

**The AUIS Innovation Awards 2022 boast an international set of judges that have thoroughly evaluated the submitted applications.**

- **Dr. Wisam K. Khalid**, Lecturer, Horticulture and Landscape Design Department and CDC Director of Mosul University.

Dr. Wisam Khalid is a lecturer at the Horticulture and Landscape Design Department and head of the Career Development Center of Mosul University since 2018. Director of Mosul University. He has been over the years a coordinator and organizer to many programs and events inside university in relation to Entrepreneurship and innovation. His interests include Entrepreneurship and Capacity building for students and graduates. He has over 5 years of work experience within Business Development. inside and outside University.

- **Aziz Nassiri**, Chief Executive Officer at RiTS Iraq, Founder and Chief Executive Officer at Riyadh for Innovation.

Aziz Nassiri is currently the CEO of RiTS Iraq. He is the founder and CEO of Riyadh for innovation and a co-founder of Noah's Ark, a platform . He is the founder of Iraqi Diaspora Network and an innovator in the Iraqi Universities Ecosystem.

Mr. Nassiri has an MSc in Manufacturing Management at Cranfield University. He has 40+ years experience in business development and business management. Mr. Nassiri also has experience in the Information Technology industry for 25 years in Europe and the Gulf countries plus 15 years in Iraq (Baghdad). He has been a youth entrepreneurship activist for 6 years supporting youth as an entrepreneur, visionary, with a mission to solve Iraq's youth unemployment problem.

- **Yad K. Rashid**, Chief Executive Officer at Avesta Group in Sulaimani, Iraq.

Yad Rashid is an experienced Chief Executive Officer with a demonstrated history of working in the information technology industry for more than 20 years. Skilled Management, Sales, Business Development, System Integration, and Cloud Services. Strong business development professional. Helping our customers in their journey toward digital transformation.

- **Tahar Benattia**, Programme Manager at Expertise France, the French public agency for international cooperation and technical expertise.

Tahar Benattia is a Programme Manager at Expertise France, the French public agency for international cooperation and technical expertise. He has been focusing on stabilization programming in post-conflict settings, mainly in Syria and Iraq for the past 5 years. Prior to working for Expertise France, Tahar managed research and evaluation assignments for development and humanitarian actors in Northern and Eastern Africa. Tahar holds an MsC in Business Administration from Grenoble Ecole de Management in France.

- **David Woodward**, Founder of DAVID WOODWARD & ASSOCIATES LLC (DW), President of the American Consortium of Universities, Principal for EdTech Innovation & Cultural Diplomacy of Yunity LLC, and Senior Advisor for Strategic Outreach for INTERLINK International Institutes.

Mr. Woodward is Founder of DAVID WOODWARD & ASSOCIATES LLC (DW), President of the American Consortium of Universities, the Principal for EdTech Innovation & Cultural Diplomacy of Yunity LLC, and the Senior Advisor for Strategic Outreach for INTERLINK International Institutes. He has previously served as Special Assistant for International Relations for Seattle Pacific University, Senior Advisor for American University of Sharjah Enterprises LLC, and President & CEO of Associates in Cultural Exchange (1998 to 2016).

Mr. Woodward holds a Master of Education in Higher Education with a specialization in Teaching English as a Second Language, a Master of Arts in Near Eastern Languages and Civilization, a Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics, and a Bachelor of Arts in History from the University of Washington in Seattle, Washington.

Mr. Woodward has led multi-site organizations in the U.S. nationally, marketing and outreach internationally, corporate board and organizational development, and establishing strategic partnerships worldwide. He has coordinated the formation of several key international marketing consortia, and collaborative initiatives across professional disciplines. In addition, Mr. Woodward has initiated the development of various business startups and educational projects involving small businesses, universities, corporations, and government agencies within the U.S. and in peer regions of the world. For the past 10 years he has annually judged social venture competitions for the Seattle Pacific University School of Business, Government and Economics.

- **Karen Eksteen**, Co-Founder of Innocircle, an innovation consultancy in South Africa.

