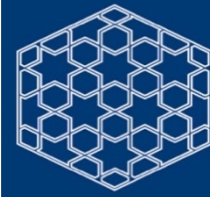




Top row: Yasser El Zahar (2016), Stephanie Cate (2014), Erika Witt (2014), Julie Yang (2018), John Ryan (2016); Second row: RJ Johnson (2018), Kate Chiucchini (2016), Hanan Khayal (2018), Wes Rogerson (2018), Hunter King (2017); Third row: Dina Gamal (2014), Nathan Thomas (2014), Sarah Walker (2018), Hala Gawad (2016), Zeyad El Kelani (2014)

GABR FELLOWS FROM 2012-2019



The SHAFIK GABR Foundation

The Gabr Fellowship Newsletter

March 2020, Issue 32

IN THIS ISSUE

Coronavirus: cause to panic or hype?

As the Coronavirus (Covid-19 epidemic) enters what many experts are citing as pandemic levels, it has the potential to become the leading story heading into the heated 2020 Presidential Election.

There are so far 89,000 confirmed cases of the virus worldwide with over 3,000 fatalities to date with top cases in China, South Korea, Italy, Iran, Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Germany, France, the United States, and Spain consecutively. Nearly every nation on earth has been touched by this infection and it is likely every country will see at least several cases of it.

Experts suggest that if this virus does reach pandemic levels approximately 40% to 70% of the world could become infected and 2% of that population could end up dying. However, the media noise surrounding this frightening health issue also raises questions as to whether all the hype around it is just that...hype.

Reports of the Coronavirus's spread and projected rise has global markets going haywire; stock markets tumbling and commodities markets in a state of flux.

Whether or not the media's decision to cover this virus the way it has is an attempt to sway voters in a certain direction remains to be seen. Coverage of the outbreak is comparable to the impeachment trial and the special counsel's report. In the meantime, enough emphasis cannot be placed on the importance of washing one's hands frequently, avoiding crowded places for some time, and drinking warm water. I know first-hand how important it is to maintain one's health, avoid hype, and believe in a better tomorrow.

M. Shafik Gabr

In Brief...

- **Alexis Taylor** career change
- Articles by **Dalia Younis** and **Menna A. Farouk**
- Birthdays: February **Fellows**
- **Chairman Gabr** meets with Fellows in Cairo
- UNICEF Egypt publishes **Dalia Younis**
- **Judson Moore** gets speaking engagement
- Meet the Fellows: **Ralph Johnson** and **Neveen Mohamed**
- **Michelle Matus** moves to Europe
- **Question of the Month:** A Pulse of the Gabr Fellowship Community

News and Updates...

Michelle Matus Moves to Vienna



2015 Gabr Fellow Michelle Matus moved to Vienna, Austria where she lives and works at Maister, a technology company developing productivity tools. She is a Product Marketing Manager. Michelle also co-hosts a podcast she created called "She Gets Out" which features international women participating in sports and recreation.

Judson Moore is featured speaker



2015 Gabr Fellow Judson Moore was a guest speaker at the Rotary eClub of Silicon Valley last month. The meeting takes place online. You can hear his presentation here: <https://www.siliconvalleyrotary.com/meeting-02-17-2020/>. Judson also saw the successful launch of his book "[Exponential Happiness](#)" several weeks ago. His book teaches readers how to identify and pursue life goals starting at a young age.

Dalia Younis Gets Published



2017 Gabr Fellow Dalia Younis had a story she wrote published on UNICEF Egypt's website in celebration of the International Day of Zero Tolerance against FGM (Female Genital Mutilation). In addition to building bridges between cultures by singing religious hymns from various denominations in Arabic, Dalia has served as a Communications Officer at UNICEF for nearly three years.

Alexis Taylor Starts New Career



2016 Gabr Fellow Alexis Taylor resigned from her position as CEO of 3 Day Startup after seven years of service to the company she helped found. Alexis says she made this decision to pursue a new chapter in her career and is currently in transition. Alexis has served as a Global Shaper for the World Economic Forum since May 2016.

Meet the Gabr Fellows

Ralph Johnson, 2018 Gabr Fellow, U.S.

Name: Ralph “RJ” Johnson

Profession: Philanthropist and Chief Compliance Officer

Professionally, I serve as a Chief Compliance Officer for a behavioral management organization and a Clinically Certified Forensic Counselor and Clinically Certified Juvenile Treatment Specialist through the National Association of Forensic Counselors-American Academy of Clinical Forensic Counselors.

