



**UNAOC**  
United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

**IN FOCUS**

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# THE INTERCULTURAL INNOVATION AWARD

A partnership between  
**United Nations Alliance of Civilizations & BMW Group**



## **UNAOC and BMW Group Announce the 10 Finalists of the 2019 Intercultural Innovation Award**

*Ten global grassroots initiatives have been named finalists of the prestigious Intercultural Innovation Award during an Awards Ceremony held on 10 December in Madrid, Spain.*



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# A Message from the High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, **H.E. Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos**

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Dear Friends of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations,

These are extraordinary times, and we need more than ever to stay united and connected as one humanity in the face of COVID-19. We can only get through this together.

This is our spring edition of **In Focus**. The activities described in this edition of our newsletter took place prior to the pandemic and subsequent lockdown. Since then, the UNAOC team has worked remotely and has continued advocating for humanistic values, including solidarity, compassion, fraternity, and social justice.

Thank you for your interest in our activities and programmes.

*Miguel Ángel Moratinos*



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# UNAOC and BMW Group Announce the 10 Finalists of the 2019 Intercultural Innovation Award (IIA)



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*“As the Intercultural Innovation Award enters its sixth edition, UNAOC and the BMW Group continue to collaborate to magnify the work of cutting-edge social innovators.*

*In today’s global context, marked by conflicts of a complex nature, civil society organizations have the power to influence individual behaviors and foster the values of respect and inclusion, and therefore play a critical role in advancing these values among their communities.”*

**Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos, High Representative for UNAOC**

Ten global grassroots initiatives have been named finalists of the prestigious Intercultural Innovation Award during an Awards Ceremony held on December 10th in Madrid, Spain. A partnership between the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) and the BMW Group, the Intercultural Innovation Award supports grassroots initiatives that promote intercultural dialogue and

understanding and contribute to peace, cultural diversity, and more inclusive societies.

The Awards Ceremony was chaired by the High Representative for UNAOC, Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos, and Mr. Bill McAndrews, Vice President Market Communications at BMW Group, and took place at the Royal Theatre.



This year, the selection process was highly competitive, with over 1,200 applications from 128 countries. The first place went to **“Milenial Islami,”** a project of the **Indika Foundation in Indonesia.** The project engages leaders of various religions in conversations with the public, both online and offline, to promote interfaith dialogue and peaceful coexistence.

In addition to a financial grant, the recipients of the Intercultural Innovation Award will benefit from capacity-building and mentorship support from UNAOC and the BMW Group to help their projects expand and replicate to other contexts. They will also be invited to join the “Intercultural Leaders” network, a skill and knowledge-sharing platform for civil society organizations and young leaders.



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*“With the Intercultural Innovation Award, we celebrate outstanding initiatives implemented by extraordinary individuals who are working to bridge intercultural divisions in innovative and impactful ways. We at the BMW Group believe that diversity not only enhances our company; it is the very foundation on which our success is built. That is why we are so proud of our strong partnership with the UNAOC. This collaboration and the Intercultural Innovation Award enable us to recognize some of the remarkable cross-cultural work being done worldwide.”*

**Mr. Bill McAndrews, Vice President Market Communications at BMW Group**



Other awardees include (in alphabetical order):

#### **180° Wende – 180° Wende (Germany)**

180° Wende connects the youth community to support their disadvantaged peers and empowers them to reclaim their own lives by reconquering their social environment. 180° Wende works in abandoned neighborhoods, prisons, and schools to provide quick and informal assistance to youth and their relatives.

[interculturalinnovation.org/180-turn/](https://interculturalinnovation.org/180-turn/)

#### **Child Soldier Reintegration Project – Grassroots Reconciliation Group (Uganda)**

The “Child Soldier Reintegration” project helps former child soldiers reconcile with war-affected communities in northern Uganda.

[interculturalinnovation.org/child-soldier-reintegration-project/](https://interculturalinnovation.org/child-soldier-reintegration-project/)

#### **E4D Entrepreneurs for Diversity – Ventana a la Diversidad (Spain)**

The project “E4D Entrepreneurs for Diversity” empowers young entrepreneurs and creators from marginalized communities in the Ibero-American region to develop innovative ideas to overcome barriers, promoting a culture of peace, and transforming their communities.

