is the life and environment I chose to work and live in.

"Your Success is my Success"

As an Irish man I am very proud of my own Irish heritage and Irish culture, I was happy and pleased to see the great pride and patriotism that the young Kuwaiti people take in serving their company and country.

The hard working Senior Engineers and Team Leaders that I have the pleasure of working with on a daily basis, encouraging me with their work ethic and their ability to adapt to all aspects of different work and thought processes, however clearly focusing on improving the KOC business.
KOTC is great company. It has always been an important part of my life. KOTC gave me the chance to start and develop my career after University graduation.

I have been with KOTC for almost 12 years. I started in 2002 as a cadet onboard Gas Al Minagish. Later on I had been promoted to Electrical Engineer and have sailed as such until 2012, when I was called in the Head Office on secondment. In 2013 I became officially Superintendent. Since then I am looking after problems related to the electrical and electronic equipment onboard some of the KOT vessels.

While I was sailing I worked with various nationalities – Kuwaiti, Indian, Pakistani, Egyptian, Polish, British, Croatian, etc. Working and living with so many different people onboard helped me a lot with the relocation in Kuwait. The other factor that facilitated my relocation was the support from KOTC, my colleagues in the office and my family, that came with me.

The life in Kuwait differs from the one I had in Bulgaria. Here I can spend more time with my family, meet many new, interesting people and enjoy the great mixtures of cultures. My job is also quite different than before. Now I have more responsibilities. I am also facing many various problems, which helps me improve my competency and makes the job quite exiting.

In conclusion I can say that living in Kuwait and working with KOTC is a great experience and pleasure.
My experience is really special. I joined KPC, a company that is distinguished by having a dynamic and vital management. Moreover, the nature of the job enables employees to engage with people from different cultures and backgrounds, and gain more experience which enriched my professional and social life.

As for job similarity, the systems and laws are very similar in my country, Egypt, and Kuwait: having precision and excellence and the ability to bear the pressures, in addition to fluent English and computer skills are all essential demands of the job market everywhere. In my opinion, the only difference is not being able to take advantage of opportunities that match the scientific capabilities and qualifications of the person.

What makes working in KPC special is the family atmosphere, and mutual respect among employees, in addition to the experience we gain on a daily basis. My job in the Parliament Relations Department gave me the chance to enter the world of politics, and learn about the various aspects of this field which affect all of our life matters. Moreover, I’ve felt great gratitude and appreciation to Kuwait and its great tolerance of other religions after my only son ‘Mario’ passed away from a devastating accident in 2011. Hasan Abul Centre that follows the Kuwait Awqaf Public Foundation, is where Mario used to play football during summer holidays. Following his passing, the centre conducted a training course that bore his name, and invited the Egyptian Ambassador, many prominent Kuwaiti figures as well as our family and friends to an event that honoured his life. It was covered by Kuwait TV and CNN International.

What really amazed me is that a colleague was behind this touching event. I only knew him by face at the time when we met coincidentally in the centre as he accompanied his sons to play football at the same place. When my son passed away, he informed Hasan Abul Centre, and asked them to stand by our family through that hard time. I knew afterwards that it was my colleague and brother Jassim Al-Jama’an, whom I will always hold great respect and appreciation for because of his moving gesture.
I was born in Kuwait and lived a happy childhood that I still have fond memories of. After the Iraqi invasion, we had to leave and go back to Jordan where I finished my education but fate led me to come back with my family to my second homeland more than nine years ago. My career started in a small company in the private sector for one year where I gained little experience. Then I was given the chance to join the Kuwaiti oil sector via KAFCO, and I was employed after passing several interviews and tests.

Working in KAFCO widened my horizons and helped me gain necessary professional experience to develop myself and enhance my productivity. It also enabled me to learn about all the companies in the Kuwaiti oil sector.

**What I like most about KAFCO**

KAFCO is special because it’s a small-sized company with a low number of employees, which makes it easier to communicate with all colleagues, and have a good social relationship.

Also, our job is far from monotony and tedious routine, since the company regularly organizes a number of health awareness lectures, as well as occupational health programs conducted weekly along with other programs which boosts company loyalty.

KAFCO management is distinguished for having an open-doors policy regardless of their nationality or posts and no discrimination.

In conclusion, I’d like to add that I take great pride in my second home, Kuwait, and in being an employee in the Kuwaiti oil sector which boosted my self-confidence and pushed me towards more success and progression.
Babar Mirza
Memories of Kuwait
I would like to humbly recall some memories from my past personal experiences in Kuwait.

When I first landed in Kuwait nearly 27 years back, after having spent 13 years in engineering management positions in the oil sector associated industry in India and UK, the most noticeable thing that struck me about Kuwait was the simplicity, humility and warmth of its senior citizens whom I used to meet at off-work places like cooperatives, public areas and places of worship. These elders of the society truly represent the cultural and traditional values of the people at large.

