2015 UNAOC Alumni Event

Celebrating Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue through the Arts

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- Proceedings -

Edited by Lorenzo Kihlgren Grandi
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The UN participation in Expo Milano 2015
UN Expo Team

For the first time in the history of world expositions, the UN does not have a pavilion but instead a horizontal presence with content spread throughout the Expo site. An itinerary dedicated to the theme “the Zero Hunger Challenge - United for a sustainable world” links these content. The UN itinerary goes from Pavilion Zero – where the link between Expo 2015’s theme and the mission of the UN is most evident – through the UN Garden, the Biodiversity Park, the Children’s Park, the Future Food District, the nine clusters, country pavilions and the civil society area, Cascina Triulza.

The main element of UN logo for Expo 2015, a spoon in the blue that is so reminiscent of the UN flag, is the symbol of United Nations’ presence at the universal exposition. This was chosen as our emblem because, when talking about food and nutrition and the challenge of feeding the whole world, the spoon is a tool common to all food traditions, demonstrating how the Zero Hunger Challenge belongs to each and every one of us.

A large part of the UN Itinerary is made up of several UN spaces in Expo Milano’s main thematic areas, easily recognizable by their giant blue spoons. By visiting the UN spaces visitors can discover through videos, photo stories, infographics and maps how the UN System strives daily to eradicate hunger and guarantee a sustainable future for our planet. Above all, by following the UN itinerary they can discover how to take part in the Challenge, because in order to get to zero, everybody needs to get involved.

In fact, the challenge was not envisioned as a plan but rather as a call to action: eradicating world hunger is a goal that concerns everyone. The objective of the UN’s presence at Expo Milano 2015 is to ensure that when discussing food and food production, the catastrophe of 795 million people who still suffer from hunger is not forgotten or left unmentioned.

When talking about hunger, the only acceptable number is zero. In order to achieve this goal, the Zero Hunger Challenge has proposed five elements:

1. Zero stunted children less than 2 years
2. 100 percent access to adequate food all year round
3. All food systems are sustainable
4. 100 percent increase in smallholder productivity and income
5. Zero loss or waste of food.

As integral part of all five elements, the UN has chosen to highlight the issue of women’s empowerment and gender equality at Expo Milano 2015, considering the fundamental role that they play in the fight against hunger and malnutrition.

Visitors can join the challenge and make the UN itinerary interactive and educational using "Get to Zero", the United Nations’ free app for Expo Milano 2015 and contribute to get the virtual number of hungry people in the world to zero.

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1st Panel – Cultural diplomacy. National and international initiatives

How culture is presented in the Russian Pavilion at Expo Milano 2015
Maria Yudina, Russia Pavilion at Expo 2015 Milano

Talking about culture in the Russian Pavilion it is important to start with the structure of the building. A lot of wood as the construction material was specifically used for honor the Russian culture of wooden architecture and represent to vast forests that cover the country.

Inside the pavilion the visitors can truly discover the country through one of the main parts of the culture – its cuisine. In the first hall of the pavilion every visitor has an opportunity to taste the authentic traditional drinks from the Water Bar where free degustations are happening 10 times per day, each lasts 40 minutes.

Later on the visitors can taste various traditional cuisine at the heart of the Pavilion – the Show Kitchen. A lot of dishes are made from real Russian products that we, organizers of Russia Expo 2015, especially bring to Milan. Rye bread, caviar, porridges and many more can be found on the menu of free degustations that are held 6 times per day for 30 minutes.

The unique culinary book “Russian Regional and modern cuisine” was published especially for Expo 2015. It is divided to 11 chapters representing 11 regions of Russian Federation. The important cultural aspect is that the reader is supposed to explore not only the recipes but also the particular qualities of the region and its traditional products. It is necessary to mention the high quality photographs and images illustrating the book – it is a real piece of art.

Another treasure of the Russian Pavilion is located on the first floor. Specifically created for the World Exposition in Milan – the core of Earth, the union of two cultures: Italian and Russian. Secondly on this floor the visitors can see the permanent exposition of Moscow Museum of Design that shows the real patterns used for textile and ceramics in 50s – 60s. The exhibition is created to introduce the visitor to the leading Russian movement in art – Avant Garde.

Of course, in the Russian Pavilion a lot of particular souvenirs can be found! The visitor can take a piece of culture back home, buying beautiful hand painted wooden toys popular all around the world – the matreshkas.

This September the Russian culture will be celebrated at Expo 2015: from 25 to 29 of September the Russian Pavilion is organizing the days of Russian culture in Milan that will include: music Festival, sculptures exhibition, literature festival and other cultural activities.

Maria Yudina is an experienced PR specialist working for EVENTICA, an agency specialized on international communication. Currently she is fulfilling her duties as the Communications Officer of the Russian Pavilion at Expo Milano 2015. Her individual approach and international background have allowed her to work on some of the major projects all over the world. Born and raised in Moscow, Russia, she studied at the top universities in Russia, Switzerland and the UK, and was awarded with merit in Masters degree in International Enterprise studies. In the last 9 years Maria has lived in 5 countries and speaks 5 languages. With the passion for traveling and cross-cultural communications she is always open to new challenges and opportunities.
The crucial role of cross-cultural relationships in the Qatari history
Mohammed Al Bloshi, Chief Operating Officer, Qatar Pavilion at Expo Milano 2015

The World Expo is by definition a platform for dialogue to whom citizens, countries and institutions are invited to participate in order to present, discuss, share innovations, discoveries, points of view in order to give a collective response to a current topic of global interest.

When we started planning our participation to Expo Milano 2015, under the theme ‘Feeding the planet, energy for life’, the first question that we asked ourselves was: what should Qatar tell to Italians and all other Participant Countries in order to give a significant contribution to this discussion, considering that it is a country importing 90% of its food and supplies?

We decided to start from our history and to have people discover, through a journey leading to the present day, the role of trade in the development of our country. Trade as the exchange of goods, people and cultures. Trade was for Qatar the practice that enabled the building of a relations’ system.

Spices from India, wood from Africa and their merchants from different areas of the world that came together, telling stories experiences, sharing.

Asia and Africa were the first continents with whom Qatar has ever come into contact, exchanging goods and welcoming and sharing culture. Relations with Europe have been developed in more recent times beginning with pearls, one of the rich resources of our sea and bordering countries that attracted jewelry manufacturers looking for high quality raw materials to create necklaces and other jewelry for instance for Indian Maharajas. All this happened in the early 1900s.

After World War II, with the discovery and the beginning of oil exportation, the lives of Qatari and their relationship with the rest of the world have changed. New opportunities, new relationships, new countries and foreigners who have begun travelling and living in Qatar, bringing their traditions that mixed the with local ones.

The people living and working in Qatar today, come from more than 110 different countries.

This implies the need for dialogue and understanding between cultures and religions: Muslims, Christians, Buddhists. The Qatars have had to learn dealing with people with different backgrounds and origins, and this was and it is only possible if coming from a deep and mutual respect.

In the past, the place of social life was the Souq the center of trade and evolution of the country.

The Qatar Pavilion at Expo 2015, in its external path, allows visitors to get a taste of what it is and was the traditional Souq with its spices, dates, bread handicrafts, traditional dishes. An open space to move around and meet the Qatari culture and people coming from different countries of the world.

The Arab market becomes a welcoming place. In Qatar, the first hotel was built right in the Souq Waqif in Doha. After World War II, an Indian boy decided to open this hotel with a few simple but comfortable rooms. A symbol for the city that has been preserved over the decades.

Things have obviously changed step by step over the years and the relationships with foreigners are now lived daily and in many places of the country. The world has become part of Qatar in a very extended way. We have for instance more than 10 European schools: Italian, French, English, Pakistani, Indian, Chinese, Japanese, other Arab states.