Personally, I have served as the National Vice Chair, United Nations Association of the United States of America National Council (UNA-USA) since 2014. I provide programmatic and operational leadership to over 200 chapters and 20,000+ members around the country. Representing the South-Central Region, I serve as the chair of the UNA-USA National Council’s WFUNA Relations Committee and as a member of the Executive, Policy & Procedures, and Partnerships & Collaborations Committee.

The Gabr Fellowship has helped me realize the need for open dialogue within communities and to reach mutual understandings towards how to achieve common goals. He says it has taught him to be more diplomatic, empathetic, and intentional in addressing issues and developing solutions to challenges raised during crucial conversations that are aimed at positive mutual outcomes for all involved.



Neveen Mohamed, 2017 Gabr Fellow, Egypt

Name: Neveen Mohamed

Profession: PhD Researcher at Vlerick Business School

I live in Ghent, Belgium where I work as a PhD Researcher at Vlerick Business School at Ghent University. My hobbies include reading, walking, and drinking coffee.

The Gabr Fellowship was eye-opening, inspiring and life-changing for me. After spending 18 days in Egypt and the USA and meeting with decision makers of both countries, I learnt a lot about the decision-making process complexities and their underlying perspectives. I also realized the cultural differences and the numerous similarities. Going on cultural tours in both countries made me realize that we have such inspiring histories and share many values. I thought I knew a lot about the American culture, but my interactions with my friends proved that there are many cultural aspects that are hard to capture in a movie or read about in a book. Though few daily habits and routines might differ, we share much more in common! The Gabr Fellowship, most importantly, helped me create priceless and a lifetime of friendships with some of the brightest American and Egyptian young leaders that I will cherish forever! 2017 Gabr Fellows, I LOVE YOU!

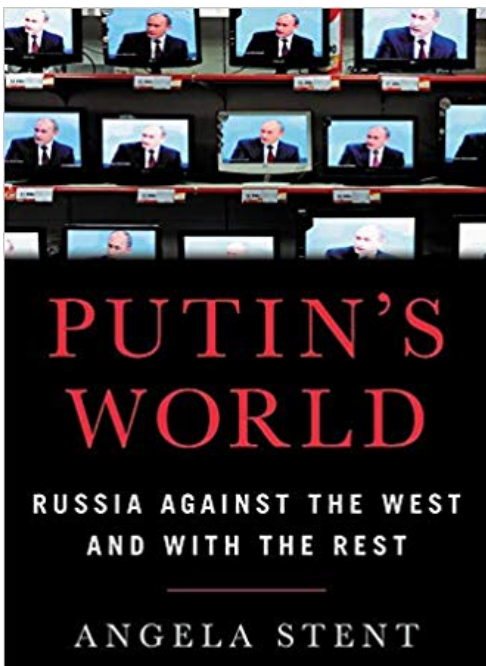


Chairman Gabr Hosts Fellows Monthly Meeting



Chairman **M. Shafik Gabr** hosted Fellows from several cohorts at the ARTOC Headquarters in Cairo and welcomed the Foundation’s new Executive Director for Egypt, Ms. Noha El Labban. Among key issues discussed was the upcoming 2020 Gabr Fellowship for which applications are being accepted through March 31, and key facts about the Renaissance Ethiopian dam and current negotiations between the parties involved. Fellows who attended included Moataz Hussein (2013), Nourhan Moussa (2014), Hadir Helal (2015), Ahmed Aransho (2015), Yasser Elzahhar (2016), Ahmed Abou EL Naga (2016), Sarah Badr (2017), Amr Seda(2017), Marwa Abdalla (2018), Soaad A. Hossam (2018), Ahmed Mostafa (2018), Shady Saleh (2018), and Karim El Sharkawy (2018)

Gabr Foundation Reading Corner



The **Foundation Reading Corner** encourages Fellows to critique the books that have been recommended to them in each issue. For this issue, Mr. Gabr recommends “Putin’s World: Russia Against the West and With the Rest” by Angela Stent, a Professor of Government and Foreign Service at Georgetown University and director of its Center for Eurasian, Russian, and East European Studies. In her compelling psychoanalytical work, Ms. Stent paints of unique picture of Vladimir Putin. While she is hardly an apologist for Putin, she is able to give credit where due and commends the Russian oligarch leader’s success in reasserting Russia’s position as a global player, gaining respect from non-Western actors the world over, and overcoming the West’s attempts to isolate his nation. Ms. Stent suggests that even history cannot determine what Putin will do next and cautions the West to expect the unexpected when it comes to him.