Also, I was greatly impressed by the high degree of respect and care the youth would accord to their elders, something akin to the oriental societies. As I was not good in spoken arabic initially, the language barrier would come in the way for connecting with these seniors, but after little interaction with them the spontaneous smile on their seasoned faces spoke abundantly of their inner self and of gratifying peace they clearly possessed. One such adorable person was Abu Fawaz of Al-Fintas.

**It was not difficult**

Even at work, our kuwaiti and expatriate colleagues were very cooperative and helpful in ensuring that I settled down initially with the formalities like driving license, Iqama, civil ID, medical registration etc. hence it wasn’t difficult at all in a new country like Kuwait.

The first impressions of Kuwait were its wide, clean roads, fast traffic on highways and big cars owned practically by every resident of Kuwait. Large malls of today were almost non-existent then and Sultan Centre, Salmiya, the old Friday market, the Fish market, Fahaheel and Kuwait’s pristine beaches were the oft-visited, favourite places for the families. Over time Kuwait had become our home away from home and we are fortunate, unlike some of the diaspora settled in the west, to be able to frequently travel at will to our home country.

**Enjoyable work environment**

At KOC we enjoy working in a multi-cultural, multi-linguistic environment due to the presence of people from diverse backgrounds throughout the world i.e. from Asia, Americas, Europe, Africa and Australia. The true diversity in the oil sector lies in the diversity of the people involved in oil & gas exploration, production, operation, facilities management, project engineering, PMCs, refining and export, with whom I have had the privilege to interact and through whom I have picked up several languages.

My most memorable thought about working in Kuwait Oil Company is the work with local management personnel and ex-colleagues, who have risen to higher management positions. On my personal front I have 3 children, all married, and have 6 grandchildren. One daughter is settled in USA as its citizen, have 2 PhD sons-in-law and my son is a Planning Engineer in KOC’s Major Projects. Thankfully for me there was definite professional as well as personal growth throughout my life in Kuwait. Having travelled to more than 20 countries, both officially and otherwise, and being able to communicate with initial pleasantries in 20 languages, I would like to sincerely thank God Almighty and KOC management for giving me the opportunity to serve Kuwait’s oil sector in several diverse ways.

Lastly and on the basis of my personal experience, I like to happily say ‘Kuwait is the best, between east and west’ and wish the best to Kuwait and its people for ever brighter future.
Celebrities in Social Media

Social media is a global phenomenon. Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are, in their own way, making the world a much smaller place. No matter where you are in the world, there are social networks that only continue to bring us together and make the so called “six degrees of separation” concept obsolete.

Tariq Al-Derbass    Construction & Follow Up Project Engineer   KOTC
Nada Sheshtar       Computer Systems Analyst    KPC
Asif Shah            Systems Analyst        KPC
Tariq Al-Derbass

An Influencial Personality

He has recently become famous in the social media world through his unique topics and messages presented in an innovative way. Tariq Al-Derbass, a trainer through social media channels describes Twitter, Facebook and Instagram indispensable tools that reach a wide audience. He adds that his audience through these channels are the ambitious segment that seek to develop themselves and leave an impression in society. He frequently uses the word “Engineer” in the title of his training courses... “Engineer your Life”, “Engineer your Time”... “Engineer your Interview”. Here, we learn more about his journey.

• Tell us more about your beginning in social media.
Before social media, I had a presence in electronic forums: I established the engineering forums when I was a student at the Engineering & Petroleum Faculty. After graduation, and my emergion in social media, I moved on from forums to Facebook then Twitter in January 2011. Back then, it was at the beginning of my journey as a trainer. After Instagram appeared, I started another account there since it’s a new method to market ideas and deliver messages.

• Being an engineer in the oil sector, what attracted you to training?
I was involved in the training field before I joined the oil sector. I started organizing training programmes from 2005 until around the end of 2010, and my passion for this field was ignited at that time. I continued to establish myself in training for five years, and started giving training courses at the end of 2010. What brought me to training was my love for teaching and my passion of developing my own knowledge to convey information to trainees really pushed me to continue. Training is an investment for the trainer before the trainee as the trainer applies the concepts before coaching them. Also, through training I believe we can advance our nation and homelands.

• What is your training specialty? And what courses and activities have you delivered?
I specialise in self-development in the administrative domain, and have used the word (engineer) as a motto for my projects and courses. As for my activities, I have organized many external training trips, voluntary projects, in training centres in Kuwait and abroad and provided consultation for individuals and voluntary teams in Kuwait. The training courses I deliver are (Engineer Your life - Engineer Your Time - Engineer Your Presentation), in addition to the Change Journey in collaboration with my colleague Ahmad Boerki. I also conduct training lectures about other subjects and have given these courses in Kuwait and the Gulf.

• How did social media contribute to your training techniques?
I consider social media a blessing that we have to invest in and utilize in the best way possible. Through social media channels you can deliver your messages to followers. Those who seek to deliver a message can use these channels to their advantage. As for me, I have conducted many training workshops through Twitter: I dedicate an hour and a half every week to workshops in subjects like change management, personal finance and others. As for Instagram, I initiated a programme during Ramadan in collaboration with my brother Ahmed Boerki, a positive thinking specialist, as well as my brother Ammar Mohammad from Qatar, a social media specialist. Through this programme, we aimed to incentivise our followers to invest the Holy month of Ramadan in the best way possible via short daily videos.