Expo Milano 2015 is a special occasion for us to let people discover the heritage of the Country and to share with the rest of the world our commitment to sustainability and the methods and technologies we have and those we are working on to grant the Qatar people enough and safe food.
Villa Vigoni: fostering the spirit of intercultural dialogue
Michele Vangi, Villa Vigoni

The German-Italian Center Villa Vigoni has been pursuing for 30 years a very special mission: to foster – mostly through academic meetings and conferences – the relationship between Italy and Germany in the fields of scientific research, higher education and culture. Every year more than 70 events take place in an inspiring environment of rare fascination: two villas of the 19th century, offering an amazing view of the Lake Como.

I have worked at Villa Vigoni for 6 years and I just would like to mention three aspects which in my opinion make this center a unique place in the field of the cultural relationships in Europe.

First of all, the high thematic diversity: from natural sciences through politics to humanities. This diversity is also reflected in numerous formats of the activities: scientific meetings, seminars on contemporary politics, workshops for PhD students, debates between journalists, round tables among experts.

Moreover I am pleased to see that Villa Vigoni is trying to open this bilateral dimension towards an European and international perspective. In fact, as a result of the mentioned thematic diversity, cultural dialogues transcend the binational perspective. Thus, more and more scholars, intellectuals and artists coming from all over the world are invited to Villa Vigoni to discuss about various politically and socially relevant issues such as migration, sustainable development and digital societies.

Finally I would like to refer to my own experience to emphasise a very important aspect of what I call the spirit of intercultural dialogue. Over the last few years several guests of the Villa Vigoni met for the first time at our conferences: it is very interesting and touching to observe how friendships begin, grows up during the years and leads to very productive collaborations: research projects, publications, new academic conferences. This is for me the evidence that scientific cooperation is very often based on human sympathy – born not only during working sessions in a conference room, but also through conversation, drinking a glass of wine on a loggia surrounded by an English garden full of Mediterranean plants.

I wish Villa Vigoni could host future UNAOC-meetings, with its fascinating ambient contributing to their success.

Dr. Michele Vangi works as scientific advisor and public relations officer at Villa Vigoni. He also teaches German Culture at the University of Milan. After his studies in Modern Literature at the University of Bari, followed the PhD at the University of Münster where he wrote his dissertation on the reception of photography in the literary discourse. He was lecturer and coordinator at the Romanisches Seminar of the University of Münster for four years. While writing his dissertation he was a scholarship holder of the Stifterverband, after his dissertation he was postdoc-scholar of the Goethe-Gesellschaft, of the Klassik-Stiftung Weimar and of the Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography Leipzig. He held guest lectures at the Universities of Marburg, Oldenburg, Bochum, Leipzig and Luxembourg.
Addressing the trafficking of blood antiquities
Mark Vlasic, UNAOC Alumni

This lecture focused on culture and the global fight against impunity -- specifically, as it pertains to curbing war crimes, human rights violations, grand corruption and stolen antiquities. It was based on the premise that those that are willing to slaughter thousands of innocents, are also willing to steal millions of dollars and loot and destroy our collective cultural heritage -- and that the fight against impunity includes both war crimes and economic crimes -- and that such a discussion should take into account the current cultural cleansing in Syria and Iraq at the hands of ISIS. The discussion, led by a professor with first-hand experience in the fight against impunity via his own personal experience with the Srebrenica genocide, Slobodan Milosevic, Saddam Hussein and Omar al-Bashir matters, as well as with the World Bank’s StAR Initiative and helping recover stolen assets on behalf of the Governments of Haiti, Liberia, Nigeria, and others, as well as supporting sovereign efforts to recover looted antiquities, focused on the importance of establishing a multi-stakeholder global engagement group to confront the current crisis posed by ISIS. According to Professor Vlasic, “the trafficking of blood antiquities needs to be addressed, through law enforcement, pro-active market regulations and collaboration.” He noted that, “collectors, archaeologists, museums, dealers, insurance companies, transport companies, freeports, governments and related parties should work together – via the World Economic Forum in Davos - to create a public-private initiative to help crack down on this lucrative illicit market.” In doing so, we may limit terrorist financing, helping save lives and our collective cultural heritage.

Mark V. Vlasic is an adjunct professor of law at Georgetown University, a senior fellow at its Institute for Law, Science & Global Security, and a principal at Madison Law & Strategy Group. Formerly the head of operations of the World Bank's Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative, he served as a White House Fellow/special assistant to the Secretary of Defense and was awarded the Secretary of Defense Medal for Exceptional Public Service by Secretary Robert Gates. He practiced law at Gibson Dunn, and served on the Slobodan Milosevic and Srebrenica prosecution teams at the UN war crimes tribunal. Mark has taught the Iraqi judges that tried Saddam Hussein, served on the U.S. Delegation to the Pan Am 103 “Lockerbie” terrorist bombing trial in the Netherlands. He provided commentary for multiple global news media, and contributed to several books. He has a BS and JD, cum laude, from Georgetown and was a Fulbright Scholar to Leiden. Mark is Counselor to the Antiquities Coalition, a Fellow of the UN Alliance of Civilizations, and is World Economic Forum Young Global Leader. As a U.S. Army officer, he has been attached to Capitol Hill and the Defense Attaché Office at the U.S. Embassy in The Hague, and was awarded the Army Commendation Medal.
Bridging the Divide: U.S. Service members Engage in Cultural Diplomacy
Jeremy Blaney, UNAOC Alumni

With more than 300,000 United States military personnel stationed abroad, engagement between U.S. servicemembers and foreign nationals is all but certain. Given the size of this population (certainly one of the largest ambassadorial groups of the United States) and the cross-cultural interactions that are bound to take place in the course of official duties and day-to-day life, one cannot help but wonder what the Department of Defense (DoD) is doing to prepare servicemembers for situations of cultural unfamiliarity. A decade of war and the, at times, deadly results that cross-cultural (mis) cues have produced demonstrate a keen need for such training. That is not to say the DoD is without such programs in place. Indeed, when Robert Gates became the Secretary of Defense in 2006, the DoD began to take seriously the need to introduce servicemembers to other cultures and societies. Though efforts to grow servicemembers’ cross-cultural competency (3C) have largely mirrored other U.S. military training programs (i.e., computer-based modules), the DoD has also adopted a high touch approach, exposing servicemembers first hand to different cultures and languages by offering two-week immersion programs in countries around the world. Such opportunities take on elements of cultural diplomacy to ensure both parties – the servicemembers who participate and the foreign nations with whom they interact – gain or increase mutual understanding. Indeed, servicemembers enroll in cooking courses, learn how to play local music, attend cultural events, and much more. This session explores the DoD’s cultural agenda, beginning prior to 9/11 when gaining 3C was not a priority and continues to the present day when enhancing 3C is done through a variety of training programs, one of which embraces cultural diplomacy as an effective means to build bridges between “us” and “them” and gain mutual understanding.

Jeremy BLANEY is an Institute for Business in the Global Context Scholar at The Fletcher School at Tufts University where he is pursuing a master’s degree in international business, specializing in global human resources. As a self-described global citizen, Jeremy is deeply passionate about bringing people of different cultures together. Drawing on personal and professional experiences as well as academic research, he recently presented on culture shock as it pertains to cross-cultural misunderstanding at TEDxTufts 2015 and collaborative approaches to public diplomacy at TEDxMacatawa 2015. Before attending Fletcher, Jeremy served as an officer in the U.S. Air Force. He completed three deployments in support of Operations ENDURING and IRAQI FREEDOM, earning three Air Medals. Captain in the Massachusetts Air National Guard. During his military career, he also completed a remote tour at the NATO Allied Air Command Headquarters in Izmir, Turkey. He continues to serve as a conducted research on and experienced firsthand several public diplomacy initiatives sponsored by the Department of Defense.

