



2017 GABR FELLOWS AT THE ATLANTIC COUNCIL IN WASHINGTON, DC , OCTOBER 26, 2017

As the world's 1.8 billion Muslims celebrate the holy month of Ramadan, it is a time of reflection, celebration, and renewal. It is a time for families to come together over dinner to break the daily fast, for friends to create their own traditions in honor of the holiday, and for people to think about the values they want to prioritize in their own lives: a commitment to charitable endeavors, a pride in community, and an embrace of strangers waiting to become friends. During this time I hear heartwarming stories of people coming together across religious lines. In Luxor, a Christian Egyptian family organizes daily feasts for hundreds celebrating Ramadan.

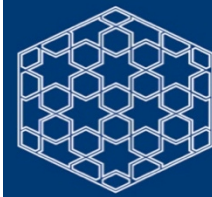
This is just one of countless examples of people in Egypt casting aside their differences and instead coming together to honor one another's humanity.

This holiday gets at the heart of the Gabr Fellowship. Through this intensive exchange program, Fellows from Egypt and the United States come together. They explore each other's cultures, traditions, business trends, and political realities. It is not simply a time for learning, but an opportunity for engagement, dialogue, and open and honest conversation. By sharing this once in a lifetime experience, true and lasting friendships are formed.

Through these last two weeks of Ramadan, I invite the Fellows and their networks to use this time to look at how they engage with their communities and beyond. Being open to new experiences, having face-to-face conversations, and breaking bread together are some of the key ways in which the next generation of game-changers can better understand their counterparts around the globe and take part in building a more peaceful and equitable world.

I hope you enjoy this latest newsletter and continue to follow the Fellows' journeys as they create a positive impact wherever they go.

M. Shafik Gabr



The
SHAFIK GABR
Foundation

The Gabr Fellowship Newsletter

June 2018, Issue 11

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News and Updates...

Dalia Ihab Younis Finalizes her Action Project



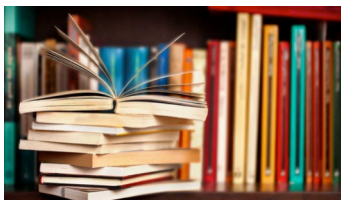
Dalia Ihab Younis (2017 Gabr Fellow) is the musician of the 2017 cohort. In addition to working as a communications specialist, Dalia has a passion for music and has focused her efforts on creating musical connections between the East and West by fusing traditional English and Arabic songs together. She is finalizing the recordings with the help of a volunteer musician in Egypt. She will publish the recordings on her Facebook page, on the Foundation's social media accounts, and more. Dalia will also be returning to the United States in June to take part in Drew University's annual interfaith dialogue Fellowship. During this time, Dalia will also lead a crowd-funding campaign to promote her musical initiative.

Yasser El Zahhar Scales His Company



Yasser El Zahhar (2016 Gabr Fellow) secured the first round of funds for his healthy catering company Gedety. Gedety is a healthy catering solution start-up that provides healthy food options for employees at their work places to inspire healthy habits. Gedety got funded by 138 Pyramids, and it has moved its kitchen to a new factory in the 5th settlement's industrial zone. Gedety will be hitting supermarket shelves soon, be able to increase its business capacity, and begin exporting products in the next three years. Congratulations Yasser!

Gabr Foundation Reading Corner



In the latest edition of the Gabr Foundation reading corner, Mr. Gabr recommends *Arab Fall: How the Muslim Brotherhood Won and Lost Egypt in 891 Days* by Eric Trager and *The Square and the Tower: Networks and Power from the Freemasons to Facebook* by Niall Ferguson. Happy reading and do write back with your feedback on the books!

Ahmed Radwan Gets Lead Role



Ahmed Radwan (2015 Gabr Fellow) will be playing one of the leading roles in the radio series *Shazt Khalto (My Aunt's Apartment)*, which will be broadcast on the leading Radio Channel in Egypt 'Nogoum FM' everyday before the Iftar feast at 4:50 PM. Ahmed started his acting career in 2007 and over the years has enriched his skills in improvisation, story narration, dance, and voice-over work. In addition to his work in short movies, radio, and theater, he also teaches the next generation of actors about their craft.