• What is the reason behind your use of social media terminologies (such as in the title of your book Retweet) outside social media?
Firstly, technology is the primary concern of young people, my targeted segment. Thus, when we were first offered to present a broadcasting programme in the Holy Quran Radio, we chose Ramadan Twitter as the name. Parts of this program were those of Twitter: (Tweet – Timeline – Mention – Direct Message). Thankfully, it resonated with the listeners and was chosen as the best programme on the Holy Quran Radio during Ramadan. The programme continued for two Ramadan cycles, and after that I released Retweet, a small book with positive subjects to develop oneself and mentality. The book was published with the aim to get anyone who benefits from it would tweet about it so others can benefit as well.

• Has your involvement in social media narrowed your audience?
Though your usage, you define your targeted segment and audience. Since I’m interested in the human development field, my audience is the ambitious segment that aims to develop itself and leave a positive social impression.
The Woman Behind “Danderma”

Nada Sheshtar

To the KPC family, she is known as Nada Sheshtar but to the world, people recognize her as “Danderma” – one of the first and most famous bloggers in Kuwait who was able to garner the interest of local as well as international readers from the very beginning. Her eccentric, witty and beautifully written posts instantly attract audiences and are truly inspiring as her voice and personality vividly shine through to reach those who have never seen her in reality.

Sheshtar’s nonchalant attitude is refreshing; when asked to describe herself she immediately says “I don’t care what others think of me. My blog is me and I accept me – whatever you see is actually me whether on my blog or my Instagram account.”

Her passion for writing along with her love for embarking on new adventures and meeting people from different cultures and backgrounds is what lead her to blogging back in July, 2008. From then on, the name “Danderma” has become widely known across the blogosphere and her reviews of restaurants, products, books, places and anything else have become a serious reference for her followers. As she simply puts it, Shishtar’s blog is “a little bit of everything” and that is why people of diverse interests enjoy reading her posts and engage on a personal level with her daily experiences and “occasional rants”.

With the emergence of Instagram, Sheshtar has embarked on another journey with a renowned Instagram account boasting over 30,000 followers. However, contrary to many bloggers who stopped blogging and moved on to Instagram, Sheshtar continues to post her intriguing life experiences on her blog as she says blogs allow you more space to express and give one a great place to write and voice his or her opinions. Nonetheless, Sheshtar says she loves Instagram because it provides way for more “creativity in terms of photography”.

When asked how social media has changed her life, Sheshtar smiles and answers in a true social media mindset: “I feel like I have two minds now; a mind that is always in the present and a mind that is always in the social media world and thinking about my next post. Even the way I look at things now – I don’t view things as

@danderma
I don't care for the others' assumptions. Blogging gives me a place to express and be myself.

Recounting some of her most memorable experiences, “Danderma” tells us a story about a young boy “Abdulkarim” who was a cancer patient in the National Cancer Hospital and was about to lose his leg as they did not have enough finances to afford a surgery that would save it. However, Danderma was one of the main bloggers that rallied for this cause and managed to find a sponsor to pay for Abdulkarim’s surgery through the great amount of publicity the issue received. Another story Sheshtar cites was when she was recently chosen last May 2014 by Tourism and Events Queensland as part of a group of 22 bloggers from around the world to visit Queensland as a way to promote Australia as a tourism destination. Sheshtar was the only blogger from the Middle East and was chosen to represent the entire region.

“The sense of pride that you get from thinking that they believed you would be a suitable representative for the entire Middle East is immense. My experience in Australia was very eye-opening; it is a really beautiful country and I was very fortunate to be able to visit it with my husband,” Sheshtar says.

Sheshtar’s husband is her constant companion in most of her events – labeling him as her “number one reader and critic” Sheshtar says she could not have achieved all her success without his continued support for everything she does.

“Whenever I’m not in the mood or not feeling inspired, my husband would always motivate me to attend events or post something on my blog […] he even suggests new topics for blog posts sometimes to help me,” she adds.

Following the huge success she gained from her blog, Danderma decided to pursue her lifelong dream of publishing a book in 2011 titled “The Chronicles of Dathra: A Dowdy Girl from Kuwait”. As a young girl, Sheshtar says was obsessed with writing stories and filled all the pages of her school books with her latest narrations and hence says it really brings her joy to see readers of her book identify with it on a profound level.

Looking forward, Sheshtar is planning on releasing the next volume of her book and when asked if she will keep blogging, she answers passionately: “Certainly. Blogging to me has surpassed the stage of being a hobby – it’s a way of life. I believe it’s imperative that I blog the same way it is imperative that I drive to get to places. Blogging gives me a place to express and to be myself.”
What made you get into blogging?
Once I got the hang of the concept of blogging and various tools that were available for bloggers, I posted few “blog-posts”. I didn’t have any idea as to what I should be blogging about so I started with posting funny pictures and jokes that I used to get via email back then. I sent the web address of my blog to my family members, and friends. Initially I had to send them the links to the new posts, whenever I posted something new. And then they would visit the blog and check out the posts, comment on them. To tell you the truth since the whole idea of blogging was new at that time, and I would rely on email forwards for the content, which came in sporadically, I seriously doubted my own ability to keep posting regularly.