Promoting diversity as a tool for urban cultural dynamism: Milan’s experience
Lorenzo Kihlgren Grandi, UNAOC Alumni

Over the last few years, growing migrant communities urged European local administrations to design and implement more effective policies for inclusion, dialogue and civil society empowerment. The City of Milan faced such a challenge by developing an innovative cultural platform, whose success lies in the enthusiastic response and participation provided by migrant communities themselves.

Since 2011 Milan has enhanced the value of its cultural diversity, conceived as a source of cultural, social and economic development and innovation. The Municipality, through its Cultural Networks office, bet on the migrants’ cultural and creative activism as well as on the willingness of the diverse communities to cooperate with each other. The Municipality invited migrants to establish their own cultural associations and launched the Forum della Città Mondo (World City Forum), an umbrella organization designed to provide these newborn associations with guidance, networking opportunities and project management skills to impact on Milan’s vibrant cultural scene.

Moreover, the Municipality, with its overall goal of linking ancient and modern cultural expressions, hosts the Forum’s headquarters in its brand-new Museum of Cultures (MuDeC), house of the municipal ethnographic collections. At MuDeC several cultural activities designed and implemented by migrants’ associations take place every month, including conferences, courses, workshops and intercultural meetings.

The response of the migrant communities could hardly be stronger. The World City Forum, counting now over 500 participating organizations and 5 thematic groups (Women and Culture; Food, Urban Gardens and Expo Side Events; Participation and Active Citizenship; Museum of Cultures; Communication and Cultural Events), has thus implemented numerous activities over the last 4 years, dealing with a variety of themes.

Indisputably one of the key players in the city’s cultural life, on May 1st 2015 the Forum opened the city’s main international event, the Universal Exposition, with a parade by representatives from all its communities. The Forum contributes regularly to Milan’s cultural events such as BookCity Milano, an annual literary festival, Tramedautore, international theatre festival, and Expo in the City, the program of Expo Milan 2015’s side events taking place in the city center.

The enhanced cultural dynamism Milan is experiencing thanks to the Forum shows the great potential of the promotion of cultural diversity and represent a best practice which is likely to influence local authorities keen to foster dialogue and integration.

Lorenzo KIHLGREN GRANDI is an officer of the International Relations Department of City of Milan and in charge of relations with international organizations, MENA countries and foreign media. Lorenzo is also involved in a dual doctorate at EHESS in Paris and LUISS in Rome, where he worked as teaching assistant in Techniques of International Negotiation and in Mediterranean Studies. Lorenzo’s thesis, “Scope and challenges of the youth activism conveyed by art and culture”, benefits from his experience as founder and chairman of Il Tamarindo, an Italian NGO devoted to intercultural dialogue, cultural diversity, creative economy and youth empowerment. Lorenzo has been the head of several projects implemented by Il Tamarindo, such as its multilingual cultural magazine, international seminars, concerts and exhibitions, artistic and entrepreneurial competitions. Lorenzo studied International Relations at the University of
Bologna, Sciences Po Paris, Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale in Milan and LUISS. He gained his first professional experiences at the European Commission in Brussels, the UNESCO Culture Sector in Paris, the Italian Embassy in Tehran and Istituto Affari Internazionali in Rome.

The Museum “Mediterranean Patterns” in Gibellina as a process of redefinition of artistic languages
Francesca Corrao, Fondazione Orestiadi

Introducing the Museum “Mediterranean Patterns" leads us to recall its founder, Ludovico Corrao. As a fine young intellectual he was already sensitively responsive to the beauty of art and started collecting the greater part of the exhibits displayed here. From antique Sicilian furniture, to classical and contemporary works up to and including the objects of Mediterranean arts and crafts. His experience in political life and travels led Corrao to further his vision of Sicily as a bridge of trade and exemplary model of dialogue, as evidenced by the precious collection of the Museum.

Corrao was a tireless Mayor who gave all of himself to make of Gibellina a modern city of art, sensitive to the processes of social and cultural renewal. At the time of Gibellina’s reconstruction, the project and its development model represented concrete evidence of civic engagement, studied and appreciated at international level. In 1993, following a proposal by Corrao, the town council approved the charter of the Orestiadi Foundation as permanent workshop for the artistic memory of the city. Definition of the Museum guidelines saw the convergence of projects conceived by Corrao together with experts invited to give their contributions. Corrao was emblematic in his ability and insight shown in carrying out the work through a process of cooption and adaptation to the conditions of the time. Corrao promoted international Congresses to study the Parks and the urban structures of old and new cities. These events stimulated new projects drawn up by the architects Unghers, Pirrone and Venezia as a remedy to the former ill-conceived ones. Gibellina became a laboratory working on transformations that involved the towns of the Belice Valley and various others, such as Mazzara del Vallo. The piazza system was created by Franco Purini and Laura Thermes, and leading artists were summoned to bring beauty to the town. Alberto Burri, for example, was called upon to preserve the memory of the old town working on its ruins, and created the “Cretto”; Pietro Consagra designed the “Star”, the gateway to the Belice Valley, Quaroni created the Church and numerous monuments were raised by a great many artists.

Corrao was fond of both the traditional and modern culture of the Mediterranean area, and therefore promoted international seminars and conferences together with the group of scholars led by Prof. Antonino Buttitta of the Faculty of Humanities and with the professors Michele Argentino of the Industrial Design Institute of Palermo Faculty of Architecture; together we have strengthened and structured what was originally a slender scheme, the desire to show the common cultural roots of all the peoples of the Mediterranean. Among the many initiatives we may recall the recital of Arab Poets in Sicily (1987) which I organized as a scholar of Arabic poetry together with the Sirian poet Adonis; the Conference on Costume promoted by Prof. Janne Vibæk Pasqualino of the Laboratory of Anthropology of Palermo University and the expert Antonella Corrao (1995); the symposium coordinated by Enzo Fiammetta - who was shortly after to become the director of the Museum - on "Materials for a museum of Sicilian-Arab culture" (1996).

In 1996, the Minister of Culture, Prof. Antonio Paolucci, inaugurated the Museum “Mediterranean Patterns”, a breeding ground of ideas which houses works, experimental workshops and exhibition projects promoted with enthusiasm - unfailing among us at the Foundation Orestiadi - in many centres of the Mediterranean, where they were always greeted with interest and keen attention.

Over the years, artists, authors of the ateliers, and the Italian and foreign intellectuals with their contributions have carried through a process of redefinition of artistic languages. Among them I would remember the Maroccan poet Muhammad Bennis and the painter Muhammad Melehi, the Tunisian painter Mja
Mdaoui and the poets Moncef Ghachem and Abdelwahhab Meddeb, the Syriac painter Ziyad Dalloul and the musician Abed Azrie, the Lebanese writer Etel Adnan, the Egyptian painter Adel al-Sawi and the poet ‘Abd al-Mo’ty Hijazi.

The Museum brings together items donated by artists and connoisseurs, and also the records of arts and crafts created for the Orestiadi Theatre Festival. Promoting the creation of extraordinary displays, Corrao summoned major artists such as Emilio Isgrò and Arnaldo Pomodoro, calling upon them to bring out the best of their craft to enhance the local festivals and the growth of the local community, respecting their dignity and expertise, always placing to the fore the central role of the human being.

Donors who shared in Corrao’s initial project have, over time helped to build a Museum that bears witness to a beauty competition between patterns, the synergy of the different skills and the harmonious collaboration between the arts

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Transnational Dialogues. Establishing and reinforcing links among artistic and cultural practitioners across Brazil, China and Europe

Luigi Galimberti, Transnational Dialogues

Transnational Dialogues is an exchange and research programme for artists, curators, designers and architects taking place across Brazil, China and Europe. Started in 2011 by the NGO European Alternatives, the programme is now in its third edition. One of its principal assets is the creation of a functioning logistical, linguistic and conceptual infrastructure for individuals and organisations working in the artistic and cultural fields. The following text has been drafted in support of cultural diplomacy and, in particular, of that carried out by those non-governmental organisations that relentlessly try to establish and reinforce links among artistic and cultural practitioners across the world.

