Zainab AlMeraj

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PROFESSIONAL BIOGRAPHY

- **Dr. Zainab AlMeraj**: is the acting chair and an associate professor at the Information Science Department at the College of Life Sciences, Kuwait University. Her current research interests include usability and accessibility of mobile and web technologies - Human Computer Interaction (HCI), computer graphics (CG), Mathematics and how interdisciplinary research can contribute to the advancement of technologies and human rights awareness. AlMeraj has previously worked on promoting computer science and mathematics to students across Canada and continues to do so in Kuwait. She has acted as a reviewer for highly reputable computing conferences and journals; launched and leads active non-government grassroots organization; acted as a official NGO representative of her efforts in ratifying the UN convention of rights of a child, women and persons with disabilities and serves as a national representative under the the Kuwait National Diwan for Human Rights in the persons with disabilities committee since 2020. AlMeraj is a certified consultant in usability and accessibility and uses this experience to advocate for digital accessibility for persons with disabilities on the NGO, academic and entrepreneurial levels.

  AlMeraj has several social entrepreneur efforts that started after running as a supervisor of the ClickIT club at Kuwait University and discovering a need for an open, collaborative and inclusive developer community in Kuwait. She first established Women Techmakers Kuwait (focused on women in tech empowerment) which then morphed into the Google Developer Group GDG Kuwait City, a tech group offering a platform to excel talent, find jobs, develop technology and network. She is also a certified trainer in the Google #IamRemarkable program for promoting women empowerment, self leadership and confidence. AlMeraj also established the Arab Women in Computing Kuwait chapter, initiated the conception of ACM HCI Kuwait chapter, and is currently developing a mentoring platform for women in tech and a social community supporting women entrepreneurs. AlMeraj is also a member of the Association of Computing Machinery (ACM) since 2007, User Experience Professional Association (UXPA) since 2018 and the International Association of Accessibility Professionals (IAAP) since 2020.

  Since 2014, AlMeraj has worked on preparing shadow reports for the UN OHCHR on four of the nine conventions signed by the State of Kuwait on human rights concerning women, children, domestic workers, illegal residents and people with disabilities. Dr. AlMeraj has continuously devoted her professional, volunteer and social career for technical skill advancement, youth empowerment, awareness, advocacy and implementation of human rights and social justice on the individual, organizational and social policy levels.

  Based on this experience, and being a Certified Professional for Usability and User Experience (UXQB) and Certified Professional in Accessibility Core Competencies (CPACC - IAAP) AlMeraj launched an entrepreneurial initiative focused on awareness and effective incorporation and implementation of accessibility and usability in tech projects, so all people are equally "able" to have great user experiences using software on desktop and mobile devices. Since then she was invited to serve as an expert reviewer to develop an Authorized Arabic Translation of WCAG 2.1 Accessibility guideline and the ICT Accessibility and Inclusive Design competency framework lead by MADA, Qatar. AlMeraj is a country representative of Kuwait in the National Diwan for Human Rights (for people with disabilities) and for the G3ICT international initiative. She seeks to help embed digital accessibility into Kuwait organizations from education to commerce and report advances under the National Human Rights Directive.

EDUCATION

- **University of Waterloo** — Waterloo, ON, Canada
  PhD in Computer Science — *Aug. 2008 – June. 2013*

- **Kuwait University** — Khaldiya, Kuwait
  Masters of Engineering in Computer Engineering - part time — *Aug. 2004 – April. 2006*

- **University of Victoria** — Victoria, B.C., Canada
  Masters of Science in Computer Science — *Aug. 2007 – July. 2008*

- **California State University, Long Beach** — Long Beach, California, U.S.A.
  Bachelor of Science in Computer Engineering — *Jan. 2000 – Dec. 2003*

EMPLOYMENT

- **Kuwait University** — Adailiya, Kuwait
  Associate Professor, Information Science Department — *August 2023 - Present*

  ○ **Acting Chair, Information Science Department**: February 2023 - November 2023

- ○ **Assistant Professor, Information Science Department**: Oct 2013 - July 2023
- ○ **Teaching Assistant on a scholarship M.Sc. and Ph.D.**: Sept. 2006 - Sept. 2013
- ○ **Scientific Research Assistant**: Sept. 2005 - August. 2006

- ○ **Professional Services**: ISC General Student Advisor and advising committee coordinator 2016-2019, ISC ClickIT club Supervisor 2015-2019, Social committee coordinator 2020-2021, Accessibility Consultant with Vice President of Academic Support Services at KU 2021.
- ○ **Committees memberships served**: Advising committee, ABET accreditation committee, Masters (MSIT & MSCIS program committee, Social committee, Ethics Review Committee.
- ○ **Teaching**: Undergraduate courses: Fundamentals of Personal Computers, Introduction to Information Systems, IT, Ethics in IT, Computers and Society, IS Theory and Practice, Calculus, Algebra, Introduction to Management Information Systems, Interactive 3D Graphics Modeling, 5 Internship supervision and 3 Capstone project supervision, Graduate courses: Introduction to Information Technology, Ethics and laws in Information technology, Information Systems Analysis, Computer Graphics (Special Topics), HCI (Special Topics), System analysis, modelling and design
- ○ **Consulting Services**: Accessibility Consultant with Vice President of Academic Support Services at Kuwait University Feb-August 2021   Represented Kuwait in officials committees at the University and Higher level Institutions of Arab GCC, students with disabilities.Founded the Digital Accessibility Empathy Labs (ongoing) to serve students with disabilities and build empathy in academia.

- **Ministry of Defense (MOD)** Sabhan, Kuwait
  Computer Engineer *Jan. 2004 - Aug. 2005*
  - ○ **Computer Networks**: Created models for portfolio hedging, portfolio optimization and price forecasting. Also creating a strategy backtesting engine used for simulating and backtesting strategies.
  - ○ **QuantDesk**: Python backend for a web application used by hedge fund managers for portfolio management.

Research and Teaching Experience

- Fulbright Scholar, School of Interactive Computing, Georgia Institute of Technology (GaTech), USA, Oct 2022 - Feb 2023.

- Visiting Assistant Professor, Kuwait Programme, LSE Middle East Centre, London School of Economics (LSE), London, UK, July-Sept, 2022.

- Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Information Systems, Computer Graphics and Virtual Reality Group, University of Granada, Spain, Nov-Jan, 2021.

- Research Assistant at the Computer Graphics Lab and Adobe Inc. University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 2010 - 2013

- Visiting Assistant Professor, HCI, School of Science and Engineering, University of Dundee, Scotland, UK, Oct-Nov, 2021.

- Assistant Professor, Department of Information Science, College of Computing Sciences and Engineering, Kuwait University, 2013 - Present.

- Research Assistant at the Island Graphics Lab Computer Science Consultant Office University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, 2007 - 2008

- Teaching Assistant, Information Science Department, College for Women, Kuwait, 2005 - 2006

Entreprenural endeavours

- **Tech Connect Co.** Kuwait
  Founder and Managing Director *August 2019 - Present*
  - ○ **Vision**: Ensure digital accessibility and effective user experiences (UX) for all, specially people with disabilities.
  - ○ **Services**: Web and mobile application management and development, UX, marketing services, professional training, UI/UX and Accessibility and Usability Audits, usability testing.
  - ○ **Completed works**: Consulting on website accessibility from design to development; Project management of third parties implementing development of an accessible e-book reading platform; Training
  - ○ **Website and social media**: www.techconnectkw.com, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram @techconnectkw

Consulting Positions and Services at national and international levels

- **The National DIWAN for Human Rights - Committee of persons with disabilities** — Kuwait
  Member — *January 2021 - Present*
  - **Title**: Member of persons with disabilities committee
  - **Mission**: Enhancing and protecting persons with disability rights and working on awareness and improving public and private freedom of rights in the State of Kuwait
  - **Research**: Investigate and report problems facing people with deaf and hard of hearing disabilities in Kuwait educational system, issues facing Kuwait sign language translators and offer suggestions to Diwan and Kuwait University
  - **Advise**: Research, investigate and report problems facing people with visual, cognitive, physical and hearing and learning disabilities in Kuwait educational system, issues facing Kuwait sign language translators and offer suggestions to Diwan and local institutions like Kuwait University to enhance their education and to NGOs to further advocate for their rights and global institutions to help guide best practices in ICT procurement and Inclusive design.

- **KFAS Consultative Committee for Education and Learning Affairs 2022** — Kuwait
  Member — *June 2022 - January 2023*
  - **Goal**: Supporting KFAS in choosing developing and funding platforms that are related to, and material that contribute to, build capacity, to enhance teaching science, math and technology in Kuwait by presenting advice on the decisions KFAS makes as part of it strategic plan and revising what is submitted to the institute related to teaching and learning.
  - **Tasks**: Part of two subcommittees (1) Assessment and measurement of ongoing projects and future programs (2) Proposal assessments and review. I've also taken part as an interviewer for a STEM internship program.

Non-Profit National and International, NGO and Community Leadership Positions and Services

- **The Committee for Affairs of Students with Special Needs in GCC Universities** — GCC level
  Member — *Sept 2022-23*
  - **Goal**: Supporting students with disabilities across all universities in the Gulf country government/national universities.
  - **Tasks**: Proposing solutions, awareness, empowerment,

- **G3ICT - The Global Initiative for Inclusive ICT country advisor** — Kuwait
  Member — *September 2021 - Present*
  - **Title**: Country representative to the State of Kuwait 2021-2024 to be renewed 2025
  - **Mission**: Promoting the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Digital Age through awareness, advocacy, policies, innovation, standardization which are aligned with the dispositions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) on the accessibility of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) and Assistive Technologies.
  - **Activities**: Collaborating with other country representatives on consulting projects in the area of accessibility, training, and awareness.

- **A11Y Kuwait - Accessibility Kuwait** — Kuwait
  Founder — *October 2021 - Present*
  - **Goal**: This online group is open to discuss IT topics related to accessibility, inclusive design and usability. Our goal is to advance knowledge of these areas in the Arabic speaking EMENA region. Everyone is welcome to participate. We try our best to be inclusive and offer Arabic and English support in our events. Topics change each month with a focus on highlighting different perspectives from NGO, Corporate, government etc. Talks are archived on YouTube for everyone to benefit from (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3PAoIpMjepw5j3wmMLuQtQ)
  - **Growth**: As of Jan 13th we have 48 members, offered 2 workshops and have 3 workshops announced.
  - **Training workshops**: Planning talks with experts in accessibility and executing hands on workshops as part of outreach and awareness.

- **The National Association of Familial Security Non-government Organization** — Kuwait
  UN Report committee — *August 2013 - Present*
  - **Positions held**: Member (2013-Present), Board member (2015-2020), Treasurer (2015-2020), UN Reports committee head (2016-2020)

- **Mission**: RAWASI is aimed at maintaining familial security in the Kuwaiti society by defending the social and legislative rights of the family and individuals and seeking to introduce legislations and laws that realize this goal. The Association diligently strives to activate and implement the civil legislations and laws of the country that ensure the realization of familial security.
- **UN Consultative Status**: Lead, applied and secured Special Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Counsel (ECOSOC) (applied twice since 2014)
- **Official Representations**: Represented the NGO in the 22nd session of the CRPD (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) on the 9-10th September 2019 at the UN Headquarters, Geneva.
- **Partnerships**: Worked with multiple other NGOs on workshops targeting women and children
- **Workshops**: Planning, recruiting, announcing event, and overseeing the full completion of talks and workshops and coverage on social media channels.
- **Head of UN Reports Committee, 2014-Present**: Research, analyzing, writing, and submitting reports directly to the UN of the status of human/family rights and situations in Kuwait. See OHCHR reports in section 3.4.1 (below).

○ The report of the National Association of Familial Security "Rawasii" Parallel to the Periodic report of Kuwait submitted to the Commission on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) 2016, coalition report with 3 NGOs submitted for 2021 cycle

○ The Shadow report of the National Association of Familial Security Rawasii" to the UN Commission of the Rights of the Child (CRC) Nov 2018.

○ The report of the National Association of Familial Security "Rawasii" Parallel to the report of Kuwait submitted to the Commission on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) 2015.

