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SESSION REPORT

508

Getting Transition *Right*: A Rights-Based Approach to Diversity and Inclusivity



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Getting Transition *Right*: A Rights-Based Approach to Diversity and Inclusivity

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Introduction

“Diversity is what we have. Inclusion is making diversity work,” said a Salzburg Global Fellow at the end of Session 508, *Getting Transition Right: A Rights-Based Approach to Diversity and Inclusivity*. The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is full of diverse voices that have often struggled to work cohesively. Despite coming together to demand change in 2011, fracture lines within these revolutionary countries seem more prevalent than ever.

In light of the unique challenges facing MENA countries in transition, approximately forty activists, influencers, and experts from across the Arab region and around the world gathered at Schloss Leopoldskron, home of Salzburg Global Seminar, to confront a basic question: how can civil society encourage their countries to embrace diversity and foster inclusion?

Co-organized with the Arab Human Rights Fund, a Lebanon-based, region-wide grant-making organization dedicated to supporting human rights actors across the Arab region, the program brought together a variety of voices and experiences to identify strategic directions for improved inclusivity in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Yemen. These countries were selected specifically because they are in the midst of difficult transitions and can pilot new approaches to diversity and inclusion for the Arab region. Salzburg Global Fellows came from a dozen countries and included civil society activists, human rights experts, academics, grant-makers, researchers, and media experts.

Participants grappled with regional realities and distinctions, examining local and international laws, policy developments, and methods of shifting public perception. They also focused on inclusivity and diversity at the national level, with delegates from

“Diversity is what we have. Inclusion is making diversity work.”



Salzburg Global Adjunct Program
Director Moukhtar Kocache introduces
the opening session

each of the four focus countries crafting policy recommendations to address local challenges.

As was revealed throughout the session, diversity in the region cuts along multiple axes, among them: gender, religion, culture, race, ethnicity, age, physical ability, and geographic location. Excluded communities weave among and beyond these categories to further include refugees, migrant workers, stateless persons, and those of unpopular political affiliations. Concern about fragmentation, lack of vision, the manipulation of language, destructive binaries, and revolutionary pessimism permeated the discussions. In attempting to discern how civil society can encourage the integration of marginalized communities, delegates wrestled with the dueling requirements of law and culture. Can law be truly effective without a culture willing to accept, respect, and enforce the laws? Alternatively, can culture evolve effectively without the galvanizing force of law? Both must shift if these countries are to truly champion a spirit of inclusion and move from transition to “transformation.”

This report summarizes the relevant points of the session’s deliberations and presents the preliminary recommendations of the participants.

Setting the Context

“Anyone who works in human rights is, by definition, optimistic,” said Fateh Azzam, Board Chair of the Arab Human Rights Fund*, at the opening discussion of Session 508. But, admitted Azzam, these are pessimistic times in the Middle East and North Africa. Despite the numerous uprisings of 2011, during which millions of people from a multitude of religious, ethnic, socio-economic, and cultural backgrounds joined together to demand change in their respective countries, the dream of inclusion and democratic equality remains largely unfulfilled.

Although the Arab region enjoys incredible diversity, growing violence and political discord have seriously challenged the promise of equal citizenship. Egypt, Iraq, Tunisia, Syria, and Yemen all face enormous challenges, and social cohesion is under attack by sectarian violence in Bahrain, Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria. In all four of the focus countries – Egypt, Libya, Yemen and Tunisia – progress has stalled or in some cases rolled back, with violence becoming the most evident driver of change in the region.

Engaging civil society is key to getting democratic progress back on track. Civil society has a critical role to play in delivering fairer, more inclusive change that embraces the region’s diverse peoples and communities. Among the tools available to civil society activists, both Azzam and Ghanim Al Najjar, Professor of Political Science at Kuwait University and Board Member of the Arab Human Rights Fund, agree that greater respect for human rights can halt the slide towards sectarianism. Previously considered a “foreign” concept, numerous Arab signatories on human rights treaties and broad social acceptance of key human rights concepts such as equality, public participation, and human dignity indicate that the normative framework of human rights is firmly imbedded in the region. Nevertheless, the sway

Realities and Priorities

Following the opening session, delegates engaged in table discussions to map the current state of discourse on diversity and inclusion, sketch out the reality on the ground, and outline priorities for moving the conversation forward.

