



## **UNAOC Fellowship Alumni Event**

### **Participants Biographies**

**“Preventing radicalization and xenophobia through  
education at grassroots level”**



Federal Foreign Office

The UNAOC Fellowship Program is made possible by grants from the  
Federal Foreign Office of Germany



**Aaron Morrison (U.S.A.)** is an American journalist working as a social justice and diversity writer for the International Business Times in New York City. Before IBT, he worked for several U.S. newspapers and a global news wire service covering local governments, social justice issues and the United Nations. Aaron is a leader of the New York Association of Black Journalists, an organization that advocates for diversity in U.S. newsrooms and fair coverage of African-Americans in the media. He received his bachelor's degree in journalism from San Francisco State University in California.



**Anca Gliga (Romania)** is a Romanian youth advocate, involved in the youth field, with an emphasis on development and peace education, for more than 6 years. She was president of AEGEE Cluj-Napoca (part of AEGEE Europe – European Students' Forum), where she focused on encouraging youth participation, active citizenship and fostering intercultural communication. Later on, Anca has worked with PATRIR – Peace Action, Training and Research Institute of Romania, as a Coordinator of GlocalTour, a national educational campaign on the Millennium Development Goals and Development Education. For 2 years, she was based in London and worked as European Coordinator for Peace Revolution, an international project focusing on youth empowerment through peace education. Anca is involved as Youth Representative with the United Network of Young Peacebuilders and the UN Major Group for Children and Youth and has spoken on their behalf at the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul and at the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development Goals, at the United Nations in New York. Anca has been part of the team working on the UN SCR 2250 resolution on Youth, Peace and Security. She holds an American MPA in Community Development with a thesis in Development Education and BA in Communication.



**Annegret Meinel (Germany)** works as a secondary school teacher for Spanish and French in colorful Mannheim, Germany and is interested in multicultural experiences. In 2011, she was the German team leader of the "youth in action" project "city talks" in Canakkale, Turkey and in 2005 one of 6 German participants in the "Metropolis Youth Congress" that united young people from all over the world in Berlin. During her formation she helped young immigrants to pass the final secondary school examination. Besides German she speaks French, Spanish, English and some Turkish, Italian (and Latin) and is politically and culturally interested. This made her also participate in the project "Europamobil" in 2014 where she led workshops in schools in sensitive regions around Paris together with young people from 11 European countries.



**Bouchra Saab (Lebanon)** has been for the past eight years pursuing a career in teaching Philosophy and foreign languages in public high-schools and has been engaged in several civil society initiatives concerning culture, civil rights and education. Her career path, as well as her civic engagement has led her to work with a varied population in different parts of the country, from the northernmost area of Akar to the underprivileged neighborhoods of the capital, Beirut. In addition to her BA in Philosophy, obtained in 2007, she holds a Certificate of Aptitude in Teaching and an MA in Language Industry from the Lebanese University. While her academic work has been focused on attitudes to Language, multilingualism and diglossia in schools, her non-academic interests have varied widely from citizenship education to personal freedom and social justice. She is currently in the preparation phase of a PhD dissertation, focusing on the evolution of mutual linguistic and cultural attitudes of Kurdish and Aramaic minorities and the Arab majority in official and unofficial textbooks in Lebanon, Syria and Iraq during the 20th century.



**Dhia Otay (Tunisia)** is committed to provide assistance to marginalized citizens and actively involved in the protection of human rights. He is currently working for Dostourna Network, and previously worked with the Tunisian Red Crescent in a field partnership with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. In 1993 he received the Best Tunisian Youth Writer Award, and continues to publish articles and support Tunisian bloggers. He has twelve years of professional experience, as an election observer and as an executive in programs for social and humanitarian assistance. He is the cofounder of the AVMSD (Maghreb Association for Solidarity and Development), and the TAF (Tunisian Federation for Air sports).



**Fatoumata Kebe (France)** was trained in Space Engineering for a year at the University of Tokyo, and is currently finishing her PhD in astronomy at the Observatory of Paris, on space debris which are the vestiges of human activity accumulated in space over time. Passionate about astronomy, Fatoumata has also invested herself in other areas such as agriculture. With a cooperative of women in Mali, she leads "Connected Eco" – a project focusing on the need for a new model of agriculture that could ensure both quality and quantity in food production where it is needed most, while preserving the natural environment. Her project also empowers women through digital training. Sensors powered by solar energy analyze the soil drought level and send the collected data by SMS to farmers so they can irrigate their fields properly and in due time, using a watering system connected to these sensors. Her project was awarded by the Young Innovators Competition, an initiative led by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), a United Nations agency focusing on the potential of Information and Communication Technologies in solving issues. Fatoumata also dedicates her energy to inspire vocations through "Ephemerides", the association she founded in order to provide astronomy courses to high school students from disadvantaged suburbs. Her goal is to help young people embrace their ambitions and accomplish their dreams.