A Father Against the Current:

The story of a courageous father who protected his daughter from FGM thanks to love and solid religious awareness



By: Dalia Younis

Shaimaa Abd El-Hamid, 31 years old, was born and studied in Assiut. She works for Assiut Childhood and Development Association in Assiut (ACDA) as a protection specialist in the National Child Helpline 16000, administrated by the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM).

Shaimaa, who will be defending her PhD thesis in months, says: "I am the only girl in my father and mother's extended family who went to college. My father believed in me despite family criticism."

Besides his insistence on educating his daughter, Shaimaa's father had another decisive stand.

Timely intervention

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) usually occurs in groups in Upper Egypt. Mothers from the same family or neighborhood agree to cut their daughters on the same day. Shaimaa's mother was no exception, but fortunately her father learned about her intentions at the right time.

Shaimaa says: "I was too young to understand why my parents were disagreeing. Few years later, there was a big fuss on the media about

Bodoor, the girl who died during being cut. Ever since, all the buried stories about FMG came to the top."

Shaimaa began to realize that FGM is common, and that what her father did was the exception: "I knew university professors and well-educated open-minded people who believed FGM was normal and beneficial for girls. I couldn't understand why my father, the simple illiterate man, refused that I get cut?"

The old secret

Shaimaa asked her father why was against FGM, he told her that when he was 15 years old in the early 1960s, there was a sheikh in his hometown of Manfalout that repeatedly discussed FGM in Friday sermons. The sheikh stressed that FGM is not part of Islam and urged people to stop it.

Shaimaa comments: "The role of the religious discourse is the most powerful. It could be more influential than seminars or awareness sessions. The sheikh's words convinced a lot of men and shaped the awareness of children like my father back then. Nevertheless, wives still cut their girls behind their husband's backs."

The risk continues

Despite the decline in the practice's prevalence in the age group 15-17 years old by more than 13 percent from 2008 to 2014 (Demographic Health Survey 2014); some challenges remain. Egypt is the highest country in FGM Medicalization as 8 out of 10 girls who are cut were cut by medical personnel.

FGM doesn't only threaten young girls, it sometimes extends beyond marriage. Shaimaa shared an unfortunate story she heard during the awareness sessions about a girl whose husband discovered that she was not cut on the wedding day and forcibly took her to the doctor to perform the "operation". Shaimaa wished she knew about this story while she holds her current appointment as a protection specialist

for **Child Helpline 16000** so she could have taken action against this man. “Such stories give me goosebumps,” Shaimaa says, “I keep wondering how a girl who went through all this would survive?!”



National and global efforts

UNICEF, in collaboration with the government of Egypt, the National Committee for the Eradication of FGM and civil society, is undertaking and facilitating numerous interventions and initiatives to sensitize and address misconceptions about FGM. The organization promotes a multi-sectoral approach for prevention, protection and response to FGM, including strengthening the national child protection systems like the **National Child Help Line 16000**. The organization also cooperates with Al-Azhar Al Sharif, the Coptic Orthodox Church (Egypt’s leading religious entities) and Ministry of Endowments to sensitize religious leaders to spread awareness about FGM and delink this harmful practice from religion in communities.

Since 2008, UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) have been implementing the “Joint Programme on Eliminating Female Genital Mutilation: Accelerating Change to end FGM”. Currently being implemented in 17 countries. The programme links community-level transformation of social/gender norms, that often drive FGM, with laws banning the practice.

It also supports access to quality child protection services and sexual and reproductive health for girls and women at risk of and affected by FGM. The current donors of this programme include Austria, EU, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

In addition, UNICEF has ongoing partnerships with [USAID](#), through the project “**Creating an Enabling Environment for Adolescent Girls in Egypt**” (2018-2021) that address issues related to FGM and the protection and empowerment of girls at risk.

In 2013, the publication “[FGM between the incorrect use of science and the misunderstood doctrine](#)” was published by Al Azhar with UNICEF. Following that, in 2016, Al Azhar and the Church published the first joint publication “[Peace. Love. Tolerance. Key Messages from Islam and Christianity on Protecting Children from Violence and Harmful Practices](#)”. The publication addressed 11 forms of violence against children including FGM.

On the 14th of June 2019, the National Day for the Elimination of FGM in Egypt, the National Committee for the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation was established headed by the [National Council for Women](#), the [National Council for Childhood and Motherhood](#) in cooperation with the relevant ministries, specialized national councils, Al-Azhar, the Church, and civil society. With the support of UNICEF and UNFPA, this committee launched the first FGM national campaign under the slogan #ProtectHerFromFGM.

