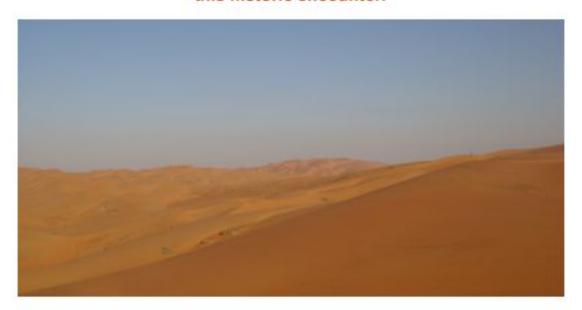
Young People bring Two Kingdoms together

Nadia Shabir

Bridging of the cultural divide between two distinctive nations - thus traditional values encounter secular values in this historic encounter.



In the present century, nobody accurate attributed more explanation of Islam in Britain from the outside. There is now, than Saudi Arabia. However, more than ever, a need for a there has been a lot of confusion cultural dialogue between the and misconception in the British people media about the people of Saudi achieve Arabia. Most of this comes from dispel myths. the difficulty in obtaining an

picture of to the Kingdom's diversity and norms of these nations understanding and

The Two Kingdoms Youth intercultural Summit held in Jeddah and Riyadh January 10-16, 2009 saw meeting of 48 youth the participants from both the United Kingdom and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This was a sequel to the first youth summit in 2007 which focused the on contribution European of educational exchange activities to Intercultural Dialogue.

The succeeding congress kingdom exchange activities to

dialogue between the two countries and its positive implications to building cooperation, cohesiveness and promoting understanding among people of different cultures. specially the youth.

The opening ceremony took place at the Chamber of Commerce in Jeddah on 10th January 2009. Beina gateway to the two holy cities and the gateway to Saudi focussed on the impact of two Arabia, picturesque and aweinspiring Jeddah was the perfect





place for such an intercultural activity. Jeddah lent a genteel but convivial and enthusiastic atmosphere to all the delegates and guests.

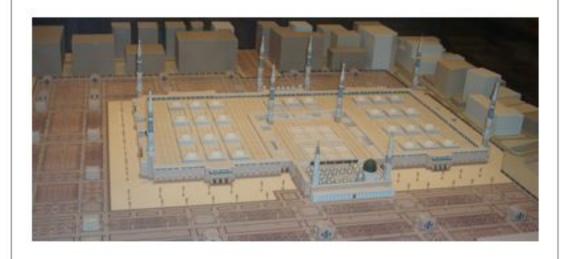
Attended by local dignitaries and has received prominent media seen as challenges to response from the two countries. an informal discussion, The organisers successfully the proceedings evocative create kingdoms, and create atmosphere of cultural learning. The youth summit also aimed to collaboration, among others. address several issues that

concern the acknowledgment of cultural diversity in Saudi Arabia as well as the opportunities for cultural expression. This has been eloquently discussed by the media. Cultural differences prolific figures of Saudi society, it among the participants were coverage and an enthusiastic success of the summit. Through and challenges issues to surrounding intercultural dialogue dialogue were discussed. The between the participants, dispel forum managed to respond to negative myths about the two these many challenges, which an include language barriers and finding a common ground for

The conference enhanced The participants also produced personal development of the strategies to address the by developing impediments to building better participants appreciation of cultural diversity, understanding, trust and making new friends, having fun cooperation between the two countries working and learning together.

TWO KINGDOMS CULTURAL AND HERITAGE TOURISM

Cultural Learning and Appreciation



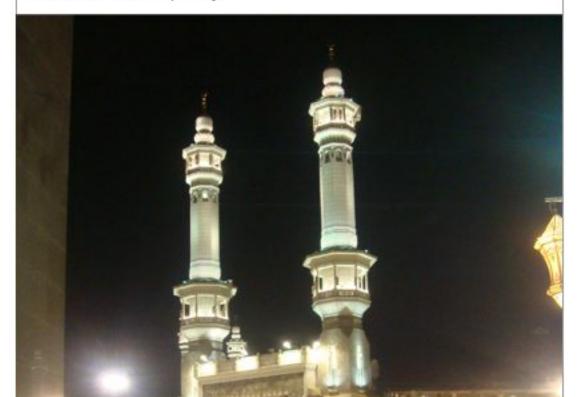
The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a land of astounding beauty, from conventional Bedouin areas to cities replete with avant-garde skyscrapers and superhighways. Interspersed in the forum proceedings, the participants were treated to an unforgettable tour of the famous attractions in the Kingdom that not only gave them the delight of travel and leisure but also the opportunity to appreciate its rich cultural heritage dating back to Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h)'s time.