Karen Eksteen is the founding member of Innocircle (Pty) Ltd, an innovation consultancy. Through her role Karen gets to live her passion for entrepreneurship, innovation management of new technologies, new venture creation, supporting and facilitating the technology innovation process. Previously at the Technology Innovation Agency and Cape Biotech Trust as an Innovation Skills Development Manager, Karen led and managed a number of skills interventions such as the Swiss South African Venture Leader program, that were targeted at national and international skills transfer and partnering initiatives to improve the innovation capacity in South Africa. Recently, Innocircle has designed the content and co-implemented the Airbus and GIZ (German Development agency) funded Africa4Future Aerospace Accelerator in which 7 African countries' entrepreneurs took part. Innocircle has been selected as the SA implementation partner and lead mentor for the 2021 Global Young Innovator programme sponsored by UK Innovate. Karen is also an ambassador for Impulse4Women, a network for female tech entrepreneurs and social impact projects to connect with investors and corporate partners.

- **Rasha Massalkhy**, Head of Incuvestments and Entrepreneurship Programs at INNOVEST Middle East in Beirut, Lebanon.

Rasha Massalkhy is the Head of Incuvestments & Entrepreneurship Programs at INNOVEST Middle East. Rasha's mission is to help businesses start and grow, increase entrepreneurs' access to capital and improve their financial acumen.

She has a demonstrated history of working in the Business Consultancy and Investment Management industries. Working with multinationals and professional institutions for more than a decade, Rasha has earned a reputation for having a contemporary management style, combining Finance, Marketing, Business Development, and Project Management skills with entrepreneurial vision and discernment. She works with companies in various stages of development from start-up to planned growth.

- **Dr. Randi Barzinji**, Lecturer, Business Administration Department at American University of Iraq, Sulaimani.

Randi Barzinji is a lecturer at the Business Administration Department in the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani. She joined AUIS as the very first 100 students at the campus in 2008. Since then she earned her MBA at AUIS and Doctorate in Paris School of Business. Her Doctorate dissertation revolves around a predictable economic transition with the growth of building a digital ecosystem in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. She is a female entrepreneur herself and hopes to play part in the entrepreneurship development and venture capital investment initiatives.

Randi is highly interested in growing the local start-up ecosystem. She believes the youth plays a crucial role in improving Iraq's private sector and economic development by innovation and creative solutions.

- **Niall Ardill**, Advisor for Start-Up Entrepreneurship at Information and Communications Technology (ICT) for Youth in Baghdad, Iraq.

Niall Ardill is an Advisor for startup entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship ecosystem support and development at GIZ's (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit) ICT for Youth projects since 2021. This advisory role encompasses areas related to tech enabled startup and entrepreneurship training, access to finance and early-stage investment, ecosystem connectivity, and research/ publications related to the above.

Niall holds a Business Management (B.A), completed in Ireland, thesis focus area on JIT manufacturing processes, case study on Dell Inc. This was followed by undertaking an MBA at the Nottingham Business School in the UK; research focused on economic sustainability and scalability of ICT startups. Additional qualifications in Estate Agency, Property Valuation and Auctioneering.

Niall has 12 years of experience in the field of education and training, primarily in the areas of entrepreneurship and business planning, and local economic development in both traditional and non-traditional sectors within the Western Balkans context. Recently he has worked in consultancy and devising roles for the startup ecosystem in Jordan and currently Baghdad, Iraq.

- **Rava Khorshid**, Director of the Professional Development Institute (PDI) at American University of Iraq, Sulaimani.

Rava Khorshid currently heads the Professional Development Institute (PDI) at the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani (AUIS). Her main focus is to provide leadership and planning for the PDI team to develop the scope and contribution of AUIS in the area of adult education and professional training. She manages the excellent reputation that PDI enjoys among the public and private sector organizations. PDI provides professional development courses on topics in various areas, including English language instruction, as well as management and business training.

Rava holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration (majored in Marketing) and an MBA degree in International Business Development from the Lahti University of Applied Sciences in Finland.

She has over 10 years of work experience within Business Development, Strategic Planning, Marketing and Administration duties in the fields of Education and Telecommunication. Rava has also been involved in different entrepreneurship & innovation related activities/initiatives in the region and currently volunteers for working at AEIC.