Where do you get your inspiration from?
I am inspired by the fact that people who visit my blog appreciate my work. My family and friends support has also been paramount to keep me going. And it’s always a big plus when I come across strangers and they tell me that they have visited my blog and they liked something in particular that I have posted or they found some information they were looking around for and they found it on my blog.
• What makes your blog different from others?
English as the primary language is a big plus for my blog. Most of my readers are expats in Kuwait. There is also a considerable readership from outside Kuwait from people looking for information about Kuwait. Apart from this I make sure that I include lot of visuals with my posts, as I feel it gives an extra dimension to what I write.

• Tell us about one of your most-read posts
Posts relating to restaurants in Kuwait, and about new mobile phones are the more prominent ones. Since Kuwait is a foodie society, people love to read about my experiences in food joints, trying out all sorts of cuisines and my reviews about them. I have covered from roadside outlets to niche restaurants in Kuwait, and this provides my readers a chance to explore all eating out options that are available in Kuwait. On the other hand, in Kuwait we all love the latest gadgets especially mobile phones. And I personally love them from a techie perspective as well.

• Do you consider blogging a passion or a hobby? Do you have any other interests?
Blogging for me is a passion. My years in blogosphere has given me a chance to not only write about what I personally like and feel, but has also given me a chance to meet people from all walks of life and make lot of good friends. Apart from blogging, I like to indulge myself in cooking, traveling, amateur photography, and last but not the least studying.

• What’s your favorite blog?
248am, Danderma, KuwaitUp2Date

• How do you balance your time between work, family and your blog?
In the beginning, blogging for me was a chance to sit back at the end of the day, and write about what had happened earlier in the day. I used to take my sweet time to do this. With the increasing popularity of my blog, businesses, marketing, and PR firms started to approach me directly to post about events, participate in openings, try out some gadgets, and visit new restaurants. This unfortunately had to be timed according to set schedules. And I have a bad habit of not refusing anyone, which means I have had to give my time and overtime to them. This required me to cut out time from family time, and with a young family that’s not an easy task. Fortunately my family has been very supportive of my blogging, and this has helped a lot. As for work, well that is a separate from blogging, but the fact that opportunities like this article in a magazine which will be published at my workplace tells me that my blogging has been noticed at my work place in a positive way.

• Can you offer any advice to aspiring bloggers?
Nearly 80% of bloggers burn out within days of beginning. Main reasons, lack of interest, time management, a direction, and hopping between various social media platforms. To be a blogger, all you have to do is write what you feel, even if it's a few lines or paragraphs. Do not take up blogging and try to compete with professional journalism. Yes you can turn your blogging into professional journalism, but remember journalism is backed up by lot of resources which a blogger usually doesn’t have.

Always respect your readers and your society when you blog. One has to be careful about what is acceptable and what unacceptable content is. Never post about issues which may hurt the sentiments of your readers. Yes blogging is a personal thing, but it’s also published publically, so people will read what you write.
Hobbies & Talents

A chapter featuring employees’ passions outside the oil sector. Here, we learn more about their diverse interests and hobbies.

Hanan Al-Mayyas          Analyst Budgeting & Consolidation Reporting    KPC
Maria Capello                 Consultant South & East Kuwait Directorate    KOC
Aida Al-Rushaid          Senior Analyst Projects & Special Studies    KPC
Mohammad Al-Saleh    Operator, Gas Plant    KGOC
Hanan Al-Mayyas
A Heavy-Weight Archer
She aspires to become an expert and reach higher levels, combining strength and art all at the same time. Hanan Al-Mayyas, practiced this sport through a mere coincidence, and has been training for three years at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Shooting Range. We learn more about her hobby in the following interview:

- Can you shed some light on the archery sport?
  It’s an entertaining sport and benefits the body at the same time. It teaches you how to control your breath, precision and patience. Archery was first established during wars and hunting, and became an Olympic sport in 1900. The sport’s beginning in Kuwait was in 2009. Archers use a bow and arrows of different sizes to suit their height and ability. Scoring depends on the distance between the archer and the multi-ring target.

- When did you take up this sport?
  I started three years ago by coincidence, as I didn’t know this sport was an option in Kuwait. I liked it because it depends on patience, concentration and endurance.

- What are your most important achievements?
  Thankfully, I’ve attained five gold medals and two silver ones locally, and my most important achievement is winning is His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah’s Cup.

- How often do you train?
  Training extends to two hours at least at in Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Shooting Range. However, because of my job and limited time, I’ve dedicated a special area at home for training. Before I start my training, I warm up and run, and after my archery training, I do some stretching.

- Is archery considered a dangerous sport?
  Danger level is very low as you don’t physically face other opponents like in some other sports. By following the rules of archery, as well as security and safety precautions archers can avoid sustaining any injuries.