Disclaimer: *The views presented in this article are the authors’ alone and do not represent the opinion of the Foundation. This article was originally published in [UNICEF Egypt](#).*

Dalia Younis is 2017 Gabr Fellow and a Communications Officer at UNICEF.

Stay tuned for more articles and thoughts from Gabr Fellows in the next newsletter

With a knock on the door, Egypt aims to turn families greener



By: Menna A. Farouk

GIZA, Egypt (Thomson Reuters Foundation) - Suzan Mohamed recently opened her door to a surprise: a group of women volunteers intent on giving her tips on everything from proper trash disposal to how to cut water and energy consumption, plus a brief introduction to climate change.

“How do you get rid of your waste?” asked Saeeda Mahmoud, a government representative and rural leader trained by the Ministry of Environment.

The resident of Meet Shammis, a neighbourhood in the city of Giza, said she usually puts trash in the landfill near her home, or hands it to a garbage collector, without separating or sorting the items.

“I do what all people here have been doing for years,” the 38-year-old said.

“Now there is a better way to get rid of the waste,” Mahmoud replied, explaining about the need to sort recyclable waste into paper, plastic and cans, which could then be sold to dealers, earning the household cash while helping the environment.

Egypt has been stepping up efforts to preserve its environment and address climate change, through measures as diverse as introducing electric buses, boosting renewable energy and trying to ban plastic bags.

But it is also intensifying environmental awareness campaigns, and women, who make many household decisions, are a particular target.

The door-to-door visit to Mohamed’s house in Giza is part of a one-year effort, launched this month by the Egyptian Ministry of Environment and the state-run National Council for Women, to raise awareness about environmental issues in Egyptian families.

With a million Egyptian pounds (\$63,000) in funding, the programme aims to reach a million women in three cities - greater Cairo, Giza and Fayoum - and could be expanded to other cities in coming years, officials say.

Carried out by 400 women leaders chosen from the three project areas, it relies on women who are visited at home sharing what they’ve learned with others in their communities, and with younger generations.

The effort is part of a broader “Go Green” push to combat desertification and climate change by raising awareness about environmental issues and encouraging citizens to adopt greener practices.

“We believe that women are the gateways to change any behavior inside the families. That is why we go to them and talk about the environment, believing that this information will get through the whole family,” Minister of Environment Yasmine Fouad told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

What women do at home, and what they know, has “direct effect on the environment and climate change,” she said.

Disclaimer: *The views presented in this article are the authors’ alone and do not represent the opinion of the Foundation. This article was originally published in the [Thomson Reuters Foundation](#).*

Menna A. Farouk is 2017 Gabr Fellow and a journalist for four years and is currently Front-page Editor of The Egyptian Gazette. **Stay tuned for more articles and thoughts from Gabr Fellows in the next newsletter.**

Question of the Month: A Pulse of the Gabr Fellowship Community



As the Gabr Fellows enter into leadership roles — in business, diplomacy, government, finance, and more— they will continue to grapple with significant challenges, magnified by an increased pace in technological advancement, the potential for ramped up global inequalities, and changes in governance and economic structures.

To better understand the pulse of the Gabr Fellowship community and to begin to articulate substantive dialogue, the Foundation polls the Fellows each month on the key issues facing their respective countries and the global community at large.

1. Is a two-state solution for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict a possibility?

Yes: 69%

No: 21%

I don't know: 10%

2. Who will win the Democrat Party's presidential nomination?

Bernie Sanders: 67%

Joe Biden: 22%

Michael Bloomberg: 11%

3. Will Egypt's long-sought free-trade agreement with the U.S. come to fruition before the end of this year?

Yes: 21%

No: 41%

I don't know: 48%

Stay tuned for next month's question of the month and the Gabr Fellows' takes on current events, as our community of future leaders grapple with the most pressing challenges of today and tomorrow.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY



March 3: **Erika Witt**, 2014 Gabr Fellow, U.S.



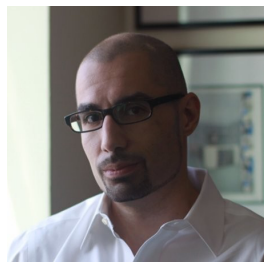
March 17: **Mohga Ahmed**, 2013 Gabr Fellow, Egypt



March 23: **Karim El Sharkway**, 2018 Gabr Fellow, Egypt



March 22: **Dan Sullivan**, 2013 Gabr Fellow, U.S.



March 30: **Murray Abeles**, 2015 Gabr Fellow, U.S.

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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/>



Frederick Arthur Bridgman – In the Souk Tunis, 1874, The Shafik Gabr Collection

Connect with us



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