[interculturalinnovation.org/e4d-entrepreneurs-for-diversity/](https://interculturalinnovation.org/e4d-entrepreneurs-for-diversity/)

#### **Inclusive Intercultural Education for Social Cohesion – Kachinland College (Myanmar)**

The “Inclusive Intercultural Education for Social Cohesion” project empowers and equips young leaders from different ethnic, linguistic, and religious backgrounds in northern Myanmar to become facilitators in intercultural dialogue, both online and offline.

[interculturalinnovation.org/inclusive-intercultural-education-for-social-cohesion/](https://interculturalinnovation.org/inclusive-intercultural-education-for-social-cohesion/)

#### **Life Into Lyrics: Bridging Cultural Divides Through Song – Darkspark (Canada)**

The “Life into Lyrics” project invites youth to create pop songs and digital campaigns with social purpose, encouraging them to lend their voices to the change they want to see in the world.

[interculturalinnovation.org/life-into-lyrics-bridging-cultural-divides-through-song/](https://interculturalinnovation.org/life-into-lyrics-bridging-cultural-divides-through-song/)

#### **MinorMatters: Rewind; Rebuild – The Alliance Development Trust (Sri Lanka)**

The project “MinorMatters: Rewind; Rebuild” is a web-based platform with resources to equip and empower citizens, especially youth, to promote religious freedom and coexistence in Sri Lanka.

[interculturalinnovation.org/minormatters-rewind-rebuild/](https://interculturalinnovation.org/minormatters-rewind-rebuild/)

#### **Schools of Peace – Museo de la Palabra y la Imagen (El Salvador)**

The “Schools of Peace” project offers a variety of workshops to young people, from music and theater to photography and audiovisual production, intending to promote youth leadership and responsible citizenship and foster a culture of peace through arts and culture. The project also targets educators by teaching them about violence prevention at school.

[interculturalinnovation.org/schools-of-peace/](https://interculturalinnovation.org/schools-of-peace/)

#### **Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom Chapter Expansion – Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom (USA)**

The Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom is a Muslim-Jewish grassroots organization in North America that helps young women and women develop relationships and gain the skills to react quickly to incidents in their communities in order to stand together in the face of hate.

[interculturalinnovation.org/sisterhood-of-salaam-shalom-chapter-expansion/](https://interculturalinnovation.org/sisterhood-of-salaam-shalom-chapter-expansion/)

#### **Women as Peace Champions – Women’s Rights Association (Pakistan)**

The “Women as Peace Champions” project engages marginalized women groups to decrease the gap in the decision-making process and increase collaboration between different communities. It provides a platform for dialogue about peace and aims to foster tolerance amongst communities through the contribution of women.

[interculturalinnovation.org/women-as-peace-champions/](https://interculturalinnovation.org/women-as-peace-champions/)



# Spotlight on Intercultural Innovation Award Recipients

## Irenia launches a new line of workshops on co-education for its students



During the 2019-2020 school year, Irenia peace games has consolidated a new line of 60-90 minutes workshops on co-education, designed to be implemented in the classroom and adapted to each educational cycle with groups of about 25 students (3-5 years, 6-7 years, 8-9 years and 10-11 years old) of primary education.

The methodology used is the theatrical and participative narration of stories that introduce and make children

reflect on topics such as:

- Different family models (mono-parental, recomposed, same-sex couples, etc.)
- Reproductive work (sharing household chores, who does what at home?)
- Gender-based violence, domestic violence
- LGBTQ community

## Route 2 Roots launches VIRSA, an interactive cultural education digital programme for students and teachers

In the course of their expansive work, Route 2 Roots learned that so many students had negligible exposure to arts and culture. To address this challenge, Route 2 Roots developed VIRSA, the first-of-its-kind initiative that marries technology, telecommunications and art to connect students in thousands of different geographical locations with teachers through real-time interactive classes. VIRSA operates daily live classes where students are able to attend remotely and thereby have the opportunity to engage with maestros from 14 disciplines. The programme reached more than 110 cities in India and abroad.