- Do you take these a seriously?
  Drawing is part and parcel of who I am since I started it in my early childhood, and was what led me to the photography world as I learned its fundamentals and basics through courses or the internet.

- In your opinion, are the youth being supported in Kuwait?
  Support given to photography is excellent; there are many exhibitions, workshops and projects dedicated to the youth in this field, and I have recently noticed great interest in all kinds of drawing. As for sports, archery specifically, since it’s a new sport in Kuwait compared to Gulf and Arab countries, it needs more efforts and attention by the concerned parties to raise its level in Kuwait and abroad.

- What are your future projects?
  I plan to develop my skills more in archery and attain more points to become qualified to participate in international tournaments.

- Do you have other hobbies?
  I like all sports, in addition to pencil drawing and photography.
Training, dedicating your time, starting early and performing in public are the basic fundamentals to playing the piano, Maria Capello says. Training early teaches children the joy of sharing, grants them a rare capability to express their feelings and polishes their music taste.

- **What is your musical background?**

Well, it all starts with my family, where every single member loves music. And not all kinds of music, but as an Italian family, opera was known to me and my sisters since our early childhood years! My mother wanted to become an opera singer, but for many reasons, she had to leave her dreams behind, planting instead good seeds of musical love in her three daughters, and enrolling us in piano lessons. I started very early to learn piano, first on a keyboard that a great-uncle bought for me, and then, in a vertical piano. I now practice in a baby grand, so the beautiful sounds my beloved instrument delivers have improved through the years.

My sisters and I took piano lessons starting in first grade. I started more formal lessons when I was in fourth grade, with a professor graduated in the Paris Conservatoire, Suzanne Joudanin, who guided me in the intricate beginnings and intermediate stages of the classical piano training. Then, I took classes with Valentina Tejera, in Venezuela. During this period, and especially during my university years, I gave several concerts, some of which I remember warmheartedly: One at the University “Universidad Simon Bolivar” main Concert Hall, and two presentations at the National Venezuelan Public Television, in a program of “Musical Youth of Venezuela”.

Then, when I started working in one of the companies, and got married, I did not practice heavily, and gradually practiced less and less until I stopped playing for a gap that extended for more than 15 years. But I started practicing fiercely again here in Kuwait. Just consider that when I first arrived, more than 8 years ago, the only piece of personal belongings that I brought here was my piano. Here, I took lessons from Tamara Granat, a gifted renowned pianist, who led me in the very difficult period of regaining my piano agility. She was a great, outstanding motivator who was able to steer and optimize my practice to arrange for a first recital in only 1 year. I owe her a lot!

- **Why were you attracted to the piano over other instruments?**

I just loved, love and will love piano! For many reasons. Most importantly, it is an instrument that stands alone, and you may play the melody and the accompaniment by yourself, you do not need another instrument to accompany in your music. Then the sound: it is in my opinion the most beautiful sound an instrument may offer. Then, the connection of the musician with the instrument is so complex, a result of technique and sentiment. Very complete instrument, very powerful, and for me, the best instrument of all.
• Who are some of the great musicians that you admire?
There are great musicians in all periods of the history. From today, and form the past. The force and emotional intensity of Rachmaninoff, is in many ways genial. Then, of course beloved Beethoven, a non-plus-ultra of music, a giant composer of all times, without time, on his own stature. Chopin re-created, gave birth to a new way to play piano. I also want to highlight the fascination I feel for Liszt, because as a piano composer he used the power and potentiality of the instrument to heights not reached or even explored before by no other pianist.

• Which historical composer would you like to have dinner with and why?
I would like to have dinner with Liszt, but I would ask him to play! No doubts. This is a real dream that I wish would come true.

Is there a right or wrong way to be listening to the great recordings of the past?
I do not think there is any wrong or right way, and would encourage anyone to listen to great recordings of the past. I am definitely in favor of getting advantage of dedicating a focused attention to “listen” to those major or memorable interpretations, and with the best music speakers available to you.

Great recordings from the past are definitively those of Arturo Bendetti Michelangeli, Horowitz, Rachmaninoff himself, Arthur Rubenstein, Alfred Brendel, Richter, Glenn Gould are available for future generations to listen to them. Then, there are what I call the “fossils” jewels of pianists of the past, But if you allow me, I always precise that there are many virtuosi nowadays that play amazingly, and if possible, please attend their concerts, buy their CDs or see them in YouTube. Andras Schiff, Lang-Lang, Maurizio Pollini, Martha Argerich, Valentina Lisitza, and Krystian Zimerman are my favorite from today’s giants of the piano.

A special mention deserve the “fossil” recordings made in the early years of the XX century, where the ability of legends of the past Gustav Mahler, George Gershwin, Ferruccio Busoni, and Teresa Carreno, was captured in rolls of mechanical pianos, that now reproduced in intensity and speed what these masters played. It is truly fantastic to listen to those.