US Fellows Reunite in Washington, DC



Gabr Fellows from the United States met with Chairman and Founder **Mr. M. Shafik Gabr**. They discussed personal and professional updates, upcoming travel plans, and the impact the Fellowship has had on them in recent years. The group also discussed Ramadan traditions and the role that music plays in building bridges between Egypt and the United States. These meetings are a great way for Fellows to stay engaged and maintain a strong community as they move forward in their careers.

Erika Witt Accepted to PhD Program



Erika Witt (2014 Gabr Fellow) was accepted into the Doctor of Design in Cultural Preservation Program at Louisiana State University, where she will focus on Museum Studies. Erika is an independent curatorial specialist focusing on the arts of Africa and the African diaspora. She has also worked as an adjunct professor at the Southern University at New Orleans, teaching courses on Curatorship and Principles in Museology. Congratulations Erika!

Gabr Fellows Discuss the Fellowship on Capitol Hill



The Foundation hosted a breakfast for Congressional staffers on May 2, 2018 on Capitol Hill. Former Fellows currently working on Capitol Hill met with their peers and discussed how the Gabr Fellowship impacted them personally and professionally and what the experience meant to them. **Mr. M. Shafik Gabr** and the Board of Advisors also highlighted the importance of intercultural exchange and the US-Egypt relationship for emerging policymakers and future leaders. Thank you to everyone who joined the meeting!

2018 Fellowship Application Closed



The application for the 2018 Fellowship closed on May 31st and we are impressed with the quality of candidates from the United States, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, and France. These individuals represent a diverse array of sectors, industries, and backgrounds. The Foundation looks forward to reviewing these stellar applications and interviewing the most qualified candidates in the coming weeks, examining action project proposals, and learning more about the next Fellowship cohort. Stay tuned for updates!

Zeyad ElKelani Awarded for Academic Excellence



Zeyad ElKelani (2014 Gabr Fellow) has been acknowledged by the Division of Politics & Economics at Claremont Graduate University as an "Outstanding Scholars Fellow" for his academic excellence in International Studies for the 2017-2018 academic year. He previously served as a Political Science teaching assistant at Cairo University and was the vice president of the Political Science Graduate Student Association.

Ahmed Aransho Earns a Master's Degree



Ahmed Aransho (2015 Gabr Fellow) has earned a Master's degree with distinction in European-Mediterranean Studies from the Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University. In the program he took courses focusing on the region's political, economic, and international affairs. Recently he has focused on the role of ethics in the EU's foreign aid policy in the South-Mediterranean region according to a four-pillar model that constitutes ethical foreign policy. Ahmed is now working as a Diplomatic Attaché at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Fellowship Site Visits: A Look Into the Old Senate Chamber



As part of the Gabr Fellowship, Fellows visit historical sites in Egypt and the United States. One of these sites is the Old Senate Chamber, which was built in 1810 and served as the seat of Senate Business until 1859. The Chamber was witness to some of the greatest national debates in 19th century America, ranging from issues including slavery, territorial expansion, and economic policy affecting the new nation. Presently, the chamber is used for occasional closed-door sessions dealing with highly classified issues of national security.

Bryan Griffin Purchases a Home



Bryan Griffin (2017 Gabr Fellow) currently works as the National Field Director for the Maccabee Task Force Foundation. He was born and raised in Tampa, Florida and moved to Las Vegas for work. He recently moved back to Florida and purchased his first home in Tampa. He continues to travel the country working with college campuses in all regions as part of the Foundation's ongoing initiatives. Congratulations Bryan!

John Ryan Attends Foundation Dinner



John Ryan (2016 Gabr Fellow) attended a Foundation dinner in Washington, DC recently. As part of the Foundation's ongoing efforts to engage stakeholders in support of US-Egypt relations, it organizes dinners to promote conversation and networking. At the dinner John spoke about his experiences as a Fellow, how it has impacted his career, and his ongoing efforts to learn how he can be an intercultural ambassador for dialogue.

Fellowship Site Visits: A Look Inside the Egyptian Parliament



Parliamentary life began in Egypt in 1866 and has witnessed seven parliamentary systems and 32 different Parliaments. Currently, the parliament is made of 596 seats. The Parliamentary palace "Maglis El Shura" houses the bicameral parliament built in the British style. It was renovated after a fire in 2008 and serves as the seat of an ever-changing Egypt that is committed to reform, growth, and progress for the Egyptian people.