*"We realized that over the last few decades, the proportion of students receiving arts education had shrunk drastically. To create this learning environment, teachers need to skillfully draw on student experiences and enrich the curriculum by including art, culture, and history. These experiences and learnings gave birth to our new programme of cultural education, called VIRSA."*

**Rakesh Gupta**, co-founder of Routes 2 Roots.



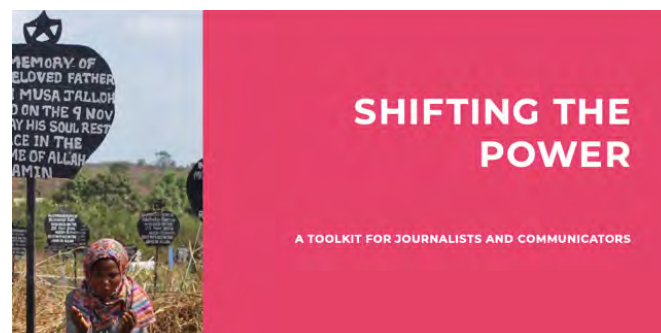
## Unistream combines business and intercultural interaction through a one-year entrepreneurship programme

In September 2019, Unistream was awarded a grant for conflict management and mitigation from USAID for the Akko Entrepreneurship Center as well as their other mixed Jewish-Arab centers in Jaffo – Tel Aviv and Nof HaGalil.

For the first time, Unistream will harness business and entrepreneurship as a mechanism for intercultural interaction for not only youth in the organization's three-year programme, but also for members of the Akko community including children and the elderly, youth within the school system via Unistream's one-year entrepreneurship programme, and business leaders/key individuals.

More specifically, the programme will prevent, mitigate, and manage the causes and consequences of violent conflict, instability and extremism and create an inclusive, equal, and pluralistic society in Israel. The programme will directly impact within the Akko Entrepreneurship Center 70 young adults, 70 children and elderly individuals in the community, and 80 key people in the business world.

## On Our Radar Celebrates 7-year anniversary and launches inclusive toolkit for journalists and communicators



On Our Radar turned seven on 12 December! They marked their anniversary by launching a brand new website that showcases a new manifesto and puts a spotlight on their key projects.

They have also released a toolkit for journalists and communicators called Shifting The Power, which is a practical guide to involving groups that are currently under-represented in news media and storytelling.

Finally, they just announced a new flagship project with Comic Relief and Safe Lives that will work directly with young survivors of domestic violence to co-design a digital platform to help young people identify and recognize abuse in intimate relationships.

## Sound Infusion programme partners with Australia's school initiative Music: Count us In



The Sound Infusion programme entered a promotional partnership with Music: Count Us In, Australia's largest school initiative with over 745,000 students and 3,400 teachers involved. Through Music: Count Us In, schools across Australia were given complimentary access to a custom promotional version of Sound Infusion, using the tools to create tracks for a nationwide competition.



## Spotlight on Intercultural Innovation Award Recipients

### All Together Now partnered with the University of Technology Sydney in race-related reporting



"Racism is a systemic issue in Australia, and it continues to be reinforced through the media at the expense of communities," said Jennifer McLean, of All Together Now's Media Monitoring Project. "All Together Now defends the notion of a free press. However, it's imperative that we challenge pervasive racism in the media and support diverse communities to feel respected and safe."

New research by All Together Now has found that 57 percent of race-related opinion pieces negatively portray Australian racial minorities. The study, which monitored Australian mainstream media from April 2018-2019,

found that social commentators express racist views in overt and covert ways, deploying a range of tactics such as dog-whistling, decontextualisation and irony to target racial minorities.

All Together Now partnered with the University of Technology, Sydney, in designing a framework used to analyse media for a race-related report. They use a three-pronged approach that consists of media monitoring, analysing the online response to race-related media pieces, and community-led solutions to reduce the negative impacts on affected communities.

### Red Dot Foundation partners with OMDENA for finding tech solutions to fight Sexual Violence

Red Dot Foundation partnered with OMDENA, a global platform that works to build Artificial Intelligence models for social good via harnessing the power of a global collaborative community of data scientists, technologists and engineers. Together over a period of two months, they worked towards creating an algorithm to find the fastest way to reach a safe place in case of an emergency.

