



UN Alliance of Civilizations FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME Spring 2013 Edition

North African & Middle Eastern Fellows



This Fellowship is a Programme of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and is made possible by grants from the Federal Foreign office of Germany and the Guérand-Hermès Foundation in partnership with the British Council, the League of Arab States, The Islamic Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), the Qatar Committee for the Alliance of Civilizations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Institute of International Education (IIE)



Abdallah Helmy (Egypt) works as a **political advisor at the Human Rights Committee of the Egyptian House of Representatives**. He is also **Policy Director of the Reform and Development Party** and directs the parliamentary block technical team. Through his work, Abdallah works on a number of **human rights issues**. He is a member of the Board of Directors of Al-Sadat Association, an Egyptian NGO that aims to empower and upgrade the underprivileged and marginalized citizens in Egypt with a main focus on women, youth and children. **He is a former secretary general of the Revolution Youth Union which handled post 25th of January revolution transition road map talks**. Abdallah is working toward a Master's Degree in Global Affairs and Public Policy at the American University in Cairo. He holds a bachelor's degree in Pharmacy from Al-Azhar university in Cairo and a certificate in Information Systems and Marketing.



Ahmed Obaid (Jordan) currently works for the **National Democratic Institute for International Affairs' Youth Program in Jordan**; he is a **founding member of the Free Assembly, an emerging political party that advocates for social democratic thought**. Ahmed's work is focused on the **field of youth empowerment and development**, mainly in the areas of **political engagement and citizenship**, partnering with 11 Jordanian universities and working with more than 2,000 students. Prior to that, Ahmed worked as a Capacity Building Officer at Relief International implementing projects for **Iraqi refugees** in Jordan; he served as an assistant researcher in several research studies on the impact of Iraqi refugees in Jordan. Ahmed served as an assistant/observer for the International Observation Missions in Jordan 2010 & 2013 and in Egypt 2012 observing parliamentary elections. Ahmed holds a degree in English Language and is a certified trainer on Managing Election Campaigns. He is passionate about working for youth and achieving equal opportunities for all.



Afnan Y. Mahmoud (Palestine) is a strategic planner, executive, and development specialist with fifteen years of experience specifically in the Palestinian context. Ms. Mahmoud has a Bachelor Degree in Psychology and a Masters Degree in Educational Administration and currently works as an **Employability & Entrepreneurship Specialist** on a USAID funded program on **Youth Entrepreneurship Development (YED)**. From that platform, she is working closely with Palestinian Youth Serving Institutions to design, deliver, monitor and evaluate youth employability, Entrepreneurship & Service Learning projects helping youth find their passion, start-up their own businesses and/or find a job. Ms. Mahmoud also served the Palestinian community through **the International Labour Organization (ILO) on lobbying the Palestinian National Authority to adopt ILO's Entrepreneurship curriculum (Know About Business – KAB)**. She has experience in the Microfinance and economic development sector through her role as the Director of the Palestinian Network for Small & Microfinance. Ms. Mahmoud is an influential figure who from different professional positions proved by utilization of her strong leadership skills, she serves as a member on general assemblies and is the **chairwoman of a Board of Directors of "Orient & Dance Theatre"**, a Palestinian emerging institution who uses modern dance as a mean of expression for children and youth



Bashar Salem Eitalhi (Libya), born and raised in Benghazi, Libya, Bashar is a **National Professional Officer within the Security Sector Advisory and Coordination Division at UNSMIL**. Bashar plays a prominent role such as providing the team with local perspective on **the Libyan security situation**, enhanced the quality of support to the Libyan counterparts. He started his political involvement in 2011, during the early days of the **Libyan revolution**. He assisted different organizations such as **Human Rights Watch & New York Times** on the situation on the ground. He joined the first team who documented the Libyan regime's use of cluster bombs against civilians in **Misrata**. His experience in helped him identify the gap between international media & the harsh reality. He then decided to join the **NTC's media committee** as an information analyst. He also collaborated with Marie Colvin from **Sunday Times** on two articles 'Killing rooms plot bloody retreat of troops loyal to Tyrant Jr' and chic 'in Jufra Libya', both published. Finally, **he was on the first ship to dock in Tripoli**, August 2011 with IOM where he participated to evacuate 200 foreigners. Bashar holds Masters degree in information system from the Arab academy for science and technology



Fatiha Ghazi (Algeria) is currently **the head of an independent law firm where she specializes in corporate law and offers pro-bono legal assistance to vulnerable women**. Fatiha graduated with a degree in legal and administrative sciences, focusing her thesis on the protection of children's rights during armed conflict, a subject of humanitarian law that allowed her to work with **the International Red Cross**. During her studies, she created an association with her classmates from across Sub-Saharan Africa. The purpose of the group was to challenge social taboos in what Fatiha found to be a close-minded and conservative society through concerts, exhibitions, dialogue, and the distribution of contraceptives. **Named a "Future Personality" of Algeria by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs**, Fatiha is committed to working in the legal field, promoting secular values and openness. She seeks lead by example for the future generation of Algerian woman who struggle to break out of restrictive societal norms.



Hala Badi Albitar (Syria) is an **Education Project Officer with the Danish Refugee Council (DRC)** through which she has worked to **support Iraqi refugees and internally displaced Syrians** by organizing remedial classes, extracurricular activities and capacity building for educators in cooperation UNICEF, UNHCR, the Syrian Red Crescent Society and the Syrian Ministry of Education. Hala has worked a social worker and **psychological counselor for Terre Des Hommes**, a Swiss organization, and has participated in training courses and seminars in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt. Hala is a Master's Candidate at the Faculty of Education at Damascus University and will soon pursue her Ph.D.