OLD JEDDAH AND ITS MYSTIC CHARM AND ARCHITECTURAL WONDERS

Visit to the Old Jeddah Naseef House

The participants were fascinated residence of King Abdul Aziz ibn with the architectural marvels of Saud, the founder of present-day the Old Naseef House that Saudi Arabia. Hearing the reflected both tradition and echoing calls to prayer for modernity with its 50 ornately Maghreb from 36 mosques decorated rooms. Centrally around Naseef House proved to located in the old city of be a fulfilling and unique Jeddah's main street, Suq al- experience.

Alawi, it is the temporary





Dinner at Coral Beach Jeddah

Watching the traditional Saudi marriage ceremony, participating in folk dancing and being treated to a lavish dinner gave the British youth a lasting memory of the warmth and generosity of Jeddah. Exposure to various cultural minorities and practices overwhelmed the British participants with new found admiration of Saudi culture.

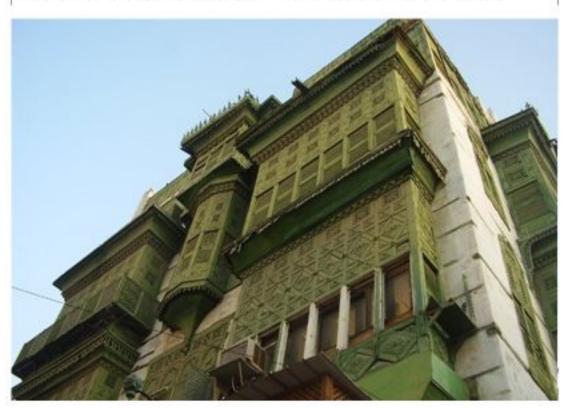
UMRAH AND FUN DESERT ADVENTURE Pilgrimage to Makkah

Participating in "little a pilgrimage" called the Umrah British Muslim gave the delegates another unique taste of Saudi traditions and enhanced their regard for the faith and religiosity of their counterparts. Like the Hajj, the Umrah is a form of pilgrimage

where the believers go through a RIYADH - EXPLORING ritual of cleansing and renewal. The visit to Makkah which is the holiest of all cities and which hosts millions of pilgrims from all over the world gave the British firsthand youth learning a experience of the Islamic faith. who did The others not participate in the Umrah went to fun-filled adventure in the desert and enjoyed some Saudi folk-dancing and a superb dinner in distinctive desert ambience.

ANOTHER SIDE OF SAUDI

The participants also visited the once small walled city of Riyadh which is dynamic now a metropolis and one of the fastest growing and most prosperous cities in the world. It is the seat of political power as well as the hub of commercial activities. The delegates enjoyed the vivacious blend of the old and the new architecture that evoked old





world charm. With deep roots in VISIT TO A MUSEUM IN Islamic tradition and values, RIYADH participants found Riyadh as The visit to the Riyadh Museum more democratically urban.

Al-Faisliyah Tower

Scaling commercial the skyscraper and the second tallest building in Saudi Arabia added fun and excitement to the youth forum activities. Braving the ferocious winds and the bitter cold, the young people and watched played games Rivadh's alitterina skyline. Indeed, Riyadh by night is one of the greatest sights in the world.

of History and Archaeology that celebrates the diverse history and the beautiful architecture and archaeology of Riyadh gave the delegates a glimpse of local art and culture. A short film viewing allowed them to learn more about the history of the Arabian Kingdoms, the Prophet's Mission and the founding father of Kingdom First Saudi Royal. They also marvelled at the display of exquisite many artefacts and other historic items related to the colourful past of Riyadh.

ALL FUN AND NO WORK DESERT STYLE

From a small airport, the participants were flown to a private desert outside of Riyadh airport. They had a chance to spend a full day in the desert. It was a "no work and total fun" day for participants, as they explored the sand dunes, played football on desert sand, and watched the sunset and enjoyed a traditional desert lamb meal in a tent.

In a world where no culture is an island, building trust and understanding through dialogue is increasingly important." This is the premise upon which the two Kingdoms convention was built

on The summit was a success. in aspects many and successfully achieved its purposes through a number of intercultural activities and events. The conference highlighted the significance of local knowledge and individual cultural practices in order deepen the understanding culture and Saudi how manage intercultural dialogue within and across communities. For British and Saudi youth, this experience was a revelation as the rich cultural and religious of Saudi heritage Arabia dispelled myths, and brought two Kingdoms together synchronization and peace! •