One of the many reasons beyond setting up a Sino-European exchange, as Transnational Dialogues began in its early days, was the inadequacy of how China and its cultural production were presented and discussed in Europe. Aside the evergreen Orientalist manifestations, which still persist in massive numbers, the monotonousness of China’s representation as an emerging economy was overwhelming: even in the scarce occasions in which Chinese art was mentioned in the media, it was because of it breaking record after record at auctions. Therefore, the culture that is communicated and circulated is yet but another manifestation of capitalism. The role of organisations involved in cultural exchanges is that of breaking up the status quo and fighting against the dullness and sterility created by the commodification of art and culture.

Strictly linked to the subordination of culture to financial and economical values is the unevenness of what goes global and what stays local. Indeed, artistic and cultural products (from artworks to languages) go global largely when they are bound to specific sets of economic values. In other words, the art and culture that transcend their national or regional boundaries can do so only if associated to specific consumption patterns –

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Francesca CORRAO, full professor of Arabic Language and Literature at Luiss Guido Carli Rome, Master of Art at the American University in Cairo, Ph.D. at Rome University La Sapienza. She gave lessons, seminars and conferences at the following Universities Cairo, Oxford, Cambridge, Parigi, Beirut, Istanbul, Amman, Damascus and Tunis. She teaches Islamic Politics and Society, Mediterranean Studies. Member of the Union of European Arabist and Islamist (UEAI) and the European professor of European Researchers of Modern Arabic Literature (EURAMAL), and the Institute of Oriental Philosophy, Soka University Tokyo; President of the Scientific Committee of the Fondazione Orestiadi in Gibellina.
contemporary art fairs being an exemplary case. The global culture that results from this context is uninformative and misleading. Therefore, while we should stay well clear of rhetorical no-global stances, it is essential not to deprive culture – both in its global and local forms – of its complexity and fertility.

Among the many facets that cultural diplomacy can take, a successful strategy is that of targeting communities that are dispersed across the world, but whose shared values or common practices can become a bond as strong as that given by geographical proximity. This is the case of the global community of individuals and organisations working in the artistic and cultural fields. Transnational Dialogues has been working in the field and helping the circulation of people and information by establishing connections that mostly avoid the already globalised hubs of cultural production – "globalised" is used here with the meaning of being uniformed to the requirements of the global market. The importance of supporting the emergence of a multi-polar artistic and intellectual world should not be underestimated.

Luigi GALIMBERTI is currently involved in several projects related to artistic research and production across the world, with a particular focus on socially and politically engaged visual arts. In addition to his undergraduate and postgraduate studies in sociology (BSc, LSE, London) and international relations (Master, ISPI, Milan), he has been awarded cum laude a master degree in art management (IULM, Rome). Luigi has been collaborating with the transnational NGO European Alternatives since its foundation and is now one of the coordinators of Transnational Dialogues, an exchange programme for young artists, curators, designers and architects across Europe, China and Brazil. He has been presenting papers and moderating discussions at Centre Pompidou (Paris), MAXXI Museum (Rome), Bartlett School of Planning, UCL (London), SESC Pompeia (São Paulo) and Organhaus (Chongqing), among others.

Cinema as a tool of social communication
Vincenzo Bevar, Cinemovel Foundation

Cinemovel is an innovative cultural project dedicated to touring cinema and the potentialities that cinema can develop both on cultural and social field. This idea begins both with the passion for cinema and the African continent of its two founders, Elisabetta Antognoni and Nello Ferrieri, and from the enthusiasm created by the first touring cinema caravan in Mozambique in 2001.

Cinemovel Foundation takes cinema on a journey to support and reinforce the civil society through the improvement of human abilities, the stimulation of the economic, social, cultural growth and through the information exchange, focusing its activities on the quality of the experience and the encounter between tradition and innovation.

Cinemovel Foundation is an international foundation, which believes in and operates following the values of social identity, solidarity, equal distribution of resources, dynamism and technological innovation, focusing its actions on what cinema does best: tell stories.

Believing in the existence of an indissoluble connection between democratization of the countries and access to the new technologies, Cinemovel Foundation moves cinema, using it as a tool of social communication, in order to ease the exchange of know-how and expertise, the diffusion of information and a better distribution of intellectual and material resources.

In this presentation I would like to introduce you to 3 of our projects, trying to better explain the flexibility of our activities.

The first one, in Mozambique started in 2001. During 3 months we covered 3.700 km from Maputo, the capital city close to South Africa, to Pemba, at the border with Tanzania,
involving an audience of more than 120.00 people. The Cinemovél crew realized, during 52 cinema nights and 130 screening of movies and documentaries in 7 different languages, an informative campaign on AIDS, with the support of the Italian Embassy, the United Nations, the Mozambican Government and Unicef.

Free Cinema on a Free Land, travelling cinema against mafia, realized in Italy and in Europe since 2006. Since the first edition of this festival, Cinemovél brings touring cinema on the lands dispossessed from the mafias and returned to legality, in collaboration with Libera of Don Luigi Ciotti and the young people of the Libera Terra Co-ops. Since the 2013 the project receives the mention of the European Commission.

The third one is a transversal activity realized in all different project of Cinemovél Foundation: Cinemovél Campus. An international workshop which uses moving images in order to educate young people from suburbs worldwide to use audiovisual multimedia techniques in a social context. The goal is to make them autonomous in realizing their video-documentation and public screening work by using low cost digital technologies.

Never as today we live in a society that uses moving images to communicate and share different types of content. It never as today is essential to train citizens to the alphabet audiovisual, strengthening the tools necessary for more active citizenship. Cinemovél reverses the flow of traditional use, bringing cinema where there is or there has never been.

Vincenzo BEVAR
studied cultural management at the University of Bologna and in Grenoble, France. Prior to that he obtained a three-year degree in cinema studies. He has worked in the fields of cinema and theatre, and with Mymovies.it, Fondazione Fabbrica Europa, 20th Century Fox. After all these diverse experiences, he found in Cinemovél the ideal marriage between performing arts and cinema. Vincenzo strongly believes in the role of culture in fostering intercultural dialogue, as well as in the need to promote universal access to cultural content. Cinemovél aims at bridging the gaps between distant worlds through journeys and encounters, and allows everyone to look beyond the limits of present time, between tradition and innovation.

Intercultural projects powered by Y2Y
Saida Ibrahimava, UNAOC Alumni

“Youth to Youth Initiative” is a young non-profit that aims to foster change and to construct an effective environment for youth participation in the decision making process and community development. Through dialogue and immediate action plans it strives to solve the most critical issues in the social-cultural sphere.

Unicity of the concept allows “Youth to Youth Initiative” to work in three planes: with youth, during the annual thematic International Summit, designed as a platform for dialogue and networking; with projects under “Youth to Youth Action Hub”, a highly responsive, community-driven online incubator for socially beneficial ideas, projects and initiatives, created by youth for youth; with young leaders from all around the world, assigned as “Youth to Youth Ambassadors” to maximize the impact of youth-led initiatives on international level.

