



Annual Review 2023

Saïd
Foundation 

Saïd
Foundation



*Mr and Mrs Wasfe Saïd established
the Saïd Foundation in 1982
(formerly known as the Karim Rida
Saïd Foundation).*

*Photo: Mr and Mrs Saïd at the
Annual Lunch*

*Cover photo: Saïd Foundation
Annual Lunch 2023*

Image credits: Greg Hammond

Welcome

The year 2023 was marked by profound sadness as well as moments of hope and pride. The tragic events that took place in 2023, from the devastating earthquake in Syria to the ongoing war on Gaza, have deeply saddened and shaken everyone at the Foundation.

Nevertheless, I witnessed remarkable hope and determination in the young people I met in that year. In 2023, I visited the Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan with my granddaughter Farah and had the privilege of meeting Syrian refugee students we supported through our partnership with the UNHCR. I was truly impressed by the energy and aspirations these students maintain despite the harsh realities they face. I also had the honour of meeting some Syrian artisans in Jordan who are working to safeguard the cultural heritage of Syria through our partner Turquoise Mountain. We are pleased to have extended our partnership with Turquoise Mountain in 2023 to support another programme aimed at preserving Palestinian craft heritage and creating livelihoods for craftspeople in Palestine.

Our commitment to academic excellence continues to be the cornerstone of our scholarships programme. In 2023, we were delighted to welcome another exceptional cohort of scholars from the Levant region to study at some of the top universities in the UK. These scholars join hundreds of other dedicated individuals from the region who have great ambitions for themselves and their countries.

This year's review features some of our alumni's outstanding achievements in their respective fields and countries, including a profile of our 2023 Alumni Achievement Prize winner, Prof. Fadi Bala'awi, who oversees Jordan's rich archaeological treasures, and a profile of Ambassador Dr Husam Zomlot,

whose unwavering advocacy for Palestinian rights has significantly raised international awareness of the plight of the people of Gaza. I am also delighted that one of our alumni, Hani Jesri, is now running the Foundation as CEO.

We had to put ambitious projects in Syria on hold due to the tragic situation in the country. The Foundation now wishes to explore the possibility of reopening its office in Syria and will work with the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office to assess whether this is feasible. The Foundation previously ran a large Child Development Programme in Syria which I hope to restart when conditions improve. I also had great ambitions for Damascus University and will explore supporting projects at the University when possible.

The programmes at the Saïd Business School at the University of Oxford continued to rank highly, attracting outstanding and diverse cohorts from around the world. The School's new major addition will be the opening of the Global Leadership Centre, which will welcome leaders from global business, government, and civil society, providing them with access to the university's top academics and brightest minds. I am grateful to the School's Dean, Professor Soumitra Dutta, for his remarkable efforts in transforming the School into a global hub of impactful business leadership. I am delighted to have recently contributed a further £10m to launch a new scholarship programme, Saïd Future Leaders, which will bring a new generation of exceptional scholars to the School. I am also pleased to be supporting two outstanding organisations in the UK, Great Ormond Street Hospital and The King's Foundation, to help advance their remarkable work.

Finally, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Foundation's trustees and staff for their dedication and hard work which makes all our work possible.

Wafic Rida Saïd
Chairman, Saïd Foundation

Scholarships Programme



*Saïd Foundation scholars at the Foundation's Annual Lunch
Image credit: Greg Hammond*

The Saïd Foundation scholarship programme aims to empower through educational opportunities and to contribute towards the development of our target countries of Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine. The scholarship programme is aimed at outstanding individuals who have the potential to make a positive impact in their countries, and equips them with the skills and knowledge they need through postgraduate studies in the

UK. Since the programme launched in 1984, the Foundation has supported nearly 700 students to study in the UK. In 2022/23 the Foundation supported 29 scholars for postgraduate studies at our UK partner universities. Scholars pursued their studies in a diverse range of subjects including clinical neuroscience, transport and city planning, entrepreneurship and innovation, and refugee care.

Scholarships Programme

In November 2022 we were very pleased to hold a lunch to welcome our new cohort of scholars to the UK, where scholars were able to meet trustees and staff of the Foundation and gather as a cohort for the first time. We were also glad to be able to provide workshops in academic writing skills to support our students as they began their studies. In June 2023 scholars attended the Foundation's annual lunch and alumni achievement prizegiving ceremony hosted by Mr and Mrs Saïd. In August 2023 we celebrated the end of the academic year with an informal scholar event in London, at which students were also able to hear from alumni and gain their advice as they looked ahead to their next steps after completing their scholarships.

