

UNOAC Fellowship programme 2014

MENA Fellows Bios

Overall objective of the Fellowship Programme: Facilitate positive cooperation and understanding between the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and Europe and North America (EUNA) by supporting emerging leaders from these regions to develop a nuanced understanding of each other.

Specific objectives:

- Present positive and innovative models of intercultural cooperation and networking.
- Engage participants in a dialogue over regional perceptions related to each other's society, the background to those perceptions and entry points to tapping into positive aspects and addressing negative social fault lines.
- Expose participants to new ideas, perspectives and unfamiliar social, political, cultural and economic models in order to trigger self-reflection and creative initiatives.

The biographies below are from emerging leaders carefully selected through a competitive process that will participate in an exposure visit Europe and North America in the second half of November 2014.



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.



Ghraith Alghaffari (Iraq). I am a young **physician** graduated from Al-Kindi Medical School in Baghdad. My family's background is multicultural, and its diversity represents almost every part of Iraq. Joining medical school didn't stop me from chasing my ambition and initial dream to become an **effective young leader** in my community. I started as a volunteer in many youth organizations, enrolled in various social and community activities. Afterwards, I continued this work on an international level: I started working on building a youth platform including 22 young leaders from the Arab league called "**Network 22**", founded and implemented by the World Bank. I also served as the **Echo-Generation TUNZA Ambassador of Iraq in 2014**, working with Iraqi youth parliament in different workshops for capacity building and leadership skills training targeting the youth of Iraq. I worked with the **Observatory Council in at the Ministry of Youth** and led a group of potentially motivated young people to address the most striking youth issues in the country to deliver it to the decision makers. I speak fluent English, Arabic, French and Kurdish.



Rwaida Al-Khulaidi (Yemen). I am a **Project Manager at the British Council in Yemen**. In addition to this, I manage a **women self-development programme entitled 'Springboard'**, designed for women in jail and women with disabilities to help them integrate in society, build their confidence and positive image about themselves. During my five years as an **arts manager**, I worked with many artists and organised many events, exhibitions, discussions, film screenings and workshops in **Yemen, other countries in the region and the UK**, in order to **initiate a dialogue and bridge the gap between the two cultures**. Amongst the projects I developed and led on is a project entitled '**Zoom**', **aiming at showing Yemen beyond the image it is portrayed in international media** and at the same time developed to build an interaction between Yemeni and British filmmakers. Films were shown on BBC Arabic and various venues in the UK.



Ahmad Al Helou (Palestine). I began my career before the completion of my bachelor's degree. Before graduating, I had managed and implemented a number of **construction, business, and IT projects**, and because of the political situation in the Gaza Strip, I moved to work as **Project Coordinator in one of the biggest NGO's in Palestine**, where later on I became **Executive Manager** in 2010. I currently manage 200 employees and an operating annual budget of more than 1.5 million dollars, in addition to a financial deficit of 0.5 million dollars. Regarding scientific research, I have published a number of **papers either on modern administrative fields such as sustainable development, good governance and social responsibility**, or on the field of my work on the **rehabilitation and integration of Down Syndrome and Autism**.



Malak Oussidhoum (Morocco). As born and grown up in the city of Tangier, Morocco, I inherited a **cosmopolitan spirit seeking the glamour and passion of cultural diversity and richness of human potential**. The concept of Alliance of Civilizations has been part of my education, mentality and heritage. This heritage has been a building ground in the way I see life and people's relationships: "Living all together in cohabitation, understanding, respect, harmony and peace: each one learning from the others". I believe throughout this journey I will be able to transmit a vision and look at the cultures and civilisations through the "eyes" of a person who looks at others through the richness of their personal brand: identity, authenticity and leadership. My wish and aim with you is to **build a community sharing the same vision and spirit**, as we can spread the word and be examples, in order to contribute to a more harmonious, peaceful and thriving world.



Hazem Balousha (Palestine). I am a Palestinian **journalist based in Gaza City**. I have worked as a **news producer for BBC World Service** and contributed to **Deutsche Welle**. I have written for **The Guardian, Al-Raya (Qatar) and other publications**. I am writing as a freelance contributor for **Almonitor Website**, and have recently joined the **Washington Post** team as a **stringer in Gaza**. I covered Israel's Operation Cast Lead in Gaza in 2008/9, the conflict between Fatah and Hamas in 2007, and the Israel war on Gaza in 2014, which lasted 50 days. I am the **founder of the Palestinian Institute for Communication and Development (PICD)** and have a master's degree in international relations as well as a bachelor's degree in journalism.



Bashar Kokash (Jordan). I am 37 years old. I hold a B.A. in Economics and an M.A. in Financial Management. This background, together with my 14 years working at the government, provide me with good **experience and knowledge in the subjects of youth, political and social reform, elections, political parties and participation, and terms of reference**. I am interested in the **Youth sector** as I believe they are the most important sector in the society and we have to invest in them. While completing my bachelor's degree at university, I was the Head of the Student Council representing over 17,000 students. In addition, **I assist in managing a campaign to enhance youth participation in the 2010 parliamentary election and in organizing the Jordan Youth Forum 2011**.



