

Global Women's Breakfast (GWB)— The Impact of the (GWB) at the University of Duhok

by Suhad A Yasin

In July 2021, I experienced an overwhelming sense of pride and accomplishment upon seeing my image on the cover of *Z*, the magazine by the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC). This recognition stemmed from the successful organization of the first Global Women's Breakfast (GWB 2020) at the University of Duhok, Kurdistan Region, Iraq, which I personally spearheaded as a PhD student in the Chemistry Department. Initially, I had concerns about the event's feasibility and significance, but these were quickly dispelled.

The IUPAC Global Women's Breakfast (GWB) aims to foster a network of women and men committed to bridging the gender gap in science. Held annually in February, coinciding with the UN Day of Women and Girls in Science, the GWB brings together participants globally to support this mission.

International participation has profoundly impacted my students. I strive to provide them with opportunities for global communication and learning beyond the traditional lecture format. The role of a university professor extends far beyond lecturing; it involves nurturing students' enthusiasm for learning and organizing meaningful activities. Through various events I organize, students engage in dialogues, exchange ideas, and collaboratively plan and execute tasks. These interactions, driven by a shared love for learning and development, often lead to greater success than expected.

In 2020, I discovered GWB through a Facebook post about the IUPAC Women's Breakfast. Intrigued by the idea, I delved into the details on their IUPAC website and realized the event's potential for uniting people through science. Our first GWB in February 2020 was a modest yet impactful event, attended by the Dean of the College and faculty members, and warmly received by students with flowers and expressions of happiness.

Since then, the anticipation for the GWB has grown among students. Despite the lack of emphasis on international student activities in Iraqi universities, the University of Duhok has proudly led the way. It was the first to participate in the GWB annually and to establish a student chapter of the American Society. Over the past four years, our GWB events have evolved, becoming a source of joy and academic enrichment

for our students. The spirit of cooperation and scientific discussion fostered by the GWB, linked to the highest international scientific body, creates an indescribable atmosphere that we eagerly look forward to each year.

The words of Dame Carol Robinson, President of the Royal Society of Chemistry (UK), encapsulate the essence of the GWB: "It's exciting, and humbling, to think that there are groups of women, just like us, all over the world, hosting breakfasts just like this, sharing this moment together. Today we join together, women across the world, to support each other, make new connections and spark new collaborations" [1].

Elisa Carignani also encourages participation in the GWB, highlighting its value: "Don't be scared, any idea is good, and no big event is required. The time dedicated to thinking and talking about inclusion, gender stereotypes, and cultural diversity is an investment. It enriches you personally and is extremely useful professionally, especially in multicultural research groups" [2]. Her insights emphasize the importance of storytelling and personal experiences in enriching discussions and addressing real-life problems.

In 2024, our students were thrilled to see a poster designed by GWB for Hiyam Adham, one of our students, featured on the IUPAC website. We printed the poster and displayed it at all entrances to the University of Duhok and in the student center to highlight the importance of participating in this global event.

The GWB has had a transformative impact on our university and students. It has inspired enthusiasm, fostered a sense of global community, and highlighted the importance of diversity in science. The event continues to be a significant annual highlight, contributing to the professional and personal growth of all participants. We will be organizing GWB2025. **In 2025, the GWB will be held on 11 February**, on the International Day of Women and Girls in Science.

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References:

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