• Which suggestions would you give to young people starting to play the piano?
To start early, and immediately perform in public, for friends, family, and school as soon as possible. This will teach them by self-experience the joy there is in sharing a rare ability that allows to express feelings and your own musicality to others. And then practice, practice, practice.
Aida Al-Rushaid
A Familiar Voice on the Radio

She has never attained anything by chance. Despite obstacles, she has never surrendered to luck. Aida Al-Rushaid describes herself through her various experiences and activities, which reflect an inspirational and impacting personality.

• Who is Aida Al-Rushaid?
I'm a citizen whose achievements were the outcome of great effort and determination to carry on despite difficulties and hurdles that appeared from time to another. A chemical engineer who has attained many other professional certificates. In a nutshell, I'm someone who always dreams of a more beautiful Kuwait and tries with everything she's got to realize this vision.
• Can you tell us more about your broadcasting history? How did you begin?
I wouldn’t say it’s a history, but rather a beautiful broadcasting experience I’m proud of. I started after enrolling in the first broadcasters foundational course, which was organized by the Media Ministry in cooperation with Al-Babtain Foundation in 2004. I finished the course with flying colours, which urged the program head at the time Ms. Salwa Hussein, a media guru, to choose me to present “Good Evening Kuwait” program even before the course completion. But my family’s refusal prevented this. Because I didn’t want to give up my media dreams, I took part in broadcasting while hoping to become involved in televised media.

• What attracted you to broadcasting?
Media in general, not only broadcasting, is a great field: you become the link between your followers and the news source, as well as an active part of forming the public opinion which means becoming an active influencer.

• Can you introduce us to the programme you currently prepare and present?
My latest broadcasting project was with Al-Watan Radio titled “Al-Watan Store”, a live programme. It consisted of several parts so that listeners won’t feel bored. We had a new guest every time that we spoke with about their experience, personal life and their latest contribution. We also discussed new and controversial issues in social media, especially in Twitter and Instagram, and added our opinions as well as some social projections.

• What is your childhood dream?
I always dreamed of having a literary creation whether in the theater, printed, or in televised media. I’ll share a little secret with you: my signature in intermediate school was “Aida Arts Production Company”. I’m still amazed by this since I was too young for such a concept! My biggest dream is writing for the children theater.

• Besides your activities in the radio, we heard of “Camp GLOW” which organizes positive events for females in Kuwait and abroad. How was this project incepted?
Camp GLOW stands for: Girls & Ladies Optimum Wellness camp. It’s a social project through which I organize activities and events directed at women of different age categories, and aimed to increase women life efficiency from different health, psychological, cultural and other aspects. The idea began when I noticed that women in Kuwait lack proper communication with themselves and their surrounding feminine society. Then, this ambitious project took place to create a healthy fruitful environment for communication, supporting relationships, positive mentality.

• How do you balance your job at KPC and your other activities?
I take great pride in my job at KPC, and I also love my interests outside my job scope. This makes me give my all to achieve a balance and juggle them, even if I fail every now and then; my job pays the price sometimes and my other interest do at others.
Mohammad Al-Saleh  
Being One with Nature

Photographer of a high caliber who loves wild life, and takes shots of this world from his own perspective. Mohammad Al-Saleh tells Th’haba the story of his 10-year-old hobby.

• How were you attracted to wild & marine life in particular?  
I started in 2004. Before my beginning in the photography world, I loved watching programs & documentary films related to wild and marine life. I admired these types of programs as they had a wealth of information and impressive scenery where Allah manifests his power in their creation, how they live and how they adapt with their environment. On this basis, I wanted to live this experience practically, I wanted to have the chance to interact with these creatures in their natural habitats.

• What is the type of the camera that you use, & which kind of lenses do you need to snap such shots?  
I use a DSLR, which is simply a professional digital camera with changeable lenses according to the theme you want to photograph. For instance, if we need to photograph animals in their natural habitats, we use a wide lens, whereas we use zooming lenses if we want closer shots. As for insects and small plants, I use magnifying macro lenses, and wide and macro lenses if we are to photograph under water.

How did you develop your skills?  
By enrolling in specialized courses and workshops & working with experienced photographers in this field, as well as reading books and magazines dedicated to this type of photography, in addition to those related to studying these creatures behavior.

• Have you had local or international participations?  
Thankfully, I’ve participated in many contests as well as local and international exhibitions, & attained many awards. One of my most important achievements was participating in Arabia Wild Life Exhibition of Nat Geo Arabia in Abu Dhabi, 2012. A photo of a nudibranch under water was published in one of the specialized articles in the National Geographic website, & a baby green turtle shot was chosen by the National Association of Underwater Instructors (NAUI), and used on the front cover of 2012 calendar as well as one scuba-diving license.

• Do you have any future projects related to this hobby?  
Yes. I plan to become a world renowned photographer through increasing my experience, participating in specialized contests & exhibitions, establishing contact with well-versed photographers and taking part in advanced courses & workshops.

• What advice would you give to amateur photographers?  
Amateurs should take photography seriously & have patience and perseverance to attain the best outcomes. They should also learn from more experienced photographers.