**Ian Plunkett (Ireland)** currently heads up public policy communications for Europe, the Middle East and Africa for Twitter. An alumnus of the London School of Economics, Ian has BA in International Relations and an MSc in Political Science and Communications. His master's dissertation focused on contemporary Saudi society and was awarded a distinction from the LSE. Ian worked on Capitol Hill for Congressman Michael McMahon who sat on the Subcommittee for Foreign Affairs and he is a graduate of the Washington-Ireland Program for Service and Leadership, a post-conflict program that brings Catholics and Protestants together from across the island of Ireland. Ian also worked for Tech City UK, a non-partisan body that advised UK Prime Minister David Cameron on technology policy. Whilst working there he worked on the launch of the Digital Business Academy. Passionate about the intersection of technology, policy and politics, Ian spent time in the West Bank pursuing the idea that new technologies can be a force for positive social change. In his role at Twitter, he works on issues relating to countering violent extremism and the power of digital platforms to foster societal tolerance.



**Ibrahim Fouda (Egypt)** holds an MA in Political Science from the University of Cairo. He is currently serving as the deputy head of mission at the Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt in Kabul, Afghanistan. Concerned with bridging cultures and forging partnership among nations, he has been volunteering as a facilitator of Intercultural Dialogue at the Soliya Connect Program since September 2013 with the aim of finding a common ground between people of different faiths, ethnicities, and cultures. Before joining the Egyptian Foreign Service, Ibrahim worked for two years at the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). He also worked for the International Organization for Migration's MENA Regional Office. His research tasks were to collect primary data for the development of a regional background paper for the World Migration Report 2013, through conducting interviews and in-depth surveys of migrants from different social backgrounds in Cairo. He thus contributed to the findings and recommendations to prevent xenophobia and racism in the community. In addition, he worked as an International Relations Specialist at the Egyptian Humanitarian Relief and Rehabilitation Organization from 2011 to 2012.





**Jeffrey Ansloos (Canada)** is a researcher, educator and policy advisor in the areas of youth engagement, violence prevention, migration, mental health, and Indigenous and human rights. Jeffrey is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Human and Social Development and a Fellow of the Centre for Youth and Society at the University of Victoria. Jeffrey is a graduate of University of Manitoba, Fuller Graduate Schools, and Trinity Western University, holding a BA in Religion, an MA in Refugee Mental Health, an MA in Theology and Ethics, and a PhD in Clinical and Community Psychology. Jeffrey has published in the areas of Iraqi and Palestinian refugee mental health, Indigenous transitional justice processes, and Canadian juvenile justice reform. His current work focuses on: practice and policy innovations in youth violence prevention, Indigenous and refugee youth engagement, and peace-building processes at the intersections of identity-based community conflicts. Jeffrey has served in a variety of capacities including as a youth worker, community organizer, project developer with a number of organizations including UNICEF, UNHCR and UNDP.



**Josh Cass (U.K.)** is the Development and Fundraising Manager at 3FF and one of the founders of FRIA, the Forum for Religion and International Affairs, a collaborative training experience that equips professionals working in international affairs with approaches for effective engagement with religion, faith and belief. He is formerly the Director of Fodip, the Forum for Discussion of Israel and Palestine, a specialist NGO focused on enabling conversations across lines of difference on the on-going Israeli-Palestinian situation. He is an experienced facilitator and has worked for a range of peacebuilding and interfaith organisations, including the Encompass Trust and St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace. He holds an MA in International Studies and Diplomacy from SOAS, University of London.



**Nikolina Talijan Hinic (Bosnia and Herzegovina)**

is currently an MSc student in International Development and Management at Lund University in Sweden. She previously worked as a Project Coordinator /Associate for International Cooperation at Perpetuum Mobile - Institute for Youth and Community Development in Bosnia and Herzegovina. She is dedicated to youth empowerment. Previously, Nikolina has worked closely with Maori communities in New Zealand,

disadvantaged children in the USA, Mayan women and children in Guatemala, and rural youth in India. She has implemented various youth related projects related to education, gender based violence prevention which aim increase understanding of gender discrimination among high school students in BiH. Through her work she has frequently organized youth cultural exchanges, promoting intercultural dialogue and diversity in Italy, Slovenia, Romania, Portugal, Germany, Serbia, Croatia, BiH, etc. She has participated in the UNAOC Fellowship Program in 2015. Prior to that, in 2014, Nikolina was invited to the Summit for the World Alliance of Religions for Peace in Seoul, South Korea.