○ The report of the National Association of Familial Security "Rawasii" Parallel to the first periodic report of the State of Kuwait submitted to the United Nations Committee for the Human Rights for Persons with Disabilities (CPRD) 2015.

○ The report of the National Association of Familial Security "Rawasii" Parallel to the third periodic report of the State of Kuwait submitted to the UN Commission for Human rights that monitors the Implementation of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR) 2015

○ The report of the National Association of Familial Security "Rawasii" Parallel to the third Periodic Universal report of the State of Kuwait. Submitted to the United Nations Commission for Human Rights (UPR) 2014.

- **Google Developer Group GDG Kuwait and Women Techmakers**   Kuwait
  Founder, Lead Co-organizer and Women Techmakers Ambassador   *July 2017 - Present*
  - **Goal**: Google Developer Groups provide resources, visibility and a community for tech-minded individuals. We help advance skills, networking, job access towards building a strong tech ecosystem in Kuwait.
  - **Conferences**: Planned, organized and delivered International Womens Day conference IWD and DevFest 2018 and 2019 targeting trending technologies and startup communities.
  - **Competitions**: Designed and implemented two 12 hour Hackathon for social good as part of IWD promoting open source and developing solutions for social problems in the country.
  - **Women focus**: As Women Techmakers Ambassador I focus on visibility and empowering women through events like, I am Remarkable sessions, Women in Tech discussion sessions, and panels like Women in Tech Entrepreneurship in Kuwait
  - **Sponsorships**: Established strategic partnerships with multiple large companies (NIU -2018, Zain 2019)
  - **Growth**: As of July 2019 we have 1500 members, offered 40 workshops, served over 1200 members of the community.
  - **Training workshops**: Planned, secured speakers, executed over 40 hands on training workshops and talks in various technologies. Such as: TensorFlow, Google Assistant, Flutter/Dart, iOS, Android and Web Development, Google mobile site certification, Family AI Challenge (List below)
  - **List of organized and hosted events and conferences with number of attendees (if available) - Total number of events 102, Total youth and community members benefited are 1689.**: Sponsors for various events included: Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science (KFAS), Ahli United Bank (AUB), NiU collaborative community, Sirdab lab, MediaphonePlus, Deloitte Kuwait, KIPCO Munjiza program, Google MENA region

- **Arab Women in Computing Kuwait Chapter**   Kuwait
  Founder and President   *Feb. 2017 - Feb 2021*
    - **Mission**: The mission of Arab Women in Computing (ArabWIC) is to support, inspire, retain, encourage collaboration among, increase visibility of and help elevate the status of Arab women in computing and technology from the various computing/technology sectors (academia, industry, private and government, as well as entrepreneurs); allow them to achieve their career goals, and create linkage between them and women-in-CS organizations internationally.
    - **Impact**: Preparing sponsorships and partnership proposals for women empowerment meetings, training and events including International Womens Day in collaboration with GDG&WTM Kuwait
    - **List of organized events**:
    - Grad Cohort Kuwait for empowering young women grads and undergrads in STEM (2019) #attendees: 40 (Sponsored by KIPCO Kuwait MUNJIZA program, Kuwait University and American University of Kuwait)
    - International Women's Day 2018 in collaboration with Google Developer Group Kuwait
    - International Women's Day 2019 in collaboration with Google Developer Group Kuwait

- **ClickIT**   Kuwait University
  Supervisor   *Fall 2014 - Spring 2019*
    - **Training workshops**: Organized on average of 4 events per term catering to student interest and needs from technical to public speaking and soft skills development (over 35 in total)
    - **Job Fair**: Developed, planned, implemented and documented a job fair for the students of the CCSE college with a total of 45 participating companies, 8 speakers and activities and catering.
    - **Total number of organized and hosted events during my supervision is 45 and one major job fair that all contributed greatly to the ISC ABET applications cycles 2016 and 2020**:

- **W3C**   GCC Regional Hub Kuwait office
  Product manager   *March 2019 - Jan 2020*
    - **Localization**: Responsible for studying localization and the running of EdX courses in Kuwait for an Arabic speaking audience

- **W3C ACT Rules (Accessibility Conformance Testing) community group member**   Kuwait
  Member   *March 2021 - Present*
    - **Mission**: Offer consistent accessibility testing for tools and test methods. Reduce different interpretations of WCAG. Make test procedures interchangeable. Develop a library of commonly accepted rules for WCAG accessibility guidelines.

Invited Professional Representative Workshops, Meetings and Talks

- **Invited judge for Mada Innovation Awards by Mada in support of the Ministry of social and family affairs of Qatar. The Mada Innovation Award valued at 1 million Qatari Riyals is a first of its kind award that is aimed to reward innovative solution that promotes accessibility and enhances the lives of users with disabilities. There were 10 winners from 6-+ applications. Mada Center, Qatar, December 2023**:

- **Invited panelist in panel titled "From Idea to Impact: Architecting Effective Innovation Ecosystems for Persons with Disabilities", This insightful panel discussion aims to unravel the intricate process of designing robust innovation ecosystems. The session will bring together a diverse group of experts, each offering a distinct perspective on building environments that foster creativity and technological advancement. Mada Innovation Center, Qatar, 7th of December 2023**:

- **Invited panel moderator for Panel titled "Enabling the journey: Developing a fintech startup ecosystem that becomes the cornerstone of innovation and growth" featuring 4 local esteemed fintech and legal experts. The session aims to discuss the main challenges the Kuwaiti fintechs face in their quest to establish and scale their initiatives and also looks at the regulatory environment and the role it plays; the sessions also looks at the role of collaborations, partnerships and funding in driving the pace of growth of fintech companies, and further explores how accelerators and incubators become the cornerstone enabling growth of fintechs., Fintech Kuwait Conference at 2nd Annual Digital Transformation Kuwait Conference, Grand Hayat Hotel, 20-22 November 2023**:

- **Invited panelist for session titled "Digital and Built Accessibility for Entertainment/Tourism from NGO and Tourism organization perspectives". As part of the Training Gate International conference on "Inclusion of people with disabilities as part of the sustainable development goals, Kuwait University, Kuwait, 13-15 November 2023**:

- **Arab American Frontiers Symposium by the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) invited talk under the topic of "Technologies for Equity and Inclusion" with talk titled "How do we foster digital equity and inclusion in the software design and development landscape?"** : 22nd-25th October 2023