• What is your most beautiful shot?  
It is not my best, but it is the reason behind my start in the photography world: it was of an eel, and it was the first time I ever used a professional camera. I also had absolutely no experience in photography nor in dealing with these dangerous creatures. Thankfully, I was lucky with this shot and it was among the ones I entered with in the aforementioned Arabia Wild Life Exhibition of National Geographic Arabia. It was also published in the Snakes Around the World Encyclopedia.
• **What is your favorite photography spot?**
  There is no certain place since every animal has a specific season and a specific area where you can find it, and photographers must pursue the right time & place to obtain optimum results.

• **What do you think of the photography hobby in Kuwait?**
  This hobby has increased recently, which indicates people’s attention and love for it, and we have many different photography subjects in Kuwait. Thus, Kuwait has many talented photographers locally and internationally.

• **What are the challenges you face during photography trips?**
  There are some, the biggest challenges are those related to the weather (high temperature, dust, rain, fog) or those related to accessibility since there are some sand areas where it is hard to move. Additionally, we sometimes need a long time that can extend for hours or days to take a shot of a certain animal. But I overcome them by preparing the right equipment for this kind of trips such as photography, safety, security and different communication means in case of any emergencies.
Making a Difference

How can one person make a positive difference in the world? One way is the practice of “giving back.” In this section we met with two inspiring personalities who are committed to leaving a mark and making the world a better place.

Altaf Al-Subaie          Analyst Competency & Assessment Systems    KPC
Malik Sajid                 Web Developer     KPC
"A joyful woman who loves life" is how anyone would describe Altaf Al-Subaie right after meeting her. However, this isn't everything about her personality: behind this beautiful picture is a solid and coherent figure that recognises the suffering of vulnerable segments of our association, and her awareness drove her to volunteer in the (Kuwaiti Children Rights Association) as head of Public Relations.

“My love for volunteering isn’t something new as I have volunteered since I was a child in many locations and for many causes. The biggest reason behind this is my ongoing desire to be the voice of the people who wouldn’t be heard otherwise.”

After a long voluntary journey that extended over several years, Altaf chose to be part of the Kuwaiti Children Rights Association. She adds: “Since our first meetings, I realised that I have to be in this organisation where members are founding doctors only who focus on technical matters, and there was a great need for a person with a different vision”.

Al-Subaie’s role is to spread the name of the association and its cause, as well as highlight the segment through media connections with different media channels and bloggers.

The association oversees daily cases of physically and psychologically abused children. However, the society constantly refuses to acknowledge this phenomenon.

It has exacerbated recently but has existed for a while. Altaf says she has witnessed really heartbreaking cases and some unfathomable ones which are being ignored because there are no laws to punish the perpetartors or protect the rights of the child involved.

The Kuwaiti Children Rights Association faces a number of challenges, but the biggest is the society’s discretion: “How do we protect the society from a disease that its pride and conservative nature prevent it from recognising it? My work at the association has taught me and other members the meaning of patience and persistance. We will never give up on these innocent children’s rights, and we will be a protector when everyone abandons them.”

Al-Subaie confirms that this cause has been getting more attention recently: “We have dealt with a number of actors who have helped us with their innovative contributions such as awareness films and art, which enabled us to set up an exhibition, and the proceeds went to the Association. We also received a call from the Ministry of Youth that wish to support our future activities.”

Finally, Altaf urged everyone to volunteer and help as much they can: “The blessing of a happy life we live on this earth is very underrated, and we can only understand its value if we see the amount of pain and sorrow hidden behind the walls of injustice and repression.”
Malik Sajid Ali

Donating blood is a noble cause. In addition to saving lives, it also benefits humanity. In this interview, Malik Sajid talks about the establishment of Pakistani Blood Donors in Kuwait group, which donates blood through the events it holds such as camps without discrimination against any race, nationality or religion.

• When was the group incepted?
In 2011, PBDIK was established during a thought provoking phase of a Pakistani Mr. Amer Hamid whose close relative who happened to be admitted in hospital and was in need of 23 bottles of blood every day. During his treatment, he was not only impressed but was also driven by the efforts and arrangements made by the Ministry of Health (MOH) for not sparing any effort in providing not just the medical treatment, but also continuous blood supply during this treatment. At this moment, a thought provoked about the donors who were donating this blood for the noble cause of humanity, without any discrimination and without knowing the whereabouts of the recipients. Taking this human gesture into account, he discussed the idea with his friends to make efforts to bring awareness in society about the importance of blood and that how their blood donations can help in saving lives. From this moment onwards, along with his friends, Mr. Amer Hamid founded Pakistani Blood Donors in Kuwait (PBDIK) and conducted the first blood donation camp in 2011. To achieve the objective of PBDIK, they utilized social media especially Facebook and invited the community, particularly of Pakistan heritage to come up and serve humanity. Alhamdulillah, at this time, not only is the community helping but also the Embassy of Pakistan in Kuwait responded positively and extended their support by all possible means.