*Saïd Foundation scholars at the Foundation's Annual Lunch
Image credit: Greg Hammond*



Saïd Foundation scholars on a visit to Leighton House

Our Alumni

We are proud of the diversity of our alumni and of their contributions to their communities and respective professions.

The Saïd Foundation Alumni Achievement Prize is an annual prize awarded to an individual judged by the Foundation's trustees to have contributed significantly to the development of the region and to have shown the positive impact of their studies as a Saïd Foundation scholar. The Saïd Foundation was delighted to award the prize in 2023 to our Jordanian alumnus Prof. Fadi Abdullah Bala'awi.

Prof. Bala'awi is a renowned expert in heritage site conservation and management. He was supported by the Saïd Foundation to study for an MA in Principles of Conservation and a PhD in Archaeology at University College London between 2001 and 2005. Prof. Bala'awi currently works as the Director General of the Department of Antiquities, a government organisation that oversees cultural heritage management and conservation work as well as archaeological research in Jordan. In this capacity, he assumes a critical position in safeguarding and showcasing Jordan's rich archaeological treasures. He has developed with his team Jordan's National Archaeological Heritage Strategy which serves as a road map for developing the heritage sector in Jordan for the next five years.



Prof. Bala'awi has also worked as a professor and researcher for more than 15 years and has held senior academic and administrative roles at the Hashemite University in Jordan including as Dean of Queen Rania School of Tourism and Heritage.

Prof. Bala'awi also holds various prominent positions in national and international organisations related to tourism and heritage. He is a board member of the Jordan Museum, the Jordan Tourism Board, and the Baptism Site Commission. He is also the founder and former Vice-President of the International Council on Monuments and Sites, a member of the Sustainable Development Goals Working Group and the advisory board for the World Heritage Site of Petra.

Spotlight on our Alumni



Ambassador Dr Husam Zomlot

alumnus 2000-03

“Education is a universal and inalienable right, irrespective of race, religion, gender or where you are from. Education is freedom and a part of our liberation struggle.

Despite the many challenges we have faced over the years, education remains the bedrock of Palestinian culture, achieving excellence in every field. The support provided by initiatives such as the Saïd Foundation is essential to continue this strong tradition of education, creating opportunities for all.”

The Palestinian Ambassador to the United Kingdom, Dr Husam Zomlot, obtained his undergraduate degree from Birzeit University, followed by a master’s degree in Development Studies at the London School of Economics and Political Science and a PhD in Political Economy from SOAS, University of London, supported in part by the Saïd Foundation scholarship.

Ambassador Zomlot has gone on to have a distinguished academic and professional career. Prior to his appointment to

the UK, Dr Zomlot served as the Palestinian Ambassador to the US, Strategic Advisor to the Palestinian President, Economic Adviser to the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO) and Senior Adviser for the Oxford Research Group.

Dr Zomlot has also held several teaching and research positions, including at the London School of Economics and Political Science and Harvard University.



Image credit: German Jordanian University

Dr Jumana Ma'touq

alumna 2011/12

“My journey at the University of Leeds pursuing my MSc in Medical Engineering was a remarkable success, which greatly enhanced both my personal and professional skills. I owe immense gratitude to the Saïd Foundation for their generous scholarship support throughout my studies.”

Dr Ma'touq is currently Assistant Professor at the Department of Biomedical Engineering at the German Jordanian University, where she holds the distinction of being the first female assistant professor since the University's establishment in 2005. She received her BSc degree in Biomedical Engineering from Jordan University of Science and Technology and ranked as the second-best student among her cohort. In 2012, with the support of a Saïd Foundation scholarship, she obtained her MSc degree in Medical Engineering from the University of Leeds, the only student in her cohort to achieve the degree with distinction. Following her passion for research and career development, she obtained her PhD degree from the Institute of Automatic Control (IRT) at Leibniz University Hannover, Germany. Dr Ma'touq holds the distinction of being the first female doctoral graduate from the IRT since its establishment in 1963.