The results were stark: although the current state of discourse pays lip service to the merits of equality, the reality reveals little tolerance for diversity and inclusion, especially among current policymakers. In countries riddled by ethnic, religious, and geographic divides, exclusion of the “other” has become a powerful and poisonous means of consolidating power. In addition, a general absence of discussion about the role of women has undermined already-weak female representation in the socio-political sphere.

[continues overleaf]

** At the time of the session (November 2013), Fateh Azzam was the Board Chair of the Arab Human Rights Fund. At the time of the publication of the session report (June 2014), Ghanim Al Najjar, then Member of the Board, had taken over this position.*

Realities and Priorities

[continued]

Building off of this brief and challenging snapshot, Salzburg Global Fellows identified a number of priorities for the coming days and beyond, including developing a “plan for the plan.” They identified security and stability as critical precursors to transformation; crafting plans for reconciliation and equality are next to impossible when armed militias and violence predominate.

In addition, emphasis must be placed on greater representation for women, both in positions of power and in the discourse generally. Finally, the Fellows agreed that civil society activists must engage with all facets of the government, including the executive, the legislature, and local governments.



Ghanim Al Najjar and Fateh Azzam

international treaties and reporting mechanisms have on daily Arab government behavior remains in doubt.

Of critical interest is what comes first: enforcement of human rights norms under the rule of law or movement towards a culture that embraces diversity and inclusivity. Both must be addressed if these countries are to truly champion a spirit of inclusion.

The Arab region is facing substantial political upheaval and transition, with different forces pushing the transition in different directions. These processes are uncertain by nature. Civil society must work with cultural norms and respect local actors, new emphasis must be placed on restorative justice, and plans for the future must accommodate both economic development and the military. Despite the present challenges and setbacks, all agree there remains room for optimism.

International & Regional Legal Frameworks

Domestic and international legal frameworks hold vast influence on the region's political and social discourse. International law, especially as it shapes human rights norms, will certainly play a pivotal role in the evaluation and development of legal systems in these transitional countries.

Ann Elizabeth Mayer, Associate Professor of Legal Studies and Business Ethics at the University of Pennsylvania, USA, highlighted the unfortunate reality that despite ratifying human rights treaties – including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) – Arab states (among others) still largely fail to fulfill their human rights obligations even while officially endorsing human rights as a means of securing their international legitimacy. Although human rights activists tend to single out the notorious failures with to respect civil and political rights, Mayer



Ann Elizabeth Mayer

urged activists to bear in mind that behind many of the rights violations in this area lie problems generated by the non-fulfillment of vital economic and social rights. Outside the circles of privileged elites, Arabs have suffered grievously due to their deprivation of ICESCR rights such as the right to work, the right to an adequate standard of living, and the right to education – rights that are given equal importance in international human rights instruments and also in the most progressive modern constitutional models. Work must now focus on entrenching the full range of human rights values into national culture.

While respecting the importance of international law, the Fellows concluded that future constitutions in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Yemen will continue to rest primarily upon Islamic law. Amr Shalakany, Associate Professor of Law at the American University in Cairo, Egypt, addressed the perceived conflict between Islamic law and human rights. “The typical reaction is one of antagonism, one of tension, [and] one of conflict,” Shalakany said. “What you’d argue for under the rubric of international law would be argued against as un-Islamic.”

Shalakany then turned to the shifting definitions of Islamic law and their implications for political discourse following the 2011 uprisings. Noting that the revolutions have revealed conflicting conceptions of what it means to be a Muslim, Shalakany outlined three notions of the *Shari’a* (Islamic law) within the Sunni tradition.