There were 32 engineers working remotely from 14 countries spanning five continents. The goal was to build a solution for creating more awareness to prevent violent acts, using satellite imagery to identify risk areas. Various techniques of modelling were used to layer data

**USING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE  
TO PREVENT SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

30+ Collaborators, two months AI Challenge  
**Building a heatmap with safe spots**

Read the article on:  
[www.medium.com/omdena](https://www.medium.com/omdena)

including infrastructure like schools, colleges, hospitals, cinema theatres, public parks and surrounding areas to get a sense of what risk factors might be involved.



## Wapikoni celebrates 15 years of involvement, experience and creativity and launches “First Nations Cinema” DVD box set

In October, Wapikoni organized its first ever annual gathering entirely dedicated to Indigenous talent. By placing at the heart of its mission the promotion and outreach of a collection of powerful works and developing a collective of inspiring artists, this convention highlighted 15 years of involvement, 15 years of experiences, and 15 years of creativity.

To celebrate the 15th anniversary of Wapikoni, the DVD box set “First Nations Cinema” produced in partnership with TVA Films, was launched at the Wapikoni Gathering. This box set includes more than 200 short films from communities across Quebec and Canada. It is available for purchase on Amazon.ca, Renaud-Bray, Archambault, Midwest Tape, Library Bound, BayStreet videos and Isotope.

## The Parents’ Circle set up Dialogue Meetings for youth and women in Palestine

Crack in the wall’s Bereaved Families Forum organized bi-national meetings for the youth in a number of Palestinian villages and towns, as well as meetings for women. Participants listened to the personal stories of bereavement and pain experienced by Forum members, as well as ways in which the Forum proposes to end the ongoing conflict through dialogue. During the meetings, participants expressed despair at the current situation and frustration, as well as feelings of hope due to people believing in new ways to connect between Palestinians and Israelis.





# UNAOC and IOM Reveal PLURAL+ Winners During Ceremony at UN Headquarters



The High Representative for UNAOC, H.E. Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos, and the Director General of IOM, H.E. Mr. António Vitorino, announced the winners of their joint initiative, the PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival, during an Awards Ceremony at the UN Headquarters in New York on 13 November 2019.

Young filmmakers came especially to New York from all corners of the world to participate in the ceremony and had the opportunity to screen their films and address an audience of more than 200 people, which included UN representatives, youth participants, media makers, and many others. The ceremony featured a musical performance by Latin Grammy Award winner Linda Briceño (Venezuela).

*"I realized that I could not look for acceptance from society or another person, and that this was a message that many women could benefit from. That's what I try to convey in my film."*

**Lina Abojaradeh (Jordan)**

PLURAL+ 2020 Winner for

"We are Enough: A Message of Girl Empowerment"  
International Jury Award in the 18-25 category







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*“The PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival provides the space for young people to freely express their visions and to share their inspiring stories on issues relevant to perceptions of migrants and refugees, minorities and marginalized communities. It also recognizes youth as powerful agents of social change and empowers them to share their vision with the world.”*

**Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos, High Representative for UNAOC**

The top prizes (International Jury Awards) went to the Spanish filmmakers of **“Seeking Refuge,”** which follows the story of a young refugee girl as she tries to adapt to life in a new country; The Mexican video **“Tags,”** which explores the issues of discrimination and pre-conceived notions; **“We Are Enough: A Message of Girl Empowerment,”** made by a young Jordanian director, which examines the expectations placed upon women and girls by society; and the Brazilian film **“Brazilian, But Not Soccer Player,”** recipient of the UNAOC-IOM Award for the Prevention of Xenophobia, which addresses with wit and humor the issue of stereotypes against people from different cities, countries, and cultures. The remaining twenty-one finalists received awards from the many partner organizations of PLURAL+.