In 2022, she was recognised at the Women's Day by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers student branch at the German Jordanian University (GJU). Throughout her academic journey, she received numerous national and international grants and awards including DAAD research grants for doctoral programmes in Germany, the National Technology Parade Award for two consecutive years, ranking first in the health and biomedical technology track, a GJU SEED research grant, and the Al-Hijawi Award.

She has recently received the prestigious Study UK Alumni Award 2023/24. Dr Ma'touq focuses on community service and on promoting health and education through knowledge transfer and conducting high-quality research.

Prof. Mounir Abi-Said

alumnus 2003-06

“The Saïd Foundation’s scholarship for my PhD studies in Biodiversity Management was pivotal for my conservation work in the Middle East. Their support drove me into a prominent conservationist/ecologist role. Now a full professor at the Lebanese University, I actively put my efforts into the conservation of our natural world. Thanks to their invaluable assistance.”



Prof. Abi-Said is a professor at the Faculty of Sciences at the Lebanese University in Lebanon. He specialises in teaching ecology, mammalogy, zoology, and conservation courses. He actively participates in numerous national and international research projects. His work primarily focuses on the ecology, monitoring, and conservation of mammal species such as hyenas, bats, and rodents, as well as resolving human-wildlife conflicts.

Prof. Abi-Said is passionate about promoting biodiversity conservation among farmers and rural communities in Lebanon and the MENA region. He also investigates the sustainable use of natural resources and the impacts of development projects, including urbanisation, wind farms, and dam projects, on ecosystems and biodiversity.

With over 30 years of experience, Prof. Abi-Said is recognised as a leading authority in mammalogy in the Levant. He has authored and co-authored several publications in refereed

journals and serves as a consultant on various national and international projects, including environmental impact assessments and ecological surveys.

In 1993, Prof. Abi-Said and his wife Diana established Animal Encounter, an educational centre for wildlife conservation. Through this centre, they aim to raise environmental awareness and rehabilitate injured animals and birds. His dedication to biodiversity conservation has earned him several international and national awards, including the QLF International Stewardship Award in 2002 and the Kamal Jumblatt Award for Environmental Protection.

Prof. Abi-Said was supported by the Saïd Foundation to complete his PhD in Biodiversity Management with a focus on mammals at the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology (DICE), University of Kent at Canterbury.



Prof. Eiman Kanjo

- alumna 2001-03

“The journey of a thousand miles began with the support of the Saïd Foundation. It empowered me with a world-class education, opened doors to prosperous opportunities, and instilled in me the confidence to make a difference. I will forever treasure the invaluable opportunity it provided me.”

Prof. Eiman Kanjo is the Provost’s Visiting Professor in tinyML at Imperial College London. She has been recognised as one of the Top 50 Women in Engineering and is a recipient of the Turing Network Development Award. She is actively involved with the tinyML Foundation, serving on the steering committee for the tinyML Research Symposium, tinyML EMEA, as a publication chair, and as the tinyML UK academic lead.

Prof. Kanjo is editorial member of the Data Centric Engineering Journal and Associate Director at Health Data Research UK. With over 140 publications and grants from prestigious funders such as the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport and the Engineering & Physical Sciences Research Council, she collaborates extensively with industry charities and local authorities.

Prior to her current roles, she conducted significant research at the Computer Science departments at both the University of Cambridge and the University of Nottingham. Currently, she is also Professor of Pervasive Computing at Nottingham Trent University, leading the Smart Sensing Lab.

Prof. Kanjo was supported by the Saïd Foundation to study for a PhD in the Computer Science department at the University of Abertay Dundee in the UK.

The Rhodes Trust Partnership



*Saïd Rhodes scholars at the
2023 Saïd Foundation annual
lunch with Mr Saïd and Warden
Dr Elizabeth Kiss
Image credit: Greg Hammond*

The Saïd Rhodes scholar community at the University of Oxford has continued to expand yearly since the start of the partnership between the Saïd Foundation and the Rhodes Trust in 2016 thanks to an endowment generously created by our Chairman. The partnership supports two outstanding students from Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine (SJLP) to pursue graduate studies at the University of Oxford.

In 2023, we welcomed two new brilliant scholars from Syria

and Palestine who are now pursuing further studies in politics, and law and finance, bringing the total number of Rhodes SJLP scholars to 15 in 2023.