Jack Gordon Works with Teen Journalists in the Democratic Republic of Congo



Jack Gordon (2017 Gabr Fellow) is a DC-based filmmaker and co-founder of Digital Development Corporation, a production company that specializes in creating dynamic visual content for international development organizations. He has produced film and photo content for institutions like the World Bank and the US Agency for International Development (USAID). Jack recently traveled to the Democratic Republic of Congo where he worked with teen journalists who are working to raise awareness about child labor in the country's mining industry.

Nathan Thomas Earns a Promotion and Receives his Master's Degree



Nathan Thomas (2014 Gabr Fellow) received his Master's degree from Johns Hopkins University's Krieger School of Arts and Sciences in Museum Studies. He has also been recently promoted to Education Programs Manager at the Clinton Foundation. In this role he will help lead and manage educational programming initiatives and spearhead partnerships with local and national educational institutions. Nathan has volunteered his time with the steering committee of Create Little Rock, TedXLittleRock, and the Arkansas Association for Black Professionals. Nathan received his undergraduate degree in Anthropology and Sociology from Hendrix College. Congratulations Nathan!

Question of the Month: Do You Think the United States Moving the Embassy to Jerusalem Helps or Deters Peace Between Israelis and Palestinians?



On May 14, 2018, the Trump Administration held a ceremony to mark the opening of the US Embassy in Jerusalem, after being moved from its previous location in Tel Aviv. The event was attended by high-level officials from Israel, the United States, and other international dignitaries. The Palestinian Authority has strongly denounced the move and public opinion polls show that it is unpopular in Palestinian communities and has been marked by ongoing protests.

As Gabr Fellows continue to hone their leadership skills, they will be confronted with addressing foreign policy decisions that affect regional and global peace and security. The Foundation recently polled Fellows from Egypt and the United States regarding their thoughts on the US Embassy move. We asked them: *Do you think the move helps or deters peace between Israelis and Palestinians?* Below you will find some responses – many of which vary, highlighting the complex nature of this particular issue:

Egyptian Fellows Responses:

"Deters. It was unjust and biased."

"This will affect the peace process and have repercussions around the Middle East. A two-state solution is down the drain and was an ineffective decision."

"This decision will not change anything on the ground, because it will not grant Israeli's the peace they want."

"I believe the relocation would undermine the peace process between Palestinians and Israelis."

"The move will further weaken any attempts for peace."

"This decision will exclude the USA as a neutral party in the negotiations and will dwarf its role in establishing peace in the region. Such a move, days before the Displace Day was a call for unnecessary angry movements."

American Fellow Responses:

"I believe the move deters peace. The move was clumsily done and further erodes the US or Israel as honest brokers legitimately considering the concerns of the Palestinians. "

"The fact that there is some degree of movement on this at least shows progress, even if that progress proves to be in the wrong direction. Too long has this issue been able to passively develop, so I support almost any action taken so that Israelis and Palestinians can find a peaceful and prosperous future."

"This deters. The US and Israel need to recognize that they can achieve their outcomes through a human understanding of the Palestinians. This type of pointless provocation is the exact opposite of the type of action they should be taking."

"The results of a game will never be accepted when one side feels like the referee favors the other time. In no way does this move promote peace."

"Deters. It takes it off the board as a bargaining chip for future peace negotiations."

"Moving the Embassy to Jerusalem will bring peace. The time to reach a serious and lasting agreement is now."

In Focus...

Egyptian Artists Outside Cairo Struggle for Spotlight Menna A. Farouk, 2017 Gabr Fellow

View full article on Al Monitor at <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/05/egyptian-artists-want-to-break-monopoly-of-cairo.html>

Disclaimer: The views presented in this article are the author's alone and do not necessarily represent the opinion of the Foundation.

Cairo is Egypt's cultural capital, as the majority of art galleries, headquarters of media outlets and other cultural establishments are located in the metropolis. Frustrated with the lack of opportunities for artists in other cities around the country, Alexandria-based artist Maha Mohamed and her colleagues launched the #Art_Has_No_Place campaign in July 2017.