Mirelle Karam (Egypt) works in the field of **NGOs and Civil Community in Egypt**; she holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration and has over 4 years experience working in the field of Voter Education and Civic Awareness. She started as a program assistant at the International Foundation for Electoral Systems and is now operations manager at **Creative Associates Intl.** Throughout both organizations, her work has helped **the promotion of Political and Civic Awareness** in various local communities while focusing on marginalized areas. She works on capacity building **for local NGOs in 10 governorates in order to empower a greater number of Egyptian citizens to engage in active community participation.** She was selected for the "Leaders for Democracy" fellowship in the field of Human Rights and Transparency, where she studied leadership and negotiation. She was also selected **as one of the 13 young Mediterranean Leaders by European Training Foundation to participate in the policymaking and implementation of its activities in Egypt.** She was invited as a guest speaker at the 40th Employment Conference conducted by the Arab Labor Organization to discuss youth and labor challenges. Mirelle's greatest passion is to work for empowering women and youth.



Nabil Ouchagour (Morocco) is the founder of a consulting firm called "Public Initiatives," a public relations and development consulting firm specialized for **International Organizations and non-governmental organizations.** Nabil Ouchagour is also a columnist **at the Huffington Post and Afrik.com** and the author of numerous publications. Among his diverse professional experiences, Mr. Ouchagour worked at the **Ministry of National Education of Morocco where he was the ministry's official media representative and contact person and economic journalist.** He carried several caps going from Public relations consultant, institutional relations and lobbying in a private agency, to responsible for business relations within one of the first private universities in Rabat. He has been in permanent contact with **policymakers, the media, international organizations and non-governmental organizations in Morocco.** He also assured the organization and moderation of conferences in many associations; he participated in several activities of the European Union. Mr. Ouchagour holds a Masters Degree in Entrepreneurship from ESC Toulouse (France), a Certificate in Corporate Management from I.S.C.A.E Rabat (Morocco) and a Bachelor of Business Administration from the Al-Akawayn University of Ifrane (Morocco). This international education has allowed Mr. Ouchagour develop a broad understanding of international and public relations and allowed him to adapt quickly in an international environment.



Ali Al-Ashwal (Yemen) is a **Radio Programs Producer "Let's Be Best Together" (LBTBT), the first youth radio show in Yemen to discuss challenges facing Yemeni youth and potential solutions.** Two of his major programs include "Tolerance, Harmony, Moderation, Human Rights and Peace" and "Promoting Youth Legal Rights in Yemen". Mr. Al-Ashwal's extensive volunteerism inspired his career path; he first joined Yemen Youth General Union in 2007. Soon after graduating from college in 2008, he joined SHABABNET Radio (FMSHABAB) **to reinforce the role of youth in civil society and worked for Save the Children, Sweden on their youth and children's programs.** A media professional in communication, Ali provides seminars in radio production, community reporting, transparency, anti-corruption and radio theatre. He is a graduate of Sana'a Community College.

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Nazeeha Saeed (Bahrain) currently works as **Bahrain Correspondent for Radio Monte Carlo, France 24, Al Safir Newspaper and freelancer for ITV, the BBC and Al Majallah Magazine.** Nazeeha is dedicated to defending the rights of both Bahraini and non-Bahraini journalists, a cause she advances in partnership with a number of international organizations. **Her commitment to advancing free speech strengthened after being detained by her country's police for her coverage of the 2011 Bahrain uprising.** Nazeeha is a member and former-president of the Bahrain International Circuit Media Club, member of the Bahrain Journalists Association, the Red Crescent Society, and the Al Reef Women Society. She is also a founding member of the Al Shabeeba Youth Society and Bahrain Correspondent Club.



Ola Sidani (Lebanon) works for UNDP as an Economic Officer in the **Office of the Prime Minister of Lebanon where she informs social and economic policy.** Formerly an economic researcher at the **General Union Of Arab Chambers of Commerce,** she has a broad understanding of development in the Arab world. Ola has been a speaker at conferences on sustainable development organized by GUCCIAAC, the League of Arab States, WTO, and UN-ESCWA; and at the AIWF Conference where she focused her remarks on **women's leadership.** She is a founding member of her high-school alumni group, a professional member at the Lebanese Economic Association and Toastmasters International and was recently elected as a Committee member at the Sidani-Family Association. Outside of work, Ola supports donation campaigns **for children's health care centers and refugees in Lebanon.** She frequently attends seminars on contemporary regional geo-politics, is keen to stay dynamic in her society, and is determined to promote the culture of women as human capital. Ola holds a M.A. in Economics from the American University of Beirut where she earned her B.A. in Economics with a Minor in Public Administration.



Dr. Zied Mhirsi (Tunisia) is a **media entrepreneur and global health professional** focused on strengthening health systems to combat HIV/AIDS. Currently the **Executive Director of Global Network of Researchers on HIV/AIDS in the Middle East and North Africa (GNR-MENA),** he recently founded the **Tunisian Center for Public Health.** Zied is also an **influential blogger and radio show host at the Tunisian radio station, Express FM.** In March 2011, he co-founded "**Tunisia Live**", the **first Tunisian English-language news** agency that now serves as Tunisia's international news platform. Zied has worked with several NGOs and CSOs in various positions. He holds a doctorate from the Faculty of Medicine, University of Tunis, El Manar (2005), a Master of Public Health from the American University of Beirut and a Master of Public Health from the University of Washington's School of Public Health, Department of Global Health where he was a Fulbright scholar. He is the author of a book on the history of mental health in Tunisia and was a Tutu Fellow at the African Leadership Institute.