- **Invited talk speaker at Training Gate International TGI convention for people with disabilities "Investing in Innovation for human and financial capital". Topic: Digital and Built Accessibility. Audience included 35 people with disabilities from Kuwait and MENA region.**: September, 2023

- **Invited speaker at the U.S. National Academy of Sciences 9th Arab-American Frontiers Symposium in partnership with Texas A&M University at Qatar and Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU) in Doha, Qatar.** : 23 - 25 October, 2023

- **Invited workshop host and speaker at Training Gate International TGI D-Partners conference. Topic: Digital Accessibility laws and guidelines" & Change-makers in Digital and Built environment accessibility"** : August, 2023

- **Invited workshop speaker at Training Gate International convention for people with disabilities.** : September, 2023

- **M-Enabling Summit 2022 Speaker in panel discussion - Global Challenges and Opportunities: Insights from G3ict's Global Country Representatives, Washington D.C., USA**: 24-26 October 2022

- **The consultative meeting of the senior officials concerned with Disability Affairs The Second Global Disability Summit via G3ICT and IAAP**: 15th February 2022

- **Invited expert reviewer on the Authorized Arabic Translation of WCAG 2.1 Accessibility guideline committee, MADA, Qatar**: 2020-Present

- **Invited panelist and expert attendee in the area of accessibility at the Secretariat of the E-learning Officials committee at the University and Higher Education Institutions of Arab Gulf Cooperation Countries - via the Office of Academic Support Services at Kuwait University**: 2020, 2021

- **KFAS Inspo Talks Moderator for a panel session titled: Data Sciences and the COVID-19 Pandemic**: November 2020

- **UN Committee on the Child CRC 87th Pre-session: submitted report on updates to the CRC 2018 Rawasi Report concerning children affected by Covid19 pandemic (Healthcare, Education, Bidoon/Stateless, immigrant workers**: October 2020

- **Special invitation to STS Forum 2020 Annual Meeting,Science and Technology in Society forum based in Japan focused on "The Role of Science and Technology in the Post COVID-19 Era" held online. STS forum focuses on many aspects of science and technology in society: for example, technological development in genomics like genome engineering and iPS cell technology; energy and environmental issues including the nuclear power option; and social changes brought by ICT and related privacy and security issues. 2020 Website: https://www.stsforum.org/kyoto2020/ (sponsored by KFAS summary report created)**: 3rd-6th October 2020

- **National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) and the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) invited talk on Promising Practices for Improving the Inclusion of Women in Science, Engineering, and Medicine: Lessons from Kuwait and the United States. Title: Examples of Developing Healthy Grassroots Tech Initiatives in Kuwait that Address Challenges Facing Youth and Women in Technology**: 5th-7th October 2020

- **Invited to participate in GCCvsVirus Hackathon 2020 as an expert speaker on the topic of accessibility and a mentor to two teams during a 48 hour GCC level Hackathon GCC vs. Virus to develop technical solutions that help people during the pandemic www.gccvsvirus.org social media (gccvsvirus)**: March 2020

- **Women Mentorship invitation, ACM CRA-W International Grad Cohort project, invited as a scholarship recipient to represent Kuwait at the Grad Cohort organized by ACM to establish their mentoring program in other parts of the world mid April 2019 in Chicago, USA.**: Description: created a group of committee members from all institutes in Kuwait, public and private to help in implementing the project in Kuwait.

- **Invited Talk, KIPCO Sharaka 2019, invited talk at User Centered Design for Social Impact workshop at KIPCO headquarters, Kuwait, March 2019.**: The workshop description - Design Thinking is a methodology used by startups and technology companies to develop new and innovative solutions to problems. As the process continues to gain traction in the business world, many nonprofits are asking how they can benefit from this approach. In my segment I talk about how GDG Kuwait City&WTM promote awareness through their workshops and solutions built for they yearly Hackathon for social good.

- **Meeting invitation, ACM SIGCHIxBorders, I was selected by ACM to represent Kuwait at SIGCHIxBorders meeting, January 2018, Alexandria, Egypt.**: Attended an invited and sponsored meeting as a member of the SIGCHIxBorders previously known as Listening to Arabs, Africans, and Spanish-Speaking Latin Americans (LAASSLA) Organization, which is a Special Interest Group in Computer-Human Interaction (SIGCHI) that is part of the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM). The purpose of the meeting was to understand the state of the HCI community in the Arab world, the challenges and opportunities for support. Consequently lead the formation of a team of 11 members to create the first ACM CHI Professional chapter in Kuwait. Outcome: Gathered 11 experts from Kuwait to establish the first Kuwait chapter CHI Kuwait city officially started in November 2018.
- **Presentation - AI talk on Federated learning at the Canadian Business Council**: Nov 2019
- **Workshop - STEAM workshop, English Skills Kuwait**: January 2020
- **Presentation - Harness the Cloud: A more collaborative approach to teaching and learning. TESOL Kuwait**: 25th Jan 2020
- **Presentation - AI talk on Federated learning at the British Business Council**: January 2019