These exceptional scholars join a prestigious community of globally minded individuals dedicated to public service. It offers a transformative experience for promising individuals, empowering them to drive positive change in their communities and beyond.

Saïd Business School

Saïd Business School scholars
Image credit: David Fischer of Fischer Studios



The Saïd Business School was founded in 1996 thanks to the generous support of our Chairman, Mr Wafic Saïd. It has evolved to be one of the leading business schools in Europe and continues to thrive as a world-class institution within one of the world's top universities.

Over the years the School has maintained its reputation of excellence in teaching and research and has also implemented significant projects aimed at enhancing its global standing.

The School's programmes continue to rank highly, attracting diverse students from around the world. The 2023/24 MBA class includes students from 63 nationalities who have worked in 23 different sectors. The School remains strongly committed to achieving gender parity. Female representation in the 2023/24 MBA class has increased to 51%.

Saïd Business School

In 2008, our Chairman Wafic Saïd established an endowment to support the school annually with initiatives that will have strategic value to the development of the School, largely in the areas of research, faculty development, scholarships and institution-building. This fund is essential in maintaining the School's commitment to diversity and excellence, enabling talented and diverse students to join the School's world-class business community. Since 2008, the Foundation has supported hundreds of MBA and DPhil scholars from around the world.

In 2018, the Saïd Foundation committed a gift of £15 million for the redevelopment of the historic Osney Power Station as the School's new Global Leadership Centre. The centre is a major new development for the School and will serve as a hub for executive education, providing a space for learning, networking, and reflection in the heart of Oxford. The teaching and residential facility will welcome leaders of global business, government and civil society and give them access to the University's leading academics and brightest minds. The centre will be fully operational from summer 2025.



*The proposed new entrance to the Global Leadership Centre
Image credit: John McAslan + Partners*



The Saïd Business School Foundation annual board meeting at the Saïd Business School. Image credit: Sam Allard of Fischer Studios

The Saïd MBA prize is awarded annually to a student who has excelled academically, made an exceptional contribution to the classroom and contributed to the wider social and intellectual life of the School.

The 2023 Saïd MBA prize was awarded to Hannah Stern, from Sydney, Australia. Hannah joined the 2022/23 Saïd MBA cohort after working as a management consultant for L.E.K. Consulting, a global strategy consulting firm. She spent several years there advising corporates, private equity and government bodies across Australia and New Zealand on business strategy and organisational transformation. Hannah also worked on several mergers and acquisitions deals, providing commercial due diligence support to investors. These experiences have ranged across industries spanning consumer and entertainment, building and construction, aviation and transport, healthcare, and energy.

Hannah is also an admitted lawyer of New South Wales, Australia. She started her career working as a corporate transactions and disputes lawyer for Gilbert + Tobin, one of Australia's leading transactions, regulatory and disputes law firms.

Since the MBA, Hannah has continued her career as a strategy consultant at L.E.K. The MBA not only enhanced her strategic acumen but heightened her awareness of the role the private sector plays in driving innovation and transformation related to the critical issues of today. She is excited to utilise skills learned in the MBA to make meaningful contributions towards this.

Hannah Stern

Winner of
the 2023 Saïd
MBA prize



Humanitarian Programme

Mr Saïd visit to Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan

Image credit: UNHCR / Shawkat AlHarfoush



In October 2023, the Chairman travelled to Jordan to visit the Zaatari camp for Syrian refugees.

The Chairman met with students and alumni of the DAFI undergraduate scholarships programme that the Foundation has supported for more than 10 years with our long-standing partner the UNHCR. The DAFI scholarship programme and the Foundation share a common ethos of community service and a commitment to making a positive impact. Scholars are chosen not only for their academic excellence but also for their dedication to improving their communities. Many DAFI students report that volunteering during their studies boosts their self-confidence and opens up work opportunities.

The Foundation also visited refugee entrepreneurs who produce various handicrafts, soaps, perfumes, and other goods. These refugees were also supported through a vocational training programme, led by UNHCR and implemented by the Jordan River Foundation (JRF) across five Jordanian governorates. This project provides accredited vocational and micro-business training for Syrian urban refugees and vulnerable Jordanians, along with support for employer networking, seed funding, mentoring, and coaching.

The Foundation remains dedicated to empowering Syrian refugees through education and vocational training, fostering hope and opportunities for a better future.