Grasping for the development of intercultural cooperation between youth, “Youth to Youth Initiative” supports cross-cultural ventures and cultural diplomacy projects through its online incubator. Among supervised projects “Dialogue Through Art”, a start-up, promoting citizen partnership through art and creating awareness and empathy through non-threatening dialogue based on a shared interest by creating a low-cost, collaborative projects. The aim of the project is to increase cultural understanding between the participants, create dialogue between
individuals who has no other opportunity to interact with one another, and produce various forms of art, including poems, photographs, music, and dance; “I AM YOU”, a youth exchange project, aiming to connect young people across the world through a guided online dialogue, empowering them with the tools necessary to create a meaningful exchange of ideas, unleash their potential and find new approaches to contemporary global challenges. “I AM YOU” Youth Exchange Program is a fusion of intercultural dialogue and a dialogue that strives to impact social issues. The Program is designed to increase awareness of global challenges, affecting young people all over the world, to foster a dialogue through cultural perspective that can become a bridge for youth with different backgrounds, and to unite efforts in advocating, campaigning or leading socially beneficial initiatives; "Lensaional" - a project aiming to empower oppressed women and girls through the transformative tools of photography, and a model of social entrepreneurship. Since 2013 “Lensaional” has empowered over 150 underprivileged women in Hong-Kong, Myanmar, Pakistan, the US and the UK. Its sustainability model consists of three major steps: -equipping women with recycled digital cameras; - providing some photography workshops; - and helping women to sell their photos online. The empowerment through photography is happening on both emotional and economic levels: participatory photography and digital storytelling methods enable women to overcome isolation, express themselves freely, and create tools for communication. It also provides women with additional economic revenue through photographs sales and skills to pursue future work opportunities in photography.

“Youth to Youth Initiative” through its mentorship and supervision under its incubator encourages artistic cooperation and cultural diplomacy initiatives and believes that culture is a powerful tool to bring positive changes to the global community.

Saida IBRAHIMAVA has more than ten years of successful experience in the nonprofit sector and more than five years working experience for governmental institutions. She has implemented a number of projects in the sphere of social inclusion, youth development, education, sport and volunteer movements. She has earned a Bachelor's of Arts in International Relations from Belarusian State University and Masters of Arts in International Economy and Politics from Charles University in Prague. She is the one of the co-founders of "Youth to Youth Initiative" an umbrella non-for-profit organization that aims to construct effective frames for youth participation in the decision making process and solving global challenges locally. Currently, she serves as a Director of Projects Development under Y2Y Action Hub (an interactive online incubator for socially beneficial ideas, concepts, startups, projects and initiatives created by youth and for youth). She enjoys focusing on the topics of youth leadership, human rights and dignity, peace-building, cross-cultural dialogue, social entrepreneurship, and has a strong passion for sustainability education, design, creative photography and art. At the moment she works on an ambitious project called “The Green School” - a start-up project in sustainability education and social entrepreneurship.

Seeing the other Sides
Reem Abdel-Hadi, UNAOC Alumni

When we look at this shape ∑ drawn on a piece of paper, we see it as “M” from the right side, but “W” from the left, three in English from the bottom and “4” in Arabic from the top, This shape is “W” and “M” and “3” and “ژ” at the same time, but as we see it from only one side “from only one point of view” we’ll see it as only one of these possible shapes. In life, we look at people, societies, cultures and religions from our side, based on our “Point of view”, our backgrounds and the way we have
been raised, so we see only one possible face and one narrative. But to be able to see the other faces of it and even know they exist, we mostly need to physically move from one place to the other just as we move from the right side of the paper to the left side, to travel and go meet people from other cultures, people who are seeing our "W" as an "M", people who have a different narrative to tell, and here comes the role of exchange programs, it takes us on a journey to explore the other sides, it gets us immersed into other cultures which ultimately enables us to understand why people have different perspectives and narratives and eventually we get to a level where we start seeing these differences as opportunities rather than threats, as a richness rather than a weakness and we learn that there is no right or wrong when it comes to opinions, there are perspectives.

In 2007 I got the chance to do a European voluntary service in a small city in the north of France, it was a life changing experience for a young girl coming from the heart of the Middle East, a mind opening one, and since then it became a responsibility to find similar opportunities for other young people to go on exchange programs. I worked with 7 likeminded people to start a branch for a youth organization called Junior Chamber International (JCI). In JCI, our focus is personal development that would lead to community development and International cooperation. Through our organization that has branches in over 100 countries, we aim to bring people from different cultures together to debate, dialogue and discuss the challenges that are facing the world and come up with plans that can be implemented on a local level to create an impact.

We believe that the more we get to know people from other cultures, the more tolerant we become and the more we understand it is not differences that divide us, it is rather our inability to embrace them, we strive to continue offering young people the chance to travel and meet people from other cultures and we hope every youth and civil society organization will continue bringing people across borders to meet and connect and celebrate differences.

Reem ABDEL-HADI is 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, she served as the first elected local president, national president and currently serve as elected councilor for Arab States. She 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. She has a degree in Industrial Engineering and work at the American Embassy’s cultural section, where she handles cultural programming. Previously, she did a yearlong voluntary service with AVRIL organization in France, and she still joins AVRIL’s annual environmental camp in France as trainer on intercultural understanding. Recently, she received a EU grant and successfully implemented a similar youth exchange in Jordan.

Empowering artists in Yemen
Rowaida Al-Khulaidi, UNAOC Alumni

The British Council is the UK’s international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. It creates international opportunities for the people of the UK and other countries, and builds trust between them worldwide through projects delivered in over 100 countries around the world in 3 major areas; English language, Arts, Education and Society.

With arts being a cornerstone of the British Council’s mission to create a friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and the wider world, a huge emphasis is given to developing art projects that bridge the gap and enables a better understanding of other cultures.
In Yemen, where the British Council has been operating since 1973, numerous art projects were delivered to help build the capacity of Yemeni artists, showcasing Yemeni artists work in UK while at the same time showing British artwork in Yemen and organising UK study tours.

Showcases included projects like Last of The Dictionary Men, which tells the story of the last remaining seamen of the oldest recorded Middle Eastern communities existing in Britain today; A Time in Hadhrmaut, where photographs taken by Harold and Doreen Ingrams during their time in Hadhrmaut from 1934 were exhibited in Yemen, and My Father’s House that featured work by five emerging Middle Eastern artists and three UK photographers – including Winner of the World Press Photo of the Year 2007 Tim Hetherington – to examine how the built environment reflects the people, the community, society and the nations of the Gulf States and Arabian Peninsula.

In addition to exhibitions and events in Yemen and the UK, the British Council organised a pilot study tour in 2014 for 7 young cultural managers from Yemen to visit small and mid-size cultural institutions in London, Liverpool and Bristol to professionalise the work in the cultural sector in Yemen and learn about audience building, curating and project development.

Identifying that Yemen is a widely misunderstood country, mainly due to the very little information provided to the people of the world, film projects were developed to shed more light on Yemen and its people and therefore help facilitate a better understanding and provide another source of information than the media, these projects include Zoom, which provided a platform for young passionate Yemeni filmmakers to learn about filmmaking from professional UK filmmakers in a country that has no film school, and Comra; that enabled filmmakers and photographers to learn about documentary filmmaking, photoessays and guerrilla filmmaking at a time of war and create films that tells human stories from Yemen.

With the current situation in Yemen, there is even more need to have art projects that will help artists in Yemen document and use their skills to highlight the ongoing conflict and create artwork from the destruction created by the war. The British Council will continue to develop projects with local partners that meet that need for the time being.

How FAI is involved in celebrating Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue through Arts
Georg Castlunger, FAI Giovani

FAI (Fondo Ambiente Italiano, the Italian National Trust) is a national, not-for-profit trust that was set up in 1975 and has since gone on to save, restore and open to the public numerous fine examples of Italy’s artistic and natural heritage.

The mission of FAI is twofold: on the one hand, it is to promote a tangible culture of respect for Italy’s natural heritage, art, history
and traditions; and on the other, it is to protect a legacy that forms a fundamental part of the roots and identity of the Italian people. FAI operates throughout Italy from its headquarters in Milan and through its Rome office, and also thanks to an extensive network of volunteers organised into 116 Delegations, which are in turn managed by 14 Regional Administrative Bodies in 20 Italian Regions.