ACADEMIC SERVICES: CONFERENCES, PRESENTATIONS AND WORKSHOPS

- **Lead organizer of College of Life Sciences (CLS) Science week/month in collaboration with KFAS: outreach STEM program targeting Grade 12 students** : 19-23 November 2023
- **CHI 2023 invited speaker in conference panel on unpacking the joys, fluidity and tensions of North-South Collaborations - Re-articulating North-South Collaborations in HCI (Human-computer Interaction)**: 23-28 April 2023
- **Invited discussion panelist "The role of developers and researchers in ensuring digital accessibility for people with disabilities" as part of Training Gate International (TGI) 2022 conference**: Kuwait August 2022
- **Initiative to update Tech Job titles in Kuwait in collaboration with KU and PAAET with support from KFAS - First workshop " Improving the Information Technology-related Ecosystem in Kuwait: Discussions about how to cultivate and foster Kuwaits Human capital"**: June 2022
- **Workshop trainer "Revitalize your teaching: Finding new approaches to revitalize your teaching techniques online and offline" under Kuwait University Center for Teaching Excellence**: March 2022
- **Volunteering Member The Arab Digital Accessibility Mada Expert Group ADA-MEG**: 2021-Ongoing
- **Trainer of a session on "Accessible Digital Books -ePUB and DAISY" for the national Qatar library staff, MADA, Qatar**: Dec 2020
- **Project Lead creating the Kuwait Disability Index (KDI) proposal prior funding (managing a team of 15 experts and professionals, Index formulation, research), Training Gate International, Kuwait**: Sept-Dec 2020
- **Invited expert reviewer on the Authorized Arabic Translation of WCAG 2.1 Accessibility guideline committee, MADA, Qatar**: 2020-Present
- **Conference Chair and lead organizer, Google Developer Group &WTM Kuwait City International Womens Day IWD**: 2018, 2019, 2020
- **Hosted cyber security training and a Kuwait national level CTF competition online due to covid19 limitations as part of International Women's Day 2020. 64 people completed the training and 11 players won the national level competition and will join a MENA regional level competition**: October 2020
- **Competition initiator and head organizer, 12 Hour Hackathon for Social Good under GDG&WTM Kuwait City IWD convention, the only platform in Kuwait for connecting developers with the tech ecosystem and NGOs**: 2018, 2019
- **Talk, "Examples of Developing Healthy Grassroots Tech Initiatives in Kuwait that Address Challenges Facing Youth and Women in Technology", National Academy of Sciences USA, KFAS, Kuwait**: March 2020
- **Workshop, "Harness the cloud: a collaborative approach to teaching and learning", TESOL Gulf, Kuwait**: Jan 2020
- **Presentation, "Artificial Intelligence (AI), Privacy and Federated Learning", British Business Council, Kuwait**: Jan 2020
- **Event and Talk, 'How to choose a research area and career you are passionate about", Grad Cohort Kuwait, Kuwait, Event Organizer, Leader, Speaker**: Dec 2019
- **Presentation, "Artificial Intelligence (AI): Changing our business landscape", Canadian Business Council, Kuwait**: Nov 2019

- **Conference Chair, Google Developer Group &WTM DevFest** : 2018, 2019
- **Workshop, Learn English through STEAM concepts at the English Skills Institute Developed a curriculum and put together materials for an 8 hours camp to strengthen children English conversation and vocabulary skills:** September 2018, 2019
- **Workshop, Website Development Workshop - with GDG&WTM Kuwait.:** Nov-Dec 2017
- **Workshop, The effect of Technology on the Family, RAWASI:** May 2017
- **Workshop, Android Basic User Interface, WTM Kuwait:** January 2018
- **Workshop, Active teaching with technology for faculty, Facilitator and trainer for Office of the Vice President of Planning, Kuwait University:** February 2018

Honours and Awards

- **Fulbright Visiting Scholar award from the Department of State of the United States of America, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs:** 2022
- **Fellowship with the LSE Kuwait Programme through KFAS Summer 2020 (postponed to Summer 2022 due to Corvid-19 pandemic):** 2022
- **Munjiza member, KIPCO CSR. Nominated as one of 15 women founding, high achieving member in technology by KIPCO CSR, Kuwait.:** November 2019
- **Financial travel award by The Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Work to represent RAWASI NGO at the 22nd session of the CRPD (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) government reports at the UN Headquarters, Geneva.:** 9-10th September 2019
- **Awarded Best Startup Initiative in Kuwait by Startup Magazine (GDG&WTM Kuwait City):** June 2019
- **Financial travel award by Google MENA to attend Google Cloud Next Conference:** March 2019
- **Financial travel award as an International Observer by ACM International to attend Grad Cohort program workshop:** February 2019
- **Financial travel award: Recipient of researcher support by Kuwait Foundation of theAdvancement of Science (KFAS) to present UCD paper in ACHI conference (Athens, Greece):** 2019
- **Financial travel award by ACM CHI across borders CHIXBorders to attend MENA meeting (Alexandria, Egypt):** 2018
- **Financial award: Five trips funded by NSERC grants to present research publication:** 2007-2012
- **Financial award by Google to attend CRA-W 2007 (Seattle, Washington):** 2007-2008
- **Kuwait University Graduate Scholarship MSc and PhD:** 2006-2013
- **Kuwait Ministry of Education Outstanding Achievement Award:** 2003
- **Deans List Honours, Cal State Long Beach USA:** 2000-2003
- **Presidents List Honours, Cal State Long Beach USA:** 2000-2003
- **Merit Undergraduate Scholarship Ministry of Higher Education:** 1999-2003

Professional Development, Training and Certifications (selected)

- **Annual Compliance Training Instructor: Terry Bridges:** Georgia Tech, Atlanta, Georgia, USA (virtual   Dec 2022
- **Annual Compliance Training Cybersecurity Instructor: Terry Bridges:** Georgia Tech, Atlanta, Georgia, USA (virtual   Dec 2022
- **Digital Accessibility Testing - AccessibilityOz:** Accessing Higher Grounds Conference, Colorado, USA (virtual)   Nov 2022
- **QPR Suicide Prevention Trainings https://mentalhealth.gatech.edu/end-suicide-initiative:** Georgia Tech, Atlanta, Georgia, USA (in person)   Oct2022
- **UX Design Thinking Session for Women Founders:** USA (Online)   Aug2022
- **Digital security for women advocates and activists in the Middle East:** Kuwait (Online)   August 2022
- **Interactive E-Learning Module on Operationalizing the Right to Development in Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, University of PEACE, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations University's International Institute for Global Health (UNU-IIGH), Geneva, UN:** June- July 2021
- **Accessibility in Higher Education professional series workshops by IAAP:** Jan- March 2021
- **Methods for listening to women and youth domestic abuse victims, documentation and writing reports, Family protection Society Jedda:** 27th September - 2nd October 2020