The vision of PBDIK is not only to bring awareness in society on the importance of blood donation but also to unite the
people to stand together during difficult times. PBDIK has also communicated with students through social media to raise awareness by conducting an online competition on Facebook where students were rewarded with valuable prizes for presenting their knowledge and understanding on the importance of blood donation.

We pray to Almighty Allah that he may please accept these sincere efforts of PBDIK and gives us capability, capacity and conscience to serve humanity in the future, Amen.

- **What made you want to initiate or take part in a blood donation group?**

I always wanted to do some work for noble cause, something which makes me feel human and proud, who knows you can be in need some day so you got back what did you donate.

I have observed many organizations working in this area but almost all were somehow restricted either by nationality, religion or ethnicity where as my dream was to serve humanity, simply everyone regardless of any boundaries. I found an organization (PBDIK) managed by young Pakistanis, but working for the benefit of humanity without any discrimination. The cause itself was great, donating blood for those who need it. Obviously blood is something which has no substitute and regardless of social status, nationality and religion, everyone has it, everyone can donate it and many of us need it.

We (PBDIK) have very specific goals which we have continued to target since our inception. We intend to educate public.

- **How was the response by the people? Did you get a lot of people wanting to donate?**

The Pakistani community in Kuwait firmly believes that the blood donation is a mere token of appreciation from them towards the Kuwaiti society and an opportunity to extend their sincere support while playing a productive role for the social and economic development between both nations.

Not just Pakistanis but other communities in Kuwait have also extended their overwhelming support to PBDIK. We believe that residents of Kuwait are extremely humane and have been open to understand and recognize our cause.

- **What kind of events does the group organize?**

We have targeted to have two blood donation camps every year in coordination with Central Blood Bank of Kuwait. PBDIK has so far conducted SIX successful blood donation camps between 2011 and 2015 with growing participation of all communities in Kuwait in every consecutive blood donation drive. So far in SIX blood donation drives, PBDIK has been able to arrange over 1200 blood donations which should be credited not just to Pakistanis but to all communities resident in Kuwait.

In a short span of mere four hours, our 6th blood donation drive witnessed an overwhelming attendance of over 400 people among which over 200 persons registered themselves as blood donors. One of the highlight of the event was an overwhelming participation from female donors which showed vital increase compared to earlier four blood donation camps.

- **How many people are actually involved in the group?**

We have many people involved in PBDIK at different levels. Around 20 people are the active participants, who think, plan and execute different activities of PBDIK e.g. Blood Donation Camps, motivational campaigns. Then we have many volunteers who help in miscellaneous activities and finally come our heroes, our blood donors.

PBDIK is composed of motivated, enlightened and respectable people who meet up at least once every month and make plans and schedules for achieving PBDIK's objectives in future. These members are unique by the fact that they are from different trades of community and have volunteered their services to serve humanity. Last year, PBDIK has also formally setup their women wing who is now giving extending their maximum support and contribution.
Venkatesan Kadavul
Venkatesan has been working at Kuwait Oil Company for 16 years. He is a Planning Engineer in the Project Support Service Group and first found his passion in photography over 20 years ago in 1991. He specializes in landscape and nature photography and enjoys capturing moments during famous festivals.

Tamer Gurgis
Has been working in Al-Ahmadi Hospital since 2006 in the Pharmaceutical and Medical Supplies Department and has considered photography one of his main hobbies since 1992. Tamer’s favorite photo session location is Al-Mubarkiya. My Instagram: tamerhabib

Mohammed Riaz
Mohammed Riaz is an engineer at KNPC since 2000. At the age of 17, Riaz stopped due to his education and he restarted in 2005. Mohammed likes to do MACRO photography, and he prefers parks and gardens.

Everyone of them captured a beautiful moment to save it as a precious piece for Th’haba.
Abdulaziz Bin Thani
A Customer Services Supervisor in the Local Marketing Department in Kuwait National Petroleum Company and has been employed since 1991. He took up photography as a hobby three years ago and specializes in sports photography. He enjoys taking photographs during rallies and motocross events. Instagram: @sanyarq68

Jassim Al-Tourah
Works in KOTC since 1996, he started photography in 2005. He is interested in landscape and cityscape photography.

Hamed Al-Mazidi
Works in Kuwait Oil Company as a Process Engineer in the Research and Technology Group. He started in the field of photography in 2006 and says his favorite location for photo sessions is Al-Hamra Tower during sunset.

Mohammed Al-Jeeran
Works in Kuwait Oil Tanker Company as a Fleet Personnel Officer and has been employed since 1998. He has loved photography since an early age in the 1980’s but has starting taking photographs professionally in 2008. Al-Jeeran specializes in nature photography and his favorite photography locations include historical cities and villages, mountainous areas and bird habitats. Instagram: Sharpshooterm
No one is aware of the amount of work required for the issuance of such a magazine; yet it does not match how much fun that the work team has during the preparation of meetings, interviews, office visits and various shooting sessions. We would not of course miss giving the credit to those people who accompanied us in this journey, as they are characterized by giving, do not hesitate to participate, and can never be remiss in accomplishing any task that may serve the public interest of the oil sector.