The first sees *Shari’a* as *fiqh* (jurisprudence) only, and requires that all Islamic law be tethered to the Koran, the *sunna* (the practices of the Prophet Mohamed), *ijma* (consensus of the Muslim community), and *qiyas* (analogical legal reasoning). The primary sources for this historiography are books written by jurists, about other jurists, for future jurists. Adherents assert that the *Shari’a* has stable answers to legal questions, resulting in a body of law that does not develop despite changing times, and which regards the *bab al-ijtihad* (gate of new legal reasoning) as closed.

The second notion challenges the presupposed ossification of Islamic law by insisting that *Shari’a* has and will continue to evolve. Adherents assert that jurists have refined the stages of development and the role of minor sources, and question whether the *bab al-*

ijtihad was truly closed. Despite an element of openness, this dialogue remains largely within the first paradigm’s confines.

The third paradigm of *Shari’a*, developed during the past several decades, expands its scope beyond *fiqh* to include everything that involves an act of judgment under the rubric of *siyasa shar’iyya* (Islamic law as expressed in regulatory decisions or policy of government). Instead of juristic texts, adherents look to court records. Courts include not only those ruled by *fiqh* trained judges, but *majalis* (councils) applying *qanon* (similar to statutory law), *hisba* (market inspection), *mazalim* (equity), and *shourta* (police). These latter courts have been traditionally dismissed from the discussion of *Shari’a* as being “secular” – but if they are secular, Shalakany points out, then the Arab region has embraced secularism for centuries.

Recognizing the existence of multiple ways of perceiving Islamic law is important, Shalakany continued, when considering the current political climate. Most people in the Arab region consider themselves



Amr Shalakany

“The typical reaction is one of antagonism, one of tension, [and] one of conflict. What you’d argue for under the rubric of international law would be argued against as un-Islamic.”

Amr Shalakany, Associate Professor of Law at the American University in Cairo, Egypt

bound by religious faith, but Shalakany points out that there is a difference between faith and belief, and beliefs can change. As a new wave of Islamic political parties contend for power, the time is ripe to challenge the superficial idea that there is only one way to be a Muslim.

Focusing the discussion on Islamic family law, Marwa Sharafeldin, Board Member of Musawah Global Movement for Equality and Justice in the Muslim Family and co-founder of the Network for Women’s Rights Organisations in Egypt, challenged the participants to explore the politics of labels and naming in Islamic law. Although the *Shari’a* may be seen as a “divine, eternal, and unchangeable message,” the *fiqh* represents fallible human efforts to understand God’s message. Today, many codified laws claim to be Islamic, but they are based on *fiqh*, custom, Western formulations of law, and other sources. The result is a law that is no longer divine, fixed, or unchangeable. Instead, Sharafeldin noted that an understanding of the text often varies based on who is reading and when.

Family law, part of a broader category of law called *mua’amalat* that governs how humans deal with each other, has been affected by political and social changes. Tracing regional developments – from the creation of the nation-state that (in theory) granted all citizens equal rights, to the birth of anti-colonialism that tied both women and Islam into national identity, to the rise of an educated female workforce, to the price paid by both men and women in the streets during the uprisings – Sharafeldin emphasized that despite women’s increasing contributions to society (e.g. women are the sole breadwinners of a third of Egyptian households today), Muslim family law lags behind.

If Islamic law will be used as a source of law in these countries going forward, Sharafeldin argued, then it must be subject to demands of the revolution (that is, *bread, liberty, and social justice for all*). Moreover, Islamic law must be openly debated between all citizens. If proponents cannot bear for *fiqh* to be debated by all people in public, then it does not belong in the public sphere.

Sharafeldin acknowledges that many people feel unequipped to debate these issues; however, she believes passionately that all citizens should be empowered to comment and critique. “If you

If Islamic law will be used as a source of law in these countries going forward then it must be subject to demands of the revolution (that is, bread, liberty, and social justice for all).