Spotlight on the first DAFI graduate to become a Saïd Foundation scholar

Dr Shahm Alboni is a doctor and medical educator who was born and brought up in war-torn Syria. Shahm was awarded the fully funded DAFI scholarship due to his outstanding academic performance in high school, which gave him the opportunity to study medicine at the Hashemite University in Jordan.

During his time in university, Shahm continued to excel academically and eventually graduated as one of the top performing doctors in his class of 2022. He also immersed himself in community work to positively impact the lives of other refugees, actively engaging in projects with various local and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), such

as the UNHCR, Jordan River Foundation (JRF), and Y-Peer. Moreover, Shahm became an advocate for refugee empowerment and education and represented young refugees at many high-profile events where he consistently emphasised the significance of education in rebuilding Syrian society.

Shahm discovered a deep enthusiasm for medical education while he was in medical school. He held the role of a vice president for one of the biggest student societies dedicated to enhancing medical education where he actively engaged in implementing many educational initiatives and projects for his fellow medical students in Jordan. He also recognised the crucial role medical education has in shaping competent healthcare professionals,

especially in countries like Syria, where the conflict disrupted access to high quality medical services. His enthusiasm for improving healthcare access and quality in the region was recognised when he was later awarded a Saïd Foundation scholarship to study a master's degree in Medical Education at the University of Nottingham in 2023/24.



CEO Catherine Thomé and Shahm at the student welcome lunch

Image credit: Greg Hammond

Turquoise Mountain Palestine



Nadia Abu Ghattas, handmade jewellery maker from Bethlehem, Palestine

In 2023, the Saïd Foundation launched an exciting new project with Turquoise Mountain to partner with and celebrate craftspeople in Palestine, helping them to grow their livelihoods, and access new markets for their products.

Having experienced decades of poor economic conditions, occupation and conflict, the Palestinian artisanal community is under threat and some traditional Palestinian crafts are at risk of dying out completely. Over just seven short months, with the Saïd Foundation's support, Turquoise Mountain established and launched a new team in the West Bank and partnered with 13 workshops, which represent 32 artisans and craft workers, that practise embroidery, jewellery, carpentry, and glass. The team is collaborating with these workshops on the design and development of new innovative craft products, opening up opportunities internationally for Palestinian craft, as well as on the restoration of two historic buildings in Bethlehem.

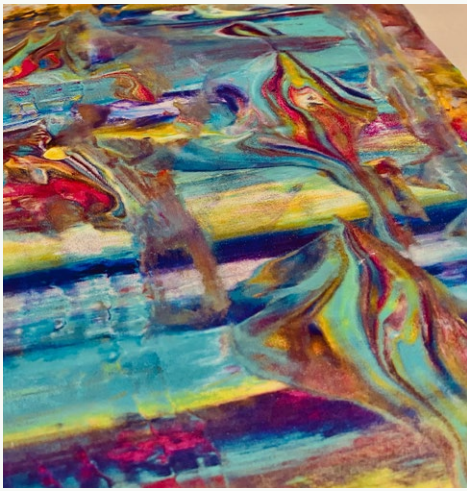
The war, which broke out in October, has only increased the need for this work, given the devastation faced by the community in



Mohammad Twam, handblown glass master artisan from Jaba', Palestine

Gaza and the worsening economic and security conditions in the West Bank. Despite the challenges, the Turquoise Mountain team continue to find ways to support artisans, providing emergency financing for at-risk businesses, supporting the jobs of 48 craftspeople and workers, initiating new orders within the artisan community, and launching training sessions to promote business resilience.

Mohammad Twam, pictured above, is an exceptionally talented master glass blower from Jaba' in Palestine, who specialises in a traditional form of the craft called lamp working. Due to the war, Mohammad saw his sales fall dramatically in a matter of days. In the months since, Turquoise Mountain has worked closely with Mohammad on developing three fantastic new collections which highlight different techniques and motifs in the craft. These collections have now been shipped internationally and are being sold through the Turquoise Mountain showroom in Amman, as well as to commercial clients, offering Mohammad a reliable source of sales, and international exposure for his incredible work.



Amal

The Foundation founded its Amal Programme in 2017, taking an arts approach to increasing understanding of Britain's Muslim communities among others and their sense of belonging in the UK. Since 2020 we have supported Amal as an independent charity.