Lina Mekail Tayar (Syria). I am a **psychologist at UNHCR project for Syrian IDPs** and a **lecturer at Tishreen University**. As a psychologist, I provide various psycho support services, such as counselling for people who suffer sensitive social and political issues as a consequence to the crisis in Syria. I graduated from the Faculty of Education and got my master's degree in 2011. While **pursuing my PhD at Damascus University** I have attended academic and professional **training courses** in Syria and abroad with international NGOs and educational foundations such as **Anna Lindh, UNHCR, UNICEF and ICRC**. I also work as a Syrian coordinator with WHRF, through which I am **developing a project that establishes basic standards to integrate psycho support in the field of education**, to be part of a bigger project aiming at raising affected Syrian children.



Khalil Bassiouny (Egypt). I am a software development consultant and social entrepreneur. I'm the **co-founder of "Selmiyah" (Peaceful) movement** promoting principles of peaceful co-living, through building bridges of trust across the divides within the Egyptian society, and coordinating the efforts of the different stakeholders. I'm also **member of the "Misriyati" (My Egypt) team**, that facilitates workshops promoting culture of peace, respect for diversity and peaceful resolution of conflicts. In 2010, I **founded a social enterprise called "Madad for Information Technology" (Support)** with the mission of providing IT support to the civic society. In 2013, I **co-founded another company, "Majal for Consultancy and Training" (Space)** to serve as a hub for different youth initiatives working in the field of civic education to come together and co-create.



Sabreen Aljirinawi (Palestine). I am **co-founder and director of Threshold towards Art Association**, an association that **believes in children's right to practice and produce art and gain essential skills** regardless of their social, physical and mental differences. The association is based in Palestine but it works in cooperation with local, regional and international organizations. I have a bachelor's degree in Media and Journalism, and a master's degree in International Studies. I have more than ten years of experience in **cultural project management and media field**, working and volunteering at several organizations. I **received the Welfare Association's Munir Kaloti Award for Palestinian Entrepreneurial Youth 2012 "For a Better Tomorrow.. We Innovate"** for my initiative **"Inside Outside; Improvisation on Stage"**, which aimed to improve the refugee children's skills in West Bank in Improvisation on stage. I am a **member of Cultural Innovators Network (CIN)** and the consultant board of **Filistin Ashabab Cultural project**, which has seven sub cultural projects.



Asma Cherifi (Tunisia). I am the **founding president of TACID Network**, a network for **civism and development**. Today, there are 253 local Tunisian NGO's; our mission is to build new local governance based on democratic values, transparency and accountability of the economic empowerment of the regions. I am also **co-founder and member of the Arab Network for Social Accountability (ANSA)**, the project of the World Bank in the MENA region, mentor for the Youth entrepreneurs in the FORSA programme G8UK Deauville, trainer in local governance, participative democracy, social accountability, advisor in open governance and open government partnership.



Reem Abdel-Hadi (Jordan). I am a **youth activist**, member of several youth societies and a **founding member of Junior Chamber International Jordan**, a branch of an international organization that focuses on individual development, community service and international understanding. In this organization, I served as the first elected local president, national president and currently serve as **elected councillor for Arab States**. I was also a board member of the student union of the University of Jordan, a founding member of **Third Eye Team**, a regional network for Arab youth. I have a degree in Industrial Engineering and work at the American Embassy's cultural section, where I handle cultural programming. Previously, I did a yearlong **voluntary service with AVRIL organization in France**, and I still join AVRIL's annual environmental camp in France as trainer on intercultural understanding. Recently, **I received an EU grant and successfully implemented a similar youth exchange in Jordan**.



Anisse Terai (Algeria). I am currently working as **Corporate & Structured Finance Manager at the Islamic Development Bank Group**. I have 7 years of experience in finance, strategy, policy, project management, trade and market analysis, focused on the energy industry. I thrive in multicultural environments, having worked and travelled to different countries. I am very active in the Civil Society; **I am a founding member and former Secretary General of ATLAS (Algerian Talents and Leaders Association)**, and the **Civil Society Initiative and Think-Tank NABNI (Notre Algerie Batie sur de Nouvelles Idees)**. I hold a Bachelor's degree with distinction from HEC Alger, a Master's Degree from Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris - Sciences Po and a Post-Master Degree with distinction (*Magna Cum Laude*) from the French Ecole Nationale d'Administration. I speak fluent Arabic, English and French.



Mohamed El Dahshan (Egypt). I am a **regional economist at the African Development Bank**, working on **issues of economic development and regional integration**. I am also a **Non-resident Fellow with the Rafik Hariri Centre for the Middle East at the Atlantic Council**. I regularly write and lecture on topics including the Middle Eastern transitions, economic development and entrepreneurship, and technology. I am also a **member of the World Economic Forum's Global Agenda Councils and Global Shapers community**. I have received the **Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Journalism Award for coverage and analysis of the Egyptian revolution for traditional and social media**. I am the **co-author of "Diaries of the Revolution"**, a collective memoir of the 2011 Egyptian uprising, which was published in Arabic and Italian. I am a graduate of the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, Sciences-Po Paris and Cairo University.