With the input of all concerned, FAI takes care of special places in Italy for the benefit of all generations, both present and future, promotes education on, love for, and knowledge and enjoyment of Italy's environment, landscape and historical and artistic heritage and supervises the protection of the landscapes and cultural assets, in the spirit of Article 9 of the Italian Constitution.

Protecting, restoring, opening to the public and bringing back to life a plethora of Italy's wonderful jewels of art and nature is a complex and never-ending task. From castles, monasteries and gardens to sites of natural beauty, villas, heritage houses and other little gems that make Italy all the more precious, all of our sites require care and attention day in, day out, in order to guarantee their effective long-term conservation.

FAI's volunteers, who are organised into Delegations that span the entire country, work to involve new members, organize the FAI Spring Day and the FAIMarathon in October on behalf of FAI. In addition, the volunteers set up – for the benefit of local FAI members and all those who share FAI's values and mission – meetings, conferences, trips, concerts and much more besides. Moreover, the volunteers help to raise the funds required for the restoration of works of art or properties entrusted to FAI.

FAI Giovani, the youth movement of the foundation, aims to promote its commitment among its young members and a specific community: students and young entrepreneur and professionals, outstanding in their student, professional and social life, with a keen passion and interest in arts and history, architecture, environmental issues – in order to make sure they become ambassadors of FAI.

This young volunteers are in between 18 and 40 years old and involved in dedicated local or nationwide events, initiatives and group travels for this specific target group. An important focus is also to care about the special interests and needs of the young volunteers and the cooperation with Universities, local institutions and associations.

How is FAI involved in particular in enhancing the Intercultural Dialogue through Arts:

- create community (volunteers, events, initiatives) and expand the related network
- collaboration with universities and international students living in Milan
- special intercultural events
- multilingual initiatives

Georg CASTLUNGER, born in 1984 in South Tyrol with Austrian roots, graduated from the University of Innsbruck Law School. He participated in student exchange programs in Padua and Milan and interned at major law firms in Toronto and Milan. After gaining work experience in commercial and legal consultancy and marketing at the Commercial Section of the Austrian Consulate General in Milan, he is currently involved in the management of the Austrian presence at Expo Milano 2015. He volunteers with the FAI Giovani Milano movement to promote the mission and the initiatives of the youth section of the Delegation of Fondo Ambiente Italiano, the Italian National Trust, of Milan.
Urban Cooking & Gardening: grow food, grow people, grow communities
Vasenka Leka, Forum della Città Mondo

The Municipality of Milan has instituted the Forum della Città Mondo, a space for intercultural dialogue and representation of over one hundred foreign communities active in the Milan area and their associations. The Forum fosters active participation of the communities and associations of diverse nationalities living in the Milan area and it now includes more than 500 associations. Associazione Città Mondo, a second level association, has also been funded with the participation of more than 80 associations. In order to give the Forum della Città Mondo even more stimulus, significance and visibility, the Municipality of Milano – DC Culture – Servizio Reti e Cooperazione Culturale has developed the project “Urban Cooking & Gardening: grow food, grow people, grow communities”, with the support of the following partners: Social Cooperative of the Giambellino Community, Pandora Onlus Social Cooperative, A&I Onlus Social Cooperative. The project, with an overall value of € 234,824.83, was selected for funding within the European Fund for the Integration of Third Countries Citizens (FEI), Action 6, Year 2012. Specific objectives included the promotion of intercultural dialogue, favoring mutual awareness and acceptance among the societies and integration for third country communities; the valorization of civic participation in the local associations of third countries in the metropolitan Milan area, favoring, among other things, bottom - up participation initiatives; the inclusion of world heritage, through activities related to nutrition and agriculture; the development of transferrable models of intercultural actions shared by third country citizens and host societies starting from strategic themes like urban and suburban agriculture and nutrition; the activation of third country citizens in a training providing occupational perspectives, with incentives for the creation of a network of urban gardens in the communities of the third countries to promote real re-appropriation practices and care of the territory, sustainable lifestyle and quality of foods; the creation of awareness in third country citizens regarding the opportunities offered by activities related to nutrition and agriculture, also from a standpoint of international cooperation with third countries; the valorization of the cultures of the communities active in the area through the project activities during EXPO Milano 2015, giving value to the experience and skills acquired in their home countries; to foster the City's intercultural dialogue policies in an international context.

In its “gardening” part, the project identifies the themes of agriculture and nutrition and the use of the urban gardens as elements that are able to promote and reinforce intercultural dialogue and stimulate integration among host societies and foreign citizens through training on the planning and planting of urban gardens. We offer the opportunity to attend a training course held by expert instructors to support the activation of an urban garden network. We select and support interventions in the field. As for the “cooking” part: the kitchen, a natural place for mixing cultures, is one of the areas where integration manifests itself in the most heartfelt ways, and as an excellent driver of socialization processes. We have identified two pathways: “From the world with flavor”, a cooking competition for amateur third-country citizens, and the organization of promotional events with the goal of promoting and sharing project activities with all the foreign communities in the Milan territory. We also intend to extend the invitation to supporting institutions and other local bodies of the province to share the results of the project and foster their transferability.

Vasenka LEKA is presently involved in activities related to social care, many of which include cultural, socio-political and ethical research projects aimed at promoting multicultural awareness. She is a co-founder of the Forum of the City Network (Cultural Cooperation of the Municipality of Milan) and also a journalist, communication strategist of the Città Mondo Association and senior consultant for Migration Policies. She has
completed her undergraduate and postgraduate studies in Psychology and Education (L. Gurakuqi University, Albania) and holds a Masters II Level Degree in Migration Law (University of Bergamo) as well a series of other qualifications, such as a Diploma on Migration Policies (Ciessevi, Milan), Diploma on Good Governance and Coordination of the Third Sector (Social Policy Development - Albania), etc. Vasenka has collaborated with several transnational NGO’s and is the Director of the Albanian Cultural Center in Milan, since its foundation. She has presented papers and moderated discussions at Metropolis, Sacro Cuore and Bicocca Universities in Milan, and many other occasions.

3rd Panel – Cultural Diplomacy Intercultural Dialogue through Artistic Engagement.

Spazio Nour: creating new forms of artistic dialogues
Seyed Arsham Alaviani and Mahmoud Saleh Mohammadi, Spazio Nour

What is Spazio Nour? Spazio Nour is Spazio Nour, but what does this mean? Not a gallery, not a club, not a social center. Spazio Nour is a Cultural Association which brings together a part of those places mentioned above, developing them in its own style, to create an environment which is not an isolated center from its context (which is the city and the building in which Spazio Nour is active), but it would be a point of reunion that is born from Art and linked to the realities which surround it. The activities of Spazio Nour are focused on two basic concepts: social art and intercultural collaborations. The project of Spazio Nour has got started from the necessity of creating a new synergetic model, which manifests the contamination of different forms of Art in an artistic and social project, thanks to the collaboration of international artists. Spazio Nour is the atelier of Mahmoud Saleh Mohammadi, Iranian artist, who had chosen to turn his studio in Milan in a collective work of art, creating a site-specific in continuous construction, which particularly affects the context in which it is located. Spazio Nour is greeted in the courtyard of Viale Bligny 42, the building is located in the city center, between Porta Romana and Via Bocconi, on that stretch of road that for 68 steps reveals a parallel world, known to the chronicle of Milan as a theater of drug dealing and petty crime. “El Camerūn”, drug fortress, world building: many are the names with which Bligny 42 is known and this reflects the multiple identities of the building. Its courtyard is the heart of this microcosm which is not just a common area of transit, but a real square, where the encounter and the clash between different cultures and lives happen. It is in this context that Spazio Nour functions, using the possibilities offered by this atmosphere to realize its projects. It also creates a base to start moving toward
more expanded ideas which can engage the whole city.
The main objective behind the Spazio Nour's activities is to create a network of artists and people who are passionate about art and artistic role in the society, and mainly those who believe that we as people and artists can make changes in the dynamic of the society by using the art language.