- **Leading in Times of Uncertainty: Leveraging Systems Thinking and Organizational Learning to Build Resilience, Cornell University, IRL School (funded by KFAS)**: 14th-17th September 2020
- **KIPCO Sharakah Forum 2020 workshops as GDGWTM Lead**: 17-19th March 2020
- **Fundamentals of Data Science using R, by RHO Analytics consultancy**: February 2020
- **The Global Leadership Challenge 2019 - Kuwait, by IE Business University**: November 2019
- **Web Accessibility by Google: Developing with Empathy, Udacity (Online)**: November 2019
- **Win the game entrepreneur workshop with Launch Kuwait and Tom McCarthy**: October 2019
- **The Global Leadership Challenge 2019 on transformational leadership.**: October 2019
- **Accessibility: How to Design for All, Interaction Design Foundation (Online)**: October 2019
- **Startup Bootcamp 5 week course, Sirdab Lab**: July 2019
- **KIPCO Sharakah Forum 2018 workshops 1. Tech tools for Community Engagement and 2. Collaboration for Community Engagement (Speed-Networking Event) as ArabWIC President**: 14th March 2018
- **Workshop: Promoting effective advocacy for gender equality (cooperative advocacy, planning and coalition building, gender empowerment) by En.v and Ibtikar consultancy.**: March 24-25th 2018.
- **Certified Professional in User Experience Foundation (CPUX-F) training course, User Vision, UK**: June 2018
- **Certified Professional in Accessibility Core Competencies (CPACC), IAAP**: August 2020
- **Web Accessibility for Managers, User Vision**: June 2018
- **Mobile Site Certification, Google**: 2018
- **Certificate: Protecting Human research participants certificate National Institutes of Health office of Extramural research certificates web-based training course** : 2nd Dec 2017
- **Workshop on Affective campaigning by Abolish 153.**: 20th May 2017
- **Attended a workshop on preparing reports for the UNHCR CEDAW committee. Held by Abolish 153 NGO**: 2-4 October 2017
- **Competition, StartUp Weekend in Kuwait Powered by Google Entrepreneurs (6th place)**: 2015 and 2016
- **Workshop on Developing Competitive Research Proposal, KFAS, Kuwait**: Dec 2016
- **CHI Conference certification course Research methods for child computer interaction.**: 2015
- **CHI conference certification course on Mobile Human-Computer Interaction**: 2015

INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATIONS

- **Certified Professional in Accessibility Core Competencies (CPACC), IAAP**: August 2020
- **Certified Professional for Usability and User Experience Foundation Level, UXQB, 2018.**: June 2018
- **Certified Trainer #IamRemarkable By Google. Trainer of Trainer for MENA WTM Leads and organizers. Workshop for women empowerment, self leadership and confidence**: 2017
- **Certified International Trainer Assessment using Technology, Information Science, Constructive teaching, Experiential learning and Andragogy By Midwest Education Group**: April 1, 2017
- **Certificate in University Teaching and a Certificate for Fundamentals of University Teaching, Center of Teaching Excellence, University of Waterloo.**: 2013

ACADEMIC SERVICE

- **ABET accreditation department level committee, CLS, ISC, KU**: 2016-Present
- **ABET accreditation college level committee, CLS, ISC, KU**: 2020-Present
- **Accessibility Chair, ACM CHI 2022 - in charge of ensuring a conference is accessible (in person and virtually) for +7000 attendees, New Orleans, USA**: 2022
- **Accessibility Chair, SIGCHI ACM COMPASS, USA**: 2021
- **Technical committee member for the first Kuwait Conference in Life Sciences KICLS in Kuwait**: 2020
- **Program Committee for Women In Engineering (WIE) 2020 summit which will take place in Agadir, Morocco**: December 2020
- **Associate Chair (AC) on the Program Committee (PC) for CHI 2020 Late Breaking Works (LBWs), 25-30 April, Honolulu, Hawaii (the highest ranking HCI, ACM-affiliated conference)**: 2020
- **Graduate Program Committee M.S. Computer Information Systems, CLS, ISC, KU**: 2018-2019

- **Conceived, Initiated and Organized the first series of the ISC Graduate research lab seminars targeting MSIT and MSCIS graduate students and senior ISC undergraduate students. In this weekly meeting you can attend and share your knowledge and experiences with others, network with others, get help improving your project/masters presentation content, practice presenting in front of an audience, get guidance on your ongoing work such as refining your research goals and questions, you can also and search for collaborators, advisors and support for what you need.**: 2019-2020
- **Graduate Program Committee M.S. Information Technology, Information Science, CLS, ISC, KU**: 2017-2018
- **Graduate Program Committee M.S. Information Technology, Information Science, CLS, ISC, KU**: 2016-2017
- **Ethics Review Committee, CLS, ISC, KU**: 2018-2020
- **Social and Public Seminar Committee, CLS, ISC, KU**: 2015-2021
- **Conference PC committee and co-organizer IEEE GCC Publicity committee Kuwait and session chair**: 2019
- **Reviewer and Chair, Poster Committee, 2nd International Conference on Computing Sciences and Engineering**: 2018
- **SIGCHI Across Boarders initiative by(ACM) (Organizing member) Alexandria**: 2018
- **ArabWIC Annual Conference (PC member), Lebanon**: 2017, 2019
- **Digital World 2019 - IARIA, ACHI Session chair**: 2019
- **Post conference Evaluation Chair, Poster Chair, International Conference on Computing Sciences and Engineering Conference ICCSE conference**: 2015, 2018
- **Conference chair and head organizer, Information Science Conference, Job Fair and Exhibition**: 2016
- **Acting Chair, Information Science Department, College of Computing Sciences and Engineering**: 2016

Research Grant Projects

- **Cubic Quadrature Formula with Fifth Degree of Accuracy (1000KD), Kuwait University**: 2019-2020

Masters thesis supervisions

- **Usability evaluation framework for AR/VR systems**: Aisha AlAjeel, M.Sc. MSIT, 2021-Present
- **Developing websites in Arabic with Arabic speaking blind participants in the GCC**: Lujain AlAnjiri, M.Sc. MSIT, 2021-Present
- **Assistive technologies for KG-K12 special education in the MENA area**: Hussain Mah Kareem, M.Sc. MSCIS, 2021-Ongoing
- **Mobile accessibility of e-government in Kuwait**: Hawraa AbdulReda, M.Sc. MSIT, 2023 (Defending 2023)
- **Adopting Augmented Reality to teach grade 12 computer course in Kuwait government high schools**: Aisha Sewailem, M.Sc. MSIT, 2023 (Defended)
- **Accessiblity of e-commerce websites in Kuwait**: Shok Shama, M.Sc. MSIT, 2018-2021 (Defended)
- **Systematic Analysis of the Barriers Faced by Arab Women in STEM**: Zahraa Aboullol, M.Sc. MSIT, 2019-2021 (Defended)
- **Learning mathematics through games for Arabic speaking blind children**: Noura AlMutairi, M.Sc. MSIT Project, 2022 (completed)
- **E-government and a cyber security readiness model**: Engr. Ali AlEnizi, M.Sc. MSIT, 2018-2020 (Defended)