Marwa Sharafeldin

are a Muslim, you have agency to discuss Islamic law. If you are a non-Muslim subject to Islamic law, you also have agency to discuss Islamic law!” Sharafeldin also noted that rights activists must develop Islamic arguments in favor of human rights, and especially in favor of women’s equality. Indeed, governments will only move in response to public pressure, and Islam can be appropriated by the women’s rights movement to pressure governments to promote and protect women’s equality.

How, then, should activists address Islam and Islamic law while promoting human rights and inclusivity? One Fellow concluded that a lack of intellectual bravery led to a reticence to discuss and produce scholarship on Islamic law. Another worried about the “monopolization of God” by certain political figures. Most Fellows agreed, however, that Islam will inevitably play a substantial role in these transitional societies and therefore that the juristic community should be included in dialogues related to diversity and inclusion. They also recognized the need to develop strategies that ensure equal participation for all citizens under the law.

“If you are a Muslim, you have agency to discuss Islamic law. If you are a non-Muslim subject to Islamic law, you also have agency to discuss Islamic law!”

Marwa Sharafeldin, Board Member of Musawah Global Movement for Equality and Justice in the Muslim Family and co-founder of the Network for Women’s Rights Organisations, Egypt

Policy activists in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Yemen must look beyond constitution-drafting to all aspects of governance including the judiciary, the police, and education

What Role for Policy?

“Policy” is defined as a plan to achieve a goal. The development of policy requires multiple tools, including social organizing, political influence, financial pressure, grass-roots and high-level advocacy, public opinion, and media and culture. Law, though often conflated with policy, is but one of the tools policy advocates can use to accomplish the desired goal.

As described by Laith Kubba, Director and Senior Program Officer at the National Endowment for Democracy, Washington, DC, USA, opportunities to influence policy are too rarely prioritized and pursued. Influencing policy requires well-conceived strategies and a dedicated constituency. Unfortunately, politics are most often led by elites; ideas that might be well-received if suggested by “insiders” are often viewed with suspicion when put forward by non-experts or “outsiders.” In response, advocates often propose the establishment of policy forums to advance policy goals in support of diversity and inclusivity – that is, public dialogues involving activists and academics that engage diverse stakeholders in critiques of current policy, presentations of new ideas, and debates on proposals. Unfortunately, as Kubba lamented, these are rare in the Arab region. Instead, too many Arab politicians still consider the solicitation of public input as a sign of weakness.

Times of political upheaval and transition can be unique windows of opportunity, however, where new leaders or governments that lack experience are more open to receiving input and recommendations from civil society. To be effective in influencing public policy, said Kubba, activists must cultivate practical skills, such as the ability to prepare a policy brief, survey public opinion, establish legitimacy, connect with government stakeholders, and interface with the media. As an example, civil society organizations in Tunisia conducted a public opinion survey of hospitals and medical services and published



Laith Kubba

the results. In response, the organizers were invited by the Minister of Health to advise the government on health-related issues.

Groups that want to effect change must target their work towards influencing those who write budgets, set regulations, and make decisions. Activists determined to enact and affect policy must be methodical, proactive in building alliances, and able to engage public opinion and research to ensure that politicians pay attention.

Policy activists in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Yemen must look beyond constitution-drafting to all aspects of governance including the judiciary, the police, and education, added Ghanim Al Najjar, Professor of Political Science at Kuwait University and Board Member of the Arab Human Rights Fund. Al Najjar noted that human rights norms in the Arab region offer a powerful tool to challenge inequitable laws and advocate for greater inclusivity. Activists must continue to connect international human rights policy with on-the-ground realities. Policy changes are gradual, stated Al Najjar, but politicians and governments respond to power. The role of civil

society actors is to convince these transitional governments that their power is at risk unless changes are made.