Since the day that Spazio Nour has started its activities as a cultural association, there are different projects that have been done: workshops, laboratories and artistic residencies with artists from Austria, Bulgaria, Finland etc. The “Free photos” project which engaged the people from the Bilgny 42 building to have a portrait of themselves and in order to encourage contacts between them, fostering closer ties through an artistic project. Two “Contemporary Evening Nour” Festivals, 3 day events in which different art forms created artistic dialogues.

Mahmoud Saleh MOHAMMADI is an Iranian artist active in Milan. He was born in 1979. His artistic career begun when he started studying painting at the University for Fine Art of Karaj (Iran) where he took his first steps toward becoming an artist. After different kinds of collaboration in Iran with art institutions and galleries, he decided to go to Italy to improve his artistic skills and amplifying his knowledge about the Contemporary Art. It was in Milan that Saleh Mohammadi has opened his studio in 2014 that has become the "Cultural association of Spazio Nour" in 2015. Spazio Nour association works with international artists and its activities are focused on the different projects of Social Art and the artistic residency. Saleh Mohammadi has been awarded by M-WAM as a new emerging international artist active in Milan. Recently his works are focused on “Carpet” as an element of his Eastern culture mixed with the Western language of contemporary art.

Seyed Arsham ALAVIANI is a Kurdish-Iranian member of the cultural association of Spazio Nour. He was born in 1986 in Sanandaj, Iran. After being graduated in Economy and Insurance from the University of Allameh Tabatabai of Tehran he decided to continue his studies abroad and eventually in September 2011 he went to Milan, Italy. From that moment on he started studying Cultural Heritage in the University of Milan (Università degli Studi di Milano). In Iran he had various experiences in artistic environments, and before he goes to Italy he has joined the "House of Art" institution for almost 10 month, which was an artistic center for contemporary art in Iran. In 2015, he started collaborating with Spazio Nour as the director of international collaborations, which is still going on. Recently his activities are focused on developing the Spazio Nour concept of the social art and the artistic residency at the international level.

Dialogue through Art: Civil Vision International and Y2Y International
Christina Sciabarra, UNAOC Alumni

The Dialogue through Art project seeks to create awareness and empathy by facilitating non-threatening dialogue between people from different cultures. This is accomplished by building on a shared interest in art and the creation of a low-cost, collaborative art project, which will be showcased on the CVI website. Based on the idea that art, which is the truest form of culture can overcome the artificial, political culture created by governments, the project provides participants with the opportunity to learn about another person's life while working on a collaborative piece of art in any medium. The shared love of either an art form or a particular subject gives individuals the space to indirectly challenge their assumptions about other cultures and develop/share their artistic skills and insights. The project is completely free and open for
anyone wishing to participate. There are 7 partnerships currently in progress and participants live in numerous countries including Afghanistan, the United States, Russia, Brazil, Germany, and Bangladesh.

Christina SCIABARRA is a Political Science PhD candidate in the School of Government and Public Policy. Her research interests include post-conflict reconstruction, conflict resolution, and peace-building strategies. Her case study work includes assessments of post-conflict peace-building strategies in Northern Ireland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq, and Lebanon. She has a B.S. in History from the United States Naval Academy, B.A. in Russian from the University of Arizona, and an M.A. in Diplomacy from Norwich University. Christina is a program director with Civil Vision International, a non-profit organization dedicated to connecting, informing, and inspiring individuals to achieve peace and cultural understanding through collaboration and dialogue. She has facilitated a number of video dialogues between students in the U.S. and Afghanistan as well as hosted a number of educational and artistic events.

The power of social practice dance
Shawn Renee Lent

Stand up from your seat and plant your feet beneath you.

Breathe in 4 counts. Hold 1 2 3 4. Exhale 1 2 3 4.


Now reach five different ways: reach out, reach inward, reach down to pull someone up, reach across, reach with your heart, however you want to reach.

Reach 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

I am a social practice dance artist. The goal, above all else, is engagement. I believe in embodied learning, the lived experience, the power of being applauded. Dance is the median because it is beyond words, requires little resources, and is in the body. My objectives are reflexive, contextual. We dance where people are. Performance and therapy are not the purpose, but both can be part of the process.

I would love to share with you a couple stories.

In a village in Northwest Bosnia, there is a field that has seen devastating horrors. Families were rounded up there and separated. People were killed or sent off the nearby concentration camps. Nowadays, this piece of land holds a community center but the people remain separate. Locks are changed. Muslim children go to the local school in the early morning. Serb and Croat children start later in the day. There are separate shops, separate services and societies.

Yet, a friend of mine, a survivor of a Serb-controlled concentration camp decided to retake this piece of land and gather artists. Together we had 300 children dancing on this land. The kids came from different communities and spent a week together. On the first day, I noticed a clique forming. This little group was snickering at a girl who was socially-awkward but had the courage to run and leap across the field. I pulled the clique away for a break. My definite assumption was that these kids had come from the same neighborhood, same background. As I asked them where they went to school and where they live, and I realized this was not the case. Within hours, a dance workshop had formed a bond (in brattiness) across institutionalized differences. I was shocked.

At 57357 Children’s Cancer Hospital Egypt, I was leading dance workshops for the outpatients coming for treatment. A woman came up to me, fully covered in conservative black. I braced myself, thinking she was there to complain about our wild dancing. I had never had a conversation before with someone
in a niqab and I honestly did not know where to look. She simply told me she wanted her son to participate and asked if it was okay. He had recently had surgery and was not able to move his limbs or much else other than his eyelashes. She and her husband, a man in a rural galabiya, wheeled in their son. She took one arms and the dad took the other. Together, they helped their son to dance, spin, reach. The boy's eyes and corners of his mouth lifted to their capacity.

This is what social practice dance can do and why I am proud of it. If you know of any places, projects or support for this work, please let me know.

Shawn Renee LENT is a social practice dance artist and manager, blogger and presenter/facilitator, who recently returned to the United States after years living in Cairo, Egypt. Shawn has designed and led dance experiences with children in divided communities of Belfast and Northwest Bosnia; as part of the cultural diplomacy efforts of the U.S. Embassy Cairo; with childhood cancer patients in Egypt and the US; Muslims, Orthodox Jews, Mormons, and Sikhs; students in Palestine, Uganda, Detroit and Chicago; preschoolers and senior citizens; high school physics students, la Quinceaneras; Bat/Bar Mitzvahs; juvenile offenders/young people in East London; homeless lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender teenagers in Chicago; among others. Shawn recently left her post as the EducationUSA Advising Coordinator at AMIDEAST Cairo (through the U.S. Department of State), and instructor for the full-time professional program at Cairo Contemporary Dance Center. Shawn is a U.S. Fulbright Scholar, American Express Leadership Fellow, and UN Alliance of Civilizations International Fellow. In 2014, Shawn was the Commencement Speaker for Millikin University.

Shawn holds a Masters degree in Arts Management with a focus in Arts in Youth and Community Development from Columbia College Chicago, as well as her BFA degree in theatre and dance from Millikin University and a Post-Graduate Certificate in Professional Practice with a focus in Youth Arts Development from Goldsmith’s College, University of London.

Music diplomacy: the experience of EMMA for Peace in Malta
Paolo Petrocelli, UNAOC Alumni

EMMA for Peace (European Mediterranean Music Academy), is a non-profit organization for music diplomacy and education. EMMA for Peace brings together music institutions, universities, and philanthropic foundations interested in music and the promotion of peace in the Mediterranean and Middle East regions. World-renowned artists have joined EMMA to help music become an instrument of understanding, awareness, and collaboration toward a peaceful future.