15.1   Served Dissertation Committee

- **Building a Comprehensive Risk Register for Risk Management Information Systems**: Alya Theyab Almutairi, M.Sc. MSIT, Information Science Department, Kuwait University, August 2020

Professional Affiliations

- **ICT Accessibility and Inclusive Design competency framework expert committee member**: 2021-Present
- **The Arab Digital Accessibility Mada Expert Group ADA-MEG**: 2020-Present
- **International Association of Accessibility Professionals - IAAP**: 2020-Present
- **International Usability and UX Qualification Board - UXQB**: 2018-Present
- **User Experience Professional Association - UXPA**: 2018-Present
- **ACM SIGCHI/SIGGRAPH**: 2003-Present
- **Grace Hopper Anita Borg Institute**:   2012-Present
- **Computing Research Association for Graduate Women CRA-W**: 2009-2013,2019-Present
- **Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Counsel through RAWASI**: 2018-Present
- **Human Construction Society for social development Non profit organization (member)**: 2023-Present
- **CHI Kuwait City Chapter**: 2018-Present
- **IEEE**: 2003-2014

Journal Publications (Most recent first)

[1] Z. AlMeraj, I. A. Doush, D. Alhuwail, S. Shama, A. AlBahar, and M. Al-Ramahi. Access and experiences of arabic native speakers with disabilities on social media during and after the world pandemic. *International Journal of HumanComputer Interaction*, 39(4):923–948, 2023, https://doi.org/10.1080/10447318.2022.2051887.

[2] Z. AlMeraj, D. Alhuwail, R. Qadri, S. Shama, and M. Crabb. Understanding mindsets, skills, current practices, and barriers of adoption of digital accessibility in kuwaits software development landscape. *Universal Access in the Information Society UAIS*, 2023.

[3] Z. Jasem, Z. AlMeraj, and D. AlHuwail. Evaluating breast cancer websites targeting arabic speakers: empirical investigation of popularity, availability, accessibility, readability, and quality. *BMC Medical Informatics Decis. Mak.*, 22(1):126, 2022.

[4] I. A. Doush, M. azmi Al-betar, M. Awadallah, Z. Alyasseri, Z. AlMeraj, and K. Sultan. Web accessibility automatic evaluation tools: To what extent can they be automated? *International Journal of Web Engineering and Technology*, April 2022.

[5] Z. AlMeraj, I. A. Doush, D. AlHuwail, S. Shama, A. AlBahar, and M. Al-Ramahi. Access and experiences of arabic native speakers with disabilities on social media during and after the world pandemic. *International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction*, May 2022.

[6] Z. AlMeraj, A. AlEnizi, and P. Manuel. An empirical investigation into organization cyber security readiness from the it employee and manager perspectives. *Electronic Government, An International Journal*, October 2021.

[7] Z. AlMeraj, F. Boujarwah, D. AlHuwail, and R. Qadri. Evaluating the accessibility of higher education institution websites in the state of kuwait: empirical evidence. *Universal Access in the Information Society UAIS*, April 2020.

[8] I. A. Doush and Z. AlMeraj. Evaluating the accessibility of kuwait e- government websites. *Jordanian Journal of Computers and Information Technology*, December 2019.

[9] I. A. Doush, M. Al-Betar, M. Awadallah, E. Santos, A. Hammouri, M. Mafarjeh, and Z. AlMeraj. Flow shop scheduling with blocking using modified harmony search algorithm with neighbouring heuristics methods. *Applied Soft Computing*, April 2019.

[10] D. AlHuwail, Z. AlMeraj, and F. Boujawrah. Evaluating hospital websites in kuwait to improve consumer engagement and access to health information: A cross sectional analytical study. bmc medical informatics and decision making. *BMC Medical Informatics and Decision Making Journal*, 2018.

[11] A. AlEnezi, Z. AlMeraj, and P. Manuel. Challenges of iot based new generation smart-government. *Journal of Informatics and Mathematical Sciences*, 10(3), 2018.

Conference Publications

- AlMeraj, Zainab (2023) Digital accessibility across Kuwaits software development landscape. LSE Middle East Centre Kuwait Programme Paper Series (20). LSE Middle East Centre, London, UK.

- (Workshop paper and presentation) Zainab AlMera and Fatemah Hussainj. A Preliminary Cross-Language Investigation of Empathy in #Disability Discourse on Twitter. In: NLP4Disability workshop, Proceedings of the 16th International Conference on PErvasive Technologies Related to Assistive Environments (PETRA '23), July 5–7, 2023, Corfu, Greece. DOI: https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/3594806.3596544

- Alhuwail D, Almeraj Z, Salem E, Behbehani H. Consumer Preferences for Portals: Insights for a Diabetes Patient Portal. In: AHIMA22 Global Annual Conference. Columbus, OH, USA. Oct 2022.

- Shok Shama and Zainab AlMeraj, An investigation into consumer experiences using e-commerce websites in the State of Kuwait, CHI Workshop on HCI research and practice in the Arab world, ACM CHI19, Glasgow, UK, May 2019.

- Zainab AlMeraj and Asmaa AlSumait, A User Centered Design Roadmap for Researchers and Designers Working with Visually Impaired and Blind Children, IARIA - ACHI paper Athens, Greece 2019.

- Zainab AlMeraj, Fatma Boujarwah, Dari AlHuwail. Evaluating hospital websites In Kuwait 2018 ICCSE conference. March 2018, by Kuwait, Kuwait City.

- Fatma Boujarwah, Zainab AlMeraj, Dari AlHuwail. What do users want? Preliminary analysis of user expectations of hospitals in the state of Kuwait. ACM CHI conference first ArabHCI workshop. Montreal April 2018.