Selected for their coverage of migration, diversity, and social inclusion, the winning-videos were chosen among **1,200+ submissions** from almost **70 countries** – a record number of entries for PLURAL+. An international jury composed of Athar Ahmad (BBC News), Axel Caballero (HBO), Aya Chebbi (African Union Youth Envoy), Lula Dualeh (Digital Advocacy Strategist), Maha Jaafar (YouTube Creator for Change), Chaker Khazaal

(Author and Journalist), Tania Safi (Video Journalist and Producer), and Arun Venugopal (WNYC) helped select the winners of the video festival.

The winning PLURAL+ videos are now being disseminated worldwide and are available online at the website <https://pluralplus.unaoc.org>. UNAOC and IOM invite the global community to help raise the visibility of these films and their talented filmmakers by sharing the videos widely online and using the hashtag #PLURALplus.







## Five Youth-Led Organizations Selected as Recipients of the **Youth Solidarity Fund**

UNAOC has announced the latest recipients of the Youth Solidarity Fund (YSF). More than 600 proposals were received from over 70 countries in response to the call for applications. Five organizations based in Africa and Asia were then selected to receive seed funding of up to USD 25,000 for the purpose of implementing projects with innovative and effective approaches to intercultural dialogue and interfaith harmony. These five recipients join a group of 63 other youth-led organizations that have been funded by UNAOC since 2008.

In addition to seed funding, YSF recipients will also receive technical support to strengthen the implementation

of their projects. UNAOC has partnered with Search for Common Ground to facilitate a capacity-building programme called Youth 360, involving online workshops and ongoing support from mentors. YSF recipients will have access to this support until the end of their project implementation period in November 2020.

The current edition of YSF is implemented through financial contributions from the Governments of Finland, Malta and the Republic of Azerbaijan.



## Profiles: Youth Solidarity Fund Recipients



*"Our project, Umoja Mashinani, can be loosely translated to mean Peace Ambassadors in the Grassroots. We aim to enhance the capacity of community radio journalists to promote messages on non-violence, religious respect and intercultural cohesion. With UNAOC, we hope to build a sustainable and impactful platform together, fostering a community of young people who work for peace."*

**Bonface Ochieng Opany**, 27 years old  
Project Coordinator, **Umoja Mashinani**  
Youth Solidarity Fund Recipient, **Amani Centre (Kenya)**

*"Our project will bring young people with diverse backgrounds together to connect, create and transform. Through theater, we will facilitate a process of introspection to explore and challenge our own identities, beliefs, biases and perspectives. With the resources and the solidarity shared through UNAOC we will be stronger to stand up and challenge the polarization and separation in our society."*

**Sivatharsini Raveendran**, 28 years old  
Project Coordinator, **Theatre for Peace – Connect.Create.Transform**  
For Youth Solidarity Fund Recipient, **Centre for Communication Training (Sri Lanka)**



*"We are launching 'We Play for Peace!' which is a project funded by UNAOC to create a safe space for youth from different religions, nationalities and backgrounds. Through sports, young people from the North Bekaa region of Lebanon will get the opportunity to set their differences aside and play together in peace. Youth will erase the memory of conflict and be a source of positive change for the future."*

**Mehdi Houssein Yehya**, 31 years old  
Project Coordinator, **We Play for Peace!**  
Youth Solidarity Fund Recipient, **Peace of Art (Lebanon)**





## Profiles: Youth Solidarity Fund Recipients



*"We are curating interfaith and intercultural conversations amongst young people of different religious and cultural backgrounds. With the grant from UNAOC, we aim to inculcate a culture of mutual understanding, respect and tolerance for these young people. Our goal is to place youth in the center of preventing any religious and cultural differences from breaking out into violence or developing into mechanisms for excluding other people."*

**Sicelo Christopher Gama**, 29 years old  
Project Coordinator, **Dismantling Religious and Cultural Stereotypes for Social Cohesion and Sustainable Peace**  
Youth Solidarity Fund Recipient, **Swaziland Intent Youth Organization (Kingdom of Eswatini)**



*"We thank UNAOC for their support of our project that will engage youth from seven sects of Islam and Christianity to strengthen interfaith understanding and foster new friendships. The project aims to reduce support for religiously motivated recruitment and acts of violent extremism in Eastern Uganda. We are confident that our project will be a living symbol to the ideals of interfaith cooperation and friendship among faiths."*

