

Basma AlKhayer: The Experience of a Salaam Trainee

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This is an email interview with [Basma AlKhayer](#) GPIW 2010 summer intern through the Salaam Traineeship program at AISEC International. Basma talks about her experience in NYC, working with GPIW and peacebuilding in the Middle East.

Tell us about yourself.



Basma AlKhayer

My name is Basma AlKhayer and I am from AIESEC Bahrain. I came to The US as a Salaam trainee. Living in New York has helped me to be more independent and stronger. I had a great time learning more about the culture and the people – plus it was easier for me to deal with people and the culture because I was raised differently than most of the people in the Middle East. I was raised in a very open-minded family and it was much easier for me to understand the culture since it's not very different from the environment I was raised in.

Were there any cultural difficulties in moving to the United States?

Honestly I didn't face any kind of discrimination for any kind of reason, in fact I was surprised because most of the people I met wanted to learn more about my culture and Bahrain. My internship was so much fun and very enlightening, the people were very helpful and laid back, the environment was very relaxed and my tasks were reasonable and it was a learning process that I very much enjoyed. I am glad I got the chance to be on this internship because being in New York City opened doors for me and now I am interning with the United Nations.

What are your favorite things about living in the US / New York City? Are you involved in anything other than working at the UN?

My favorite thing about living in NYC is the life style, I enjoy meeting new people and the city life makes it easier, plus the exposure to new things and its makes it easier to build a network. I made a lot of friends in the city and met a lot of important people at the UN and outside the UN. I enjoy being independent and I love that

my language is getting stronger and better ever since I got here. It's also easier for me to express my thoughts and ideas now.

What were the best things you learned at your Salaam internship (and what was your internship for?)

My Salaam traineeship was with an NGO called **Global Peace Initiative of Women** and their goals are working on women issues/rights and promoting peace, my task was to do research and find people with mutual interests to collaborate with, and my summer internship helped a lot, it taught me all that I know now and currently working on at UN now I have the knowledge and it's easier for me to deal with whatever I'm assigned to do at work. I am much more familiar with the issues and it's easier for me to give out ideas. it also taught me how to present projects and ideas.

Do you know when / if you want to go back to Bahrain? If so, what do you want to do there?

I don't know when I will be back to Bahrain but if I ever do I will make sure to work on something related to my current job.

What are your thoughts on the events unfolding in your home country of Bahrain and the broader Middle East / North Africa region?

My thoughts about the situation in the Middle East are neutral. Of course I am happy for Tunisia and Egypt, and hopefully they will have a better life now. All I can say about what is going on in Bahrain is that it's sad because Bahrain is a very peaceful country, plus the number of well-educated people in Bahrain is very large. But some of the people and the government are being unreasonable. I believe there are peaceful approaches like a civilized dialogue to get their demands.

Do you have any specific hope for how you would like the troubles in Bahrain to resolve, and how, if at all, you would like Bahrain to be different after the crisis is over?

I wouldn't necessarily call what's going on in Bahrain a crisis because it's not as intense as the media claims. But since Bahrain is a civilized country with a good amount of well-educated people, I hope that the people in Bahrain start a civilized dialogue and find peaceful approaches to ask for their demands and I hope that the government gives a chance to the people to express what they need and want. I also think that they should ask for reasonable demands, but before anything I hope that the division in Bahrain ends because nothing shall work in Bahrain if efforts are not focused in unity so I hope that happens once everyone calms down. I honestly wish that everything comes to an end soon and everything calms down so that Bahrain can go back to its peaceful nature.

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