**Rebaz Mohammed (Iraq)** has 10 years of experience in non-profit and civil society. He earned a M.A and a Ph.D in Law from Sulaimanyah University and teaches in his alma mater since 2008, and studied Democracy and Leadership in Syracuse University. He worked in IHRLI, as project manager, on documenting Iraq's history of violations of human rights. For 3 years, with Norwegian People's Aid, he advocated for the rights of minorities, trained government authorities on Human Rights

principles. Rebaz was one of the first responders to the Yezidi's crisis, during which, and through NPA, he managed to find shelter and food for the first Yezidi families fleeing ISIS. Because of his commitment to helping the IDPs and Refugees, he joined the humanitarian aid field with REACH, and became responsible for managing the IDP camps, and working on establishing peaceful coexistence between them and the host communities. He currently serves as program coordinator with International Media Support along with his teaching position, and is nominated to teach at the American University in Iraq as well.



**Rowaida Al Khulaidi (Yemen)** is a projects manager at the British Council in Yemen, and currently leads on different projects including different art form projects, youth community leadership and women development programmes, helping to build the capacity of those involved and building a better understanding between the UK and Yemen through arts & social development. Currently and due to the situation in

Yemen her main focus are on cultivating art at times of conflict as a mean towards civil peace and providing youth and youth NGOs with community leadership skills with emphasis on conflict mediation which in turn increases their resilience to being radicalised. During the 7 years as a projects manager in the British Council, Rowaida worked with many groups of people both in Yemen and the UK and organised many events in both countries and the region to help open a dialogue and bridge the gap between cultures. Her passion in art and social development has led to the establishment and continuity of successful life changing projects that benefit Yemeni artists, youth and women alike.



**Said Bahajin (Morocco)** is the Director of the Arab Nations DEEP Node. He is also the President of Creators without Borders Association and a researcher in UNESCO Chair of philosophy for Peace, in Jaume I University in Spain where he received his Masters and Doctorate in Peace, Conflict, and Development Studies. His PhD thesis, entitled United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and the Peaceful Transformation of Conflict between Muslim and Western Societies, has been praised for

its sophisticated analysis and its significant contribution to peace philosophy. Beginning his career as an educationist in a primary school in Morocco from 1997 to 2011, Said is now an experienced coordinator of numerous International Peace Education Projects, and a collaborator in several different networks and programs, including the Young Leaders Visitors Program in Sweden, Peace Master Castellon Network, and the Power of Peace Network supported by the UNESCO. In 2009 Said won the Castellon Intercultural Journalist Prize and was the 2009 recipient of the prestigious Castellon Peace Prize.





**Sara Zaini (Saudi Arabia)** is a co-founder of Emkan Education and the Managing Director of School and educational Content Development. She is also an education consultant, teacher trainer and independent writer. Her experience includes working as the head of the education department for Hadara Consulting, leading and participating in many projects related to youth empowerment and exchange, curriculum design, and school improvement. Sara is also an educational reform writer specialized in policy change and leadership. She worked as a lecturer at King Abdul-Aziz University in the department of Curriculum and Teaching for four years. Her experience includes leading and managing multiple school evaluation and development projects, International curriculum design and research to support policy making in education. At the school level, Sara worked as a special education specialist serving children with special needs. Her experience includes a wide range of public, private clients and non-profit organizations. Sara holds an M.A. in International Educational Development from Columbia University and a B.A. in special education from Dar Al-Hekma University in Saudi Arabia.



**Zein Tayyeb (Jordan)** is a Humanitarian Affairs Officer at the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), her role is focused on establishing and maintaining contacts with other humanitarian agencies to plan and evaluate complex humanitarian and emergency assistance programmes. She has also worked with UNICEF for over three years, where she was based in the Syrian refugee camps in Jordan. Her work was focused on providing quality education, psychosocial support, and life skills development for all the Syrian children in and out of schools. Zein holds a Master's degree in International Relations and Human rights from the University of East London, UK. Her research interests focus on human rights-based issues, Migration, Integration, Education, Equality, and Youth. She has always been very concerned by humanitarian work and now that she is part of the global effort, she hopes to help improve the future of every child. Moreover, Zein participated in an intensive training course in Brown University on Human Security and Humanitarian Response.