The Fellows then debated the question of how to link public policy to local needs. A key element, they agreed, is the creation of institutions that allow everyday citizens to consult with the government. As a Libyan Fellow pointed out, policy leaders in Libya are completely cut off from their constituents due to an absence of basic political infrastructure – this isolation undermines transparency and accountability. In addition, textual victories are but one half of the process; if progressive laws are not implemented or enforced then the practical result remains limited. Focusing on influencing policy by engaging “grassroots” and local civic actors in public debates can work simultaneously on the two key elements of change identified – culture and the law.



Ghanim Al Najjar

The Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI): What Does It Reveal?

Produced by the German foundation Bertelsmann Stiftung, the Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI) measures political and economic transformation and the quality of governance in 129 countries around the world. The Index looks at 17 criteria and 49 indicators within the categories of political transformation, economic transformation, and transformation management to measure progress toward democracy, the rule of law, and a socially responsible market economy. Criteria, indicators, and categories are measured on a scale from one to ten, allowing the Index to calculate both cumulative shifts and isolated developments. The Foundation prepares and publishes the BTI every two years as a tool for activists, researchers, stakeholders, and political leaders.

Hauke Hartmann, Project Director of the BTI, and Jan Völkel, BTI Regional Coordinator for Middle East and North Africa, presented the latest BTI, which covers global developments through January 31, 2013—two years after the beginning of the Arab uprisings. Unfortunately, despite the toppling of all four focus countries' autocratic regimes, the Index does not paint a much improved picture for the region.

In terms of political transformation, Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya all improved by more than one

point, but the regional average (when factoring in less positive developments in Bahrain, Oman, Syria, and Yemen) has nevertheless remained the same. Although Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, and especially Libya have experienced significant gains in “political participation” (one of the core criteria of the political transformation, indicated by free and fair elections, greater freedom of expression, and an increase in the right to assemble and associate), all four have likewise experienced a decline in “stateness” (as measured by a loss of monopoly on the use of force, decreased state identity, growing interference of religious dogmas, and a weakened ability to conduct basic administration).

All four countries have likewise experienced a drop in economic transformation, as indicated by factors such as economic performance, socioeconomic development, the strength of the welfare regime, and sustainability. Regarding transformation management (as measured by conflict management, conflict intensity, and civil society participation), the four countries have generally experienced an increase in civil society participation, but a simultaneous increase in conflict intensity and decrease in conflict management.

The Fellows expressed appreciation for the BTI as an aggregate measurement tool helpful for government leaders, but some were uncertain how activists could apply the Index in their work. In addition, some Fellows expressed concern that local nuance—for instance, with regards to tribal participation or a loss of political legitimacy—can be difficult to capture in criteria and indicators created to span dozens of countries. But, as many Fellows agreed, empirical analyses can still prove valuable, especially when trying to more generally compare one country or region's progress—or lack thereof—against that of another. Some Fellows questioned the collection and refinement of knowledge, arguing that the local experts used to help prepare each country report might be isolated, disconnected, or biased; in response, Hartmann stressed the level of care that is taken by the Bertelsmann Foundation in selecting its more than 250 researchers from leading academic institutions worldwide and that each report is subject to four independent reviews. Hartmann and Völkel expressed gratitude for the Fellows' thoughtful comments and critiques, and remain open to continuing feedback on how to improve and expand the BTI framework.

Hauke Hartmann and Jan Völkel



Shifting Public Perceptions and Values

Even though cultural rights are regularly overlooked in the push for human rights, culture is often the first determinant, the pulse or manifestation, the symptom, and the expression of what is brewing or spilling over in societies on the local level. Participants explored the many sides of culture – including art, media, education, and the greater public sphere – and how cultural expression can be used by civil society activists to build inclusion and social change.