EMMA’s goal is to create a conversation and to share musical excellence among international musicians of the highest level and students and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds across Europe and the Middle East. It uses music as a tool for peace in places torn apart by war, bringing the best talent from the world’s concert halls and academies to refugee camps and other deprived areas where music education is otherwise inaccessible.

“You can't make good music using just white keys. And you can't make good music using just black keys. If you want to make good music, you have to use black and white keys. Music is life”.

That's what a young migrant from Ghana said in the middle of a concert organized by EMMA for Peace, Malta Philharmonic Orchestra and Malta Youth Orchestra on last 1st February at the Robert Samut Hall in Floriana (Malta), as a final event of Sounds at the heart of the Mediterranean, a join project in collaboration with Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR),
Foundation for Shelter and Support to Migrants, Junior Chamber International in support of young refugees of the Mediterranean.

The Mediterranean is one of the busiest seaways in the world, as well as a dangerous sea frontier for migrants and asylum seekers en route to southern Europe. Today, hundreds of thousands of migrants live in refugees camps after having lost everything: their homes, their loved ones, their dignity, their hope.

Most of the time efforts of concerned organizations concentrate mainly on covering basic needs like food, medicines and warm clothing, while moral and psychological support is very lacking. EMMA for Peace’s mission is precisely to help large international organizations bringing added value to their aid programs.

Through music, education, arts, culture we are hoping to create a common territory for many young refugees, a world in which they will discover the importance of listening to each other, communicating, working together, expressing themselves, singing their pains and hopes and having their voice heard by the world. A world in which they can live in harmony with themselves and with others.

Musicians from the Youth Orchestra percussion section and young migrants, led by MPO principal percussionist Daniel Cauchi, came together for a powerful musical experience. Three weeks of workshops where improvisation, collective lyric-writing and musical composition were the building blocks culminating in a public performance that attracted an extremely diverse audience made by children, students, adults, professional musicians, migrants, diplomats, representatives from international organizations (including Ms Chiara Milani, Junior Chamber International World President 2013, and Jon Hoisaete, Head of UNHCR Office in Malta).

On 31st January 2014 at Teatrino Manoel in Valletta (Malta), Malta Philharmonic Orchestra in collaboration with EMMA for Peace presented a solidarity concert of Italian Opera, featuring acclaimed Maltese soprano Miriam Cauchi under the direction of Greek conductor Michalis Economou. A pre-concert talk about the dramatic situation of refugees in the Mediterranean and EMMA for Peace educational activities in Malta took place before the performance.

It was exciting and moving seeing how Maltese population has demonstrated its attention and support participating at both concerts with enthusiasm and warmth, completely feeling the two rooms.

A significant demonstration of attention towards the project came from all the major Maltese media and institutions, included the President of the Republic of Malta, His Excellency Dr George Abela, how received a delegation of EMMA for Peace, along with Chairman of the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra, Mr. Sigmund Mifsud, and Greek conductor Michalis Economou, to express his personally appreciation and support for the initiative.

Another small but equally strong signal of dialogue, unity and reconciliation has been sent from the heart of the Mediterranean by EMMA for Peace.

Paolo PETROCELLI is an international relations and cultural affairs expert, senior arts administrator, lecturer, musicologist, violinist, UNESCO Expert in Music, TEDx Speaker. As a music diplomacy ambassador, he serves in institutional roles to forge bonds through music in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia and the US. Paolo founded EMMA for Peace (Euro-Mediterranean Music Academy for Peace) to drive positive change in the Mediterranean region. EMMA brings together major institutions and world renowned artists under the shared passion for music and the promotion of peace. His most high-profile appointment thus far is as one of the youngest members ever elected to the Board.
of Directors of Fondazione Teatro dell’Opera di Roma (Rome Opera House). Top-level roles in
the private sector have rounded out his cultural
relations and senior arts administrator
expertise, allowing collaboration with global
leaders in performing arts management. He is
Assistant to the Superintendent of the Rome
Opera House for International Development
and External Relations, Director of
International Relations of Kyoto Opera Festival
and Sawakami Opera Foundation in Japan. In
order to serve as an active citizen and support
non-profit activity, he has become a leading
member of some of the most prestigious
international and cultural organizations.

Cultural Innovators Network
Olga Pavlenko, Cultural Innovators Network

Cultural Innovators Network could be defined
as visions and actions of tomorrow’s societies.
It is composed of artists, cultural managers,
civil society professionals and activists who
are seismographs of the situation in societies.
It is cross-cultural and cross-sectoral platform
for innovation.

CIN network started in 2012 with learning
journeys in Egypt, Italy and Germany. 3
Forums were organized till now: 1st CIN
Forum in Istanbul, Turkey in December 2012;
2nd CIN Forum in Hammamet, Tunisia in
November 2013; 3rd CIN Forum in
Thessaloniki, Greece in June 2014. In 2014
also the CInnovation journeys between the
members of the network took place. In 2015
CIN days were organized in Algiers, Bagdad,
Beirut, Berlin and Tessaloniki.

All this activities are essential to create a kind
of big family around the region and to develop
he common goals and strategies. A special
attention is paid to keep the communication
through network really active and practically
useful.

But a part from those the huge number of
capillary actions are done through the
numerous CIN projects developed in common
during the CIN Forums and implemented by
the CIN members locally. To have more

information on the diverse CIN projects that
could be divided by areas of work on:
- peaceful acceptance of cultural diversity
- civic participation
- stimulate entrepreneurship spirit
- art and culture as communication tool
- providing an understanding of political and
social dynamics on the ground
- network of experts
- human rights and co-existence
- cultural heritage in the Euro-MENA Region
- fostering interaction among the region
- capacity building for young professionals
- making information public
- interaction and interdisciplinary
- inclusion of locals

For CIN is very important to give the same
importance to all the cultures and realities
participating in the network activities, avoiding
any kind of cultural dominance or cultural
colonialism. We research on local strategies
good to be applied in a specific area, acting
mainly through local activists. At the same time
one of the aims of the CIN is to enhance it’s
members professional capacity and to share
the good practices experience.

CIN members are coming from 31 countries
around the Mediterranean region, central
Europe and Meddle Est counting 109
members, 60 female and 49 male.
CIN got an important support from the Goethe
institute on the various steps of it’s
development, and since 2015 CIN became an
independent legal entity.

Olga PAVLENKO
moved from her
original country
Ukraine to Italy in
2004. Leaving her
home made her
conscious of her own
identity. “I started to
ask, what makes
people feel that they belong to different
cultures.” As a visual artist this question found
its way into her work. In her art practice she
unites the experience of her degree in law
obtained in Ukraine and art degree, obtained
in Fine Arts Academy in Florence. Olga
Pavlenko always demonstrated an interest in the intercultural dialogue and consider essential the experience of the Roots&Routes network. Subsequently she travelled nearly all central and eastern Europe, mainly the cities with high numbers of second and third generation immigrants, meeting other artists. “It is great to see how fresh European culture can be.”

Further on she took part at the Cultural Innovators Forum in Istanbul in 2012 and since that she is a part of the CIN network. She is a coordinator of the 1000and1realities CIN project visual art project for children in Turkey, Iraq and Cyprus. In 2013 she continue to reflect on the intercultural relationship through Euromediterranean Youth Meeting, Barcelona. In her art research and didactic practice she always pay a particular attention to the collective and multiple authorship, collaboration and collective conscience. In 2014 she took part in Steps Ahead Academy Professionalization of Junior Coaches in Performing Arts and Media and UCARE Urban Culture Against Racism in Europe. Since that she implemented a cultural didactic project Feel the Music in local schools and cultural centers.