Mohamed, 22, told Al-Monitor that the campaign is starting to show solid progress, with cultural events organized in various cities and hundreds of artists joining in. The initiative aims to promote the work of artists from all over Egypt, most of whom are musicians, actors, singers, painters, and photographers.

"#Art_Has_No_Place mainly aims to shed light on the monopoly of Cairo in cultural affairs. I have wanted to join the field of TV advertisements and cinema, but I couldn't because I live in Alexandria. I found that other artists around me face the same problem, so I decided to launch a platform where the public can see the art of people outside the capital," Mohamed said.

The initiative started with Mohamed and her colleagues posting their art on social media with the hashtag #Art_Has_No_Place, in an attempt to encourage other artists from all over the country to do the same. The campaign includes a promotional video that features a drummer who plays music in an abandoned place without an audience. The choice of the drummer in the video is deliberate.

"The drummer is the most important band member and the one responsible for setting the tempo. However, he sits at the back of the stage and people neither see nor

remember him much. That's exactly what's happening to Egyptian artists who do not live in the capital," Mohamed said.

The video's voice-over, by Yousef Al-Tohamy, seeks to encourage artists who feel they get little visibility: "You are not alone. There are a lot of people like you... Successful but trapped in a closed circle. Hardworking but in a deadlock... No one values their hard work... You will work hard and try but your eyes won't see anything but emptiness... A theater without an audience... But you should know that you are not just another person in the background, you control the entire song. You are there but they just don't see you."

Ahmed Moustafa, the drummer who appeared in the video, said drummers outside Cairo are struggling with low-quality recording studios and producers who are not willing to provide funding for any underground bands that exist in cities outside the capital.

"We lack the funding and facilities in Alexandria. We have very few recording studios. We also lack theaters where we can perform concerts," he told Al-Monitor. "However, the #Art_Has_No_Place campaign empowers artists from 26 out of 29 governorates and provides a platform for them to display their works."

The campaign has not just been limited to posting art pieces and videos online under the hashtag #Art_Has_No_Place, but it has extended to the organization of an art exhibition and cultural events in collaboration with cultural institutions, including the Goethe Institute, the co-working space Shebak Mazloum and the cultural coffee shop Beram we Sayed in Alexandria.

"A play by an Alexandria-born director was staged at the Goethe Institute after I contacted them and briefed them on the initiative," Mohamed said.

Anas Elnily, a 23-year-old director from Alexandria, said he experienced difficult

times trying to find a theater for his play "Ka'ana" (As If It Is) due to high rental prices in his hometown as well as the limited number of venues.

"Life is hard for independent artists in Egypt in general and it is even harder for people who live outside the capital," Elnily told Al-Monitor.

Eman Mahmoud, a photographer from Minya, in Upper Egypt, agrees with Elnily. "It is hard to find exhibition spaces in Minya and opportunities for artists are limited. That's why you have to move to the capital to search for opportunities and funding," she told Al-Monitor. Mahmoud, who has not joined the campaign but said she will, said she must travel to the capital to seek opportunities to move ahead with her career.

"When there are no facilities in your hometown, you have to move where all the facilities are and where all the attention and [majority of the art sector] is located," she added.

Art critic Tarek ek-Shenawy said that the #Art_Has_No_Place initiative is very important, and that it should be expanded and embraced by governmental institutions. "We have long wanted campaigns like this one because it addresses a very crucial and real obstacle facing artists from outside Cairo," he told Al-Monitor.

Shenawy said the government should support the initiative and provide them facilities for outside the capital. He urged media outlets to highlight works by Egyptian artists, and encouraged artists not to give up but instead find a way to show their art to the public.

To read more, visit <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/05/egyptian-artists-want-to-break-monopoly-of-cairo.html> and stay tuned for more articles and thoughts from Gabr Fellows in the next newsletter.

The Gabr Fellowship Newsletter

For more information on the Shafik Gabr Foundation and its *East-West: The Art of Dialogue* Initiative, please visit the website <https://eastwestdialogue.org/>.

For earlier itineraries of the US program, please see the previous years' reports at <https://eastwestdialogue.org/fellowship/brochures/>



The Pyramids at Gizeh, Morning- Ernst Koerner

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