From a broad perspective, culture provides multiple important outlets through which opinions can be expressed, views exchanged, and consensus built, said Moukhtar Kocache, an arts and culture expert from the region. Contemporary cultural production has become increasingly active in the struggle for justice, with art now encompassing civic engagement, politics, and social change. Where the rights movement has difficulty in disseminating its discourse to wider audiences, the cultural movement can employ fiction, film, art, music, and other creative processes that engage and provoke discussion. Indeed, the personal growth brought about via exposure to diverse intellectual and cultural traditions can lead to increased awareness, greater appreciation for difference, and an expanded capacity for compassion and empathy.

Almost two years ago, noted Kocache, a conference brought together 350 artists and cultural leaders from around the Arab region, during which they declared that leaders or activists in culture and the arts should intentionally participate in local social movements. Human rights activists and civil society leaders must continue to engage and coordinate with cultural leaders (formal and informal) in order to cultivate inclusion and support transformation.

Azza Kamel, Executive Director of Appropriate Communication Techniques for Development in Egypt, expounded on four critical

“Culture provides multiple important outlets through which opinions can be expressed, views exchanged, and consensus built.”



Moukhtar Kocache

roles of the media. First, the media serves as a watchdog, monitoring events, institutions, activists, and governments. Second, the media is a guard dog, supporting activists and giving protection by publicizing human rights abuses. Third, the media works as a guide dog, helping activists to see what political leaders and decision-makers do behind the scenes. Finally, and unfortunately, the media can also be a lap dog, placating power and failing to challenge authority.

To use the media strategically, Kamel continued, activists should work with individual members of the media who can promote the visibility of human rights activists and facilitate their ability to communicate effectively. Media allies can also celebrate and widely publicize successful cases of inclusive policies and practices. Arts, popular culture, and technology can further promote inclusiveness through the use of street theatre, songs, graffiti, and social media.

Public perception is inevitably tied to education, argued Mohamed Sallam, Director of the Pan-Afrikan Center at Augsburg College, Minneapolis, MN, USA. For example, the incorporation of rights-

The media serves as a watchdog, a guard dog, a guide dog – but, the media can also be a lap dog, placating power and failing to challenge authority.

based curricula in public education demonstrates one way to effect long term and widespread change. At the same time, however, he expressed concern that, at least in Egypt, new religious narratives are beginning to enter educational spaces, which could have a divisive effect.

The solution begins with reform of the education landscape. Much work done in the field of education is performed by those whose specialty lies elsewhere (e.g. economists, policymakers, and political scientists) – instead, advocates need to include education and pedagogy experts from the beginning; their expertise and potential contribution goes vastly unacknowledged by the social change and human rights circles.

The public sphere (that is, the social realm where public opinion forms) serves as the underlying medium in which culture, media, and education operate. Belabbes Benkredda, Founding Director of Munathara, an open Arab debate initiative based in Tunis, believes that greater attention must be paid to cultivating the public sphere



Azza Kamel

because it provides the critical mechanisms and open debate necessary for social change and, ultimately, a functioning democracy. Although the Arab uprisings were facilitated by a newfound freedom of communication across social and religious barriers, he contends that the revolutions are now failing because the public sphere is fragmenting. Even though social media is typically hailed as a great equalizer, Benkredda argues that social media is now being used more effectively to foster division, isolation, and polarization by encouraging individuals to listen and interact only with those who share the same opinions.

To strengthen the public sphere requires three factors. First, there must be respect for rational argument and engagement with those who disagree. The fight for freedom of speech is often understood to mean fighting for one's own right to speak only – instead, points out Benkredda, we must fight for everyone's right to speak, especially those whose views we oppose. Second, a vibrant public sphere can only emerge, and be sustained, if there is broad citizen



Mohamed Sallam

participation. Established opinion leaders often fail to reflect the demographic make-up of society, so civil society must encourage voices from those we do not often hear, particularly youth, women and marginalized communities. Finally, the public sphere requires some form of competition. In its most ideal state the public sphere is a “marketplace of ideas” and the best results come when opposing ideas compete for public support. Competition can lead to some form of consensus, lending legitimacy to the results of public discourse. Munathara hosts a prime time broadcast during which youth, women, and other marginalized voices debate policy with politicians from across the Arab world – Benkredda hopes that this framework can serve as a model for cultivating the public sphere in other transitional spaces.