Amal's purpose is to help shift the dominant narrative around Muslims in the UK to one that is confident, diverse and just. It does so by growing opportunities for Muslims to realise, express and share their creative potential. It is the only initiative using a multiple-arts approach focusing specifically on Muslims.

Amal focused in 2023 on the development and delivery of a portfolio of 12 immensely diverse, high-quality arts projects co-created in Bradford and Birmingham by Muslim-majority participants with Muslim artists. The artwork created was then showcased at arts venues and in the community, providing opportunities for cross-community encounters.



In 2023, Amal developed and delivered a portfolio of 12 co-created projects.

Images feature, from the top down, the following co-created projects: Cloudsongs, Print & Matter and the Nasheed Choir. Image credit: Kimia Modaressi Chahardehi, Meemunah Hussain and Arooj.

CO-CREATED PROJECTS

Collectively, the projects have

- provided opportunities to Muslim communities and artists that would not otherwise have existed.
- told a multitude of stories that represent British Muslims with authenticity and nuance.
- shown there is a huge appetite for Muslim engagement in the arts.
- modelled ways in which the arts sector can become more inclusive of Muslims.
- demonstrated ways to overcome the barriers Muslims face to creative engagement.

Print & Matter created a self-sufficient community of Muslim art makers with the skills to use printing and self-publishing to create and distribute their work.

"The project invites other people to come in and see this is a really diverse, imaginative group of people who have a voice we don't always hear. And it's fresh, and it's new, and it's interesting, and it's vibrant."

Unaiza Karim, Participant

Cloudsongs gave a platform to home schooling families to share their experiences, as Muslims, of culture and everyday life through the co-creation of unique sound and light artworks.

"A project like this is incredibly important as it addresses the needs of families who feel isolated from mainstream society. It restores their faith and gives them a sense of belonging within society."

Artist

The Nasheed Choir gave young Muslims an opportunity to develop a unique form of music that blends their Muslim, British and South Asian heritages, performing to a packed Bradford Cathedral.

"This is my first time singing like this and it makes me feel happy."

Participant - The Nasheed Choir

About Us

Vision

Our vision is of a world where people from all backgrounds can realise their full potential.

Mission

Our mission is to bring positive and lasting change to the lives of children, young people and the wider community through carefully selected investments in themes and geographies with which the Saïd family and the Saïd Foundation have developed strong links and expertise.

The Foundation's guiding principles are:

1. A conviction that education is a powerful tool to change lives for the better and that higher education in particular plays a valuable role in creating enlightened and effective leadership which benefits the broader community.
2. An approach that is non-sectarian and non-political.
3. Recognition of the need to build capacity and capability across the region we work in.
4. An understanding of the importance of bridge building, communication and respect across cultures.
5. A desire to enhance and learn from our thematic and regional experience and to benefit from synergy between programmes.
6. The potential to promote philanthropy and to maximise the impact of specific projects through partnerships with organisations that share our objectives.

Saïd Foundation Trustees



Mr Wafic Saïd
Chairman



Mrs Rosemary Saïd



Dr Rasha Saïd
Deputy Chair



Mr Khaled Saïd



Reverend
Jonathan Aitken



Mrs Sirine Idilby



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Lord Powell of
Bayswater KCMG



Mrs Nadine
Zakaria

Saïd Foundation Team



Left to right: Rebekah Palmer, Hani Jesri, Catherine Thome, Yolanda Geach, and Katie Monks

In 2022/23 the Foundation's grant commitments were £6.54 million.

£ millions	2022/23	
Saïd Business School	1.29	20%
Humanitarian Programme	-	-
Scholarship Programme	0.98	15%
UCL Medical Research	3.00	46%
Turquoise Mountain Palestine	1.20	18%
Other	0.07	1%
Total	6.54	100%

£ millions	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Saïd Business School	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.3
Humanitarian Programme	1.4	0.8	0.4	0.0	-
Scholarship Programme	0.5	0.7	0.8	1.3	1.0
UCL Medical Research	-	-	-	-	3.0
Turquoise Mountain Palestine	-	-	-	-	1.2
Other	0.3	0.3	0.6	-	0.1
Total	3.4	3.1	3.0	2.6	6.5



Saïd Foundation

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