**Zulaika Nanfuka**, 32 years old  
Project Coordinator, **Nurturing for Peace**  
Youth Solidarity Fund Recipient, **Uganda Muslim Youth Development Forum (Uganda)**





## Youth Solidarity Fund Alumni Organization Participates in Annual Meeting of the Global Coalition for Youth, Peace and Security

UNAOC supported Kessy Ekomo Soignet, Executive Director of Association URU and YSF recipient in 2018, to attend the Annual Meeting of the Global Coalition for Youth, Peace and Security in Sandö, Sweden, on 5-7 November 2019. The meeting was hosted by the Folke Bernadotte Academy, the Swedish government agency for peace, security and development.

Kessy shared the progress and challenges her youth-led organization has had in implementing the youth, peace and security agenda on the ground in the Central African Republic. The meeting was also an opportunity

for participants to provide input to the first report of the UN Secretary-General on Youth, Peace and Security mandated by Security Council resolution 2419 (2018) as well as make plans for the fifth anniversary of Security Council resolution 2250 (2015) taking place in 2020.

Participants included representatives from UN entities, civil society organizations, academia in addition to young people involved in peacebuilding. The meeting furthered collaborative efforts to shape global policy and practice on youth, peace, and security.





## UNAOC Young Peacebuilders programme: Giving Youth the Tools to Build Peace

The second phase of the third edition of the Young Peacebuilders programme was successfully concluded in Mérida, Spain. The face-to-face workshop organized from 7-12 October 2019 brought together 19 participants from 12 countries in the Middle East and North Africa, namely: Algeria, Egypt, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, State of Palestine, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

The overall objective of the workshop, organized by the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and generously supported by AEXCID, was to consolidate the learning acquired during the first phase, which took place online, and to practice concrete peacebuilding skills.

The agenda of the workshop included tools aiming at facilitating constructive dialogue, discussions on the role of women in peacebuilding, practice sessions on how to engage in debates, the use of theater as a tool for conflict resolution, and combating hate speech in the media, among others.

The High Representative for UNAOC, Mr. Miguel Moratinos, participated in the closing session and engaged in an interactive discussion with the young women and men

who took part in the workshop. Mr. Moratinos thanked the participants for their great commitment to the promotion of peacebuilding in their countries of origin: "It is a pleasure to see how the projects that UNAOC are implementing on the ground have a real impact on society. We talk a lot about security in our societies, but in general, we forget to talk about peace, and there is no sustainability without peace. When we call you 'Young Peacebuilders', it means that you carry a great responsibility in your community."





## UNAOC Alumni Participate in the 25th Lisbon Forum



During the 25th Lisbon Forum, which took place on 25-26 November, UNAOC co-organized a session with the North-South Center of the Council of Europe, focusing on the relevance of intercultural dialogue and learning as a vector to effectively achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

The joint-session was moderated by the Chief of Cabinet and Spokesperson for UNAOC, Ms. Nihal Saad and included the participation of the High Representative for UNAOC and two UNAOC alumni: 2018 recipient of

the Youth Solidarity Fund Mr. Muhamad Hisbullah Amrie from Indonesia and Ms. Shadi Rouhshahbaz from Iran who was a participant in the second Young Peacebuilders programme in the MENA region. Mr. Amrie's youth-led organization Pamflet encourages collaboration amongst youth from different cultures and religions to develop an online campaign for countering extremism and Ms. Shadi Rouhshahbaz founded PeaceMentors, a project that aims to build safe spaces in order to facilitate youth training on peacebuilding and intercultural dialogue.

## UNAOC organizes Youth Migration Film Forum at UN Headquarters



UNAOC organized a Youth Migration Film Forum at the UN Headquarters to celebrate the work of young filmmakers globally and discuss the power of storytelling. Held in partnership with the World Council of Peoples for the UN (WCPUN), the Permanent Mission of Mexico to the UN, the Consulate General of Mexico in New York, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the event featured two youth-produced short films that won the PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival, a joint initiative of UNAOC and IOM. It also included remarks by Mexican Youth Delegates, New York's Commissioner of Immigrant Affairs Ms. Bitta Mostofi, and DREAMer activist Mr. César Vargas.