- Ali Alenizi, Zainab AlMeraj, Paul Manuel. , Challenges of IoT based Smart-government Development (2018) 21st Saudi Computer Society National Computer Conference, NCC 2018

- Ali Alenizi, Zainab AlMeraj, Paul Manuel. Challenges of IoT Smart Based Government. IEEE GreenTech: Smart City, Austin Texas April, 2018.

- Abdalla Rababah, Zainab AlMeraj. The best uniform approximation algorithm with degree two. ICNNAM conference 2016, AIP Conference proceedings 060003, Greece 2016. http://dx.doi.org/10.1063/1.4992217

- Towards Effective Evaluation of Geometric Texture Synthesis. Proceedings of the Symposium on Non-Photorealistic Rendering - NPAR - Expressive 2013. Pages 5-14 (10). DOI http://doi.acm.org/10.1145/2486042.2486043

- Zainab AlMeraj, Craig S. Kaplan, Paul Asente. Patch-based geometric texture synthesis. Computational Aesthetics - CAe Expressive 2013, Pages 15-20 DOI http://dx.doi.org/ 10.11145.2487276.2487278 Anaheim, California. ACM New York, USA

- (technical report) K. Bibik, C, Iu, H. Vosoughpour, G. Yap, Z. AlMeraj, A. Pytel, W. Cowan and S. Mann. Implicit surfaces seminar, Spring 2012. Technical report, Cheriton School of Computer Science, University of Waterloo. 2013.

- Zainab AlMeraj, Craig S. Kaplan, Paul Asente, Ed Lank. Towards ground truth in geometric textures. DOI http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/2024676.2024679 (NPAR 2011, August 5-7, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada).

- Zainab Meraj, Brian Wyvill, Tobias Isenberg, Amy Gooch, and Richard Guy. Mimicking Hand-Drawn Pencil Lines. With Ken Anjyo and Pascal Barla, editors.Poster and Animation Proceedings of the Sixth International Symposium on Non-Photorealistic Animation and Rendering (N PAR 2008, June 911, 2008, Annecy, France), page 9, 2008.

- Zainab Meraj, Brian Wyvill, Tobias Isenberg, Amy Gooch, and Richard Guy. Mimicking Hand-Drawn Pencil Lines. In Paul Brown, Douglas W. Cunningham, Victoria Interrante, and Jon McCormack, editors, Proceedings of the International Symposium on Computational Aesthetics in Graphics, Visualization, and

Imaging (CAe 2008, June 1820, 2008, Lisbon, Portugal), pages 7380, Aire-la-Ville, Switzerland, 2008. Eurographics Association.

- Zainab Meraj and Sabah Al- Fadaghi, CARPI: Capture, Archival and Retrieval of Personal Information. BTW 2007 (Business, Technology and Web) Workshop on Multimedia Semantics The Role of Metadata. Aachen, Germany, March 2007.

POSTERS

- Zainab AlMeraj. A simple evaluation framework for enhanced usability and accessibility of Cultural Heritage Information Systems. INTERACT 2023 19th International Conference of Technical Committee 13 (Human-Computer Interaction) of IFIP (International Federation for Information Processing), York, UK.

- Shok Shama and Zainab AlMeraj, An investigation into consumer experiences using e-commerce websites in the State of Kuwait, Scientific Poster Session, and the 2nd International conference on computing sciences and engineering, Kuwait University, Kuwait, 2020.

- Zainab AlMeraj, Fatma Boujarwah, Dari AlHuwail. Evaluating hospital websites: a cross-sectional analytical study 2018 Kuwait University Scientific poster day 2018.

- Ali Alenizi, Z. AlMeraj and P. Manuel. Challenges of Smart government. Kuwait University Scientific Poster day 2018 (2nd Place award).

- Zainab AlMeraj and Saqiba Sulaiman, Reminders: A progression model enabling Alzheimer caregivers track regression Poster in Kuwait University Poster Day 2015 (awarded second place in the competition between posters at the College of Computing Sciences and Engineering).

- Zainab AlMeraj, Craig S. Kaplan, Paul Asente, Geometric texture aesthetics for digital Cartography Poster in Visual Science of Art Conference VSAC, Alghero, Italy 2012.

- Zainab AlMeraj, Craig S. Kaplan, Paul Asente, Patch-based geometric synthesis Poster in NPAR 2012. Annecy, France.

- Zainab AlMeraj, Craig S. Kaplan, Paul Asente, Similarity measures for geometric arrangements Poster in Graphics Interface 2012. York, Ontario, Canada.

- Zainab AlMeraj, Towards ground truth in geometric textures Poster in Grace Hopper 2011. Portland, Oregon, USA.

- Zainab AlMeraj, Craig S. Kaplan, Paul Asente, Ed Lank. Towards ground truth in geometric textures. Poster in the 37th Graphics Interface conference. (GI 2011, May 24-27, 2011, St. Johns, Newfoundland, Canada), 2011.

NON-SCIENTIFIC REPORTS UN – OHCHR HUMAN RIGHTS

- The report of the National Association of Familial Security "Rawasii" Parallel to the Periodic report of Kuwait submitted to the Commission on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) 2016,2021

- The Shadow report of the National Association of Familial Security Rawasii" to the UN Commission of the Rights of the Child (CRC) Nov 2018.

- The Shadow report of the National Association of Familial Security Rawasii" to the Arab Human Rights Committee 12th session (Mithaq committee part of the Arab Human Rights Committee Dec 2016

- The report of the National Association of Familial Security "Rawasii" Parallel to the report of Kuwait submitted to the Commission on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) 2015.

- The report of the National Association of Familial Security "Rawasii" Parallel to the first periodic report of the State of Kuwait submitted to the United Nations Committee for the Human Rights for Persons with Disabilities (CPRD) 2015.

- The report of the National Association of Familial Security "Rawasii" Parallel to the third periodic report of the State of Kuwait submitted to the UN Commission for Human rights that monitors the Implementation of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR) 2015

- The report of the National Association of Familial Security "Rawasii" Parallel to the third Periodic Universal report of the State of Kuwait. Submitted to the United Nations Commission for Human Rights (UPR) 2014.