## Highlights of the **UNAOC 2019 MENA Fellows** travels to the US and Europe

UNAOC 2019 MENA Fellows travelled to Washington D.C., New York, Berlin, Germany, and Madrid, Spain, from 13 to 27 October 2019 to work on “The role of women in peacemaking and conflict prevention”. Based on an online survey shared with participants, 85 percent of the MENA Fellows said they have gained significant knowledge on women, peacebuilding and conflict prevention during their trip. Below are the highlights of their visit:

In Washington D.C., MENA Fellows talked about global engagement for the advancement of women’s rights with the Office of Global Women’s Issues at the State Department. They exchanged ideas on civil society engagement to help women refugees and bring women into full equality with the National Organization for Women – the oldest grassroots feminist organization in the US. They discussed ways to encourage a gendered approach to peacebuilding and promote women’s participation in reconciliation processes with Search for Common Ground.

In New York, MENA Fellows had a great exchange with the High Representative for UNAOC about the organization’s various activities and initiatives to promote diversity, inclusion and intercultural cooperation. They had a lively debate on how to bring gender expertise to humanitarian

actors and include women in mediation and peacebuilding efforts with UN Women. They exchanged best practices to amplify women’s voices for a more sustainable and inclusive peace with the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders.

In Berlin, MENA Fellows learned how the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany is working with civil society on a plan of action for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 (2000) and the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda. They met with 180° Wende and WomEx and learned more about the role played by gender in radicalization processes, from religious to right-wing extremism. They discussed community building activities to support refugee women and girls with Give Something Back To Berlin.

In Madrid, MENA Fellows met with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Spain and learned about Spain’s contribution to the global agenda for WPS. Fellows discussed the importance to raise awareness across Spain’s society on the role of women in peacebuilding with Women International League for Peace and Freedom España. They had an interesting conversation on media engagement to promote a gendered approach to news production with Journalists for Equality.



# “Engaging women in peacebuilding, conflict mediation and the prevention of violent extremism”

## A UNAOC Fellowship Alumni event



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*“Lack of education impedes women from joining the formal peace processes and making meaningful contributions to peace discussions. When women are empowered through education, we gain useful perspectives that result in more inclusive and lasting peace agreements.”*

**Mustafa Kemal Akbulut, Turkey (2016 EUNA Fellow)**

Violent extremism and conflict are transnational threats to global stability, which can virtually affect every human being, without distinction of nationality, ethnicity, religion, ideology or gender. Across the UN system, there has been growing awareness that addressing these challenges requires a multi-dimensional and a whole-of-society approach focused on prevention. However, the importance of adopting gender-sensitive frameworks is often overlooked, despite some undeniable progress at global policy level through the advancement of the UN agenda on Women, Peace and Security. Nevertheless, today, women are still almost totally excluded from formal peace processes, while gender stereotypes and grievances are frequently manipulated and exploited by violent groups to enhance recruitment.

In that context, UNAOC and the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations organized an event on “Engaging women in peacebuilding, conflict mediation and the prevention violent extremism” on 4 December 2019. Fifteen UNAOC Fellows from Europe, North

America, the Middle East, and North Africa, working in the fields of gender, peacebuilding and prevention of violent extremism, were invited to share their recommendations and good practices on the inclusion of women in global efforts to achieve sustainable peace.

Following a TED Talk format, UNAOC Fellows presented their professional achievements in (a) engaging youth and leveraging the intersection between the UN agenda on Women, Peace and Security and on Youth Peace and Security; (b) harnessing the power of media to change the narrative around the role of women in peacebuilding and in preventing violent extremism; (c) developing partnerships with institutions and civil society to promote women’s visibility and inclusion at decision making level.

Participants in the latest edition of the Fellowship Programme also shared the lessons learned during their trip to Morocco, Egypt, Qatar, the United States, Germany and Spain on the role of women in peacemaking and conflict prevention.





*“One humanity. Many cultures.”*

*UNAOC aims to improve understanding and cooperation among nations and peoples across cultures and to reduce polarization at local and global levels. It helps develop more inclusive societies, in which diversity is experienced as an asset.*

**United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC)**

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