A Fellow from Yemen pushed back on the necessity of competition to build the public sphere. Her organization, #SupportYemen, is a media collective born of the revolution that trains Yemenis to use video and photography to tell their own stories and advocate for their own issues – instead of competition, she hopes that more people will join together in and through independent media. Benkredda noted that competition doesn’t require hardheaded opposition; instead, ideal competition in the public sphere would hone ideas and encourage buy-in among different parties.

Despite the utility of human rights norms and instruments to help shape public perceptions, countries can sometimes turn against these tools due to a perceived “Western” influence. Jeanne Elone, International Criminal Justice Program Officer at TrustAfrica, Dakar, Senegal, shared her experience in the African context. NGOs advocating prosecution of those responsible for the 2007 post-election violence in Kenya are being marginalized as “imperialist” and “anti-African” because they are turning to the International Criminal Court (ICC), an international court established to prosecute genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. Identity politics, laments Elone, are undermining efforts to correct injustice.

The solution, as she sees it, is to shift the focus to injustice itself without ostracizing the government. In Africa, this means refocusing the discourse on the victims of violence instead of on whether the ICC is “anti-African” or whether accountability is “pro-Western.” To



Belabbes Benkredda

Even though social media is typically hailed as a great equalizer, social media is now being used more effectively to foster division, isolation, and polarization by encouraging individuals to listen and interact only with those who share the same opinions.

achieve this balance, civil society actors must act with political and media savvy.

A key problem, noted several Fellows, is a lack of vision. Clashes across and between ideologies seem to dominate at the moment. Media channels owned or co-opted by political and religious factions further entrench social divides by providing only a single viewpoint. On the other hand, noted one Fellow, the cost of media production and communication has plummeted, creating a unique opportunity to promote marginalized voices.

Progress does exist – for example, rapid expansion in the number of independent cultural, civic and media spaces has allowed marginalized groups to speak, engage in discourse, and express creativity. In addition, media and educational content produced by civil society is now being passed on to private channels and the public

educational system, bringing issues that are previously taboo to the public sphere. The critical question now is how to ensure diversity of media so that individuals throughout the region can hear the voices of those that are “voiceless”. Tools born of culture and media have the ability to embed the values of diversity and inclusion in local communities, and represent a valuable new strategy that activists should embrace.



Jeanne Elone

Salient Issues around Diversity & Inclusion

“Discrimination and exclusion do not just make people’s lives a hassle – they end in bloodshed.” Grim words opened the discussion on the different groups facing marginalization and discrimination in the Arab region.

Despite winning an election in 2012, the pro-Mohamed Morsi and pro-Muslim Brotherhood Islamists in Egypt are now the new political minority, noted H.A. Hellyer, a non-resident fellow at the Royal United Services Institute and the Brookings Institution. Although the public discourse while Morsi was in office tended towards dehumanizing those who opposed the Islamists, this recent shift has created new discourse that marginalizes and dehumanizes pro-Morsi and pro-Islamist proponents, portraying them as poor and stupid, irrational in their voting patterns, or not true Egyptian patriots. The result has been little public outcry in response to the bloodshed suffered by these adherents in the latter half of 2013.

We must be careful, Hellyer warned, in how we react to those who exclude us – as evident in Egypt through the actions of the Islamists towards their opponents during Morsi’s presidency, and subsequently by their opponents towards the Islamists after Morsi was removed. In communities dominated by a single paradigm, proposing discussion of exclusion and diversity can make you a candidate for exclusion in turn. Hellyer explained how he recently wrote a satirical piece claiming that the prominent voices promoting human rights and calling for accountability with regards to the recent killings of Islamists were secretly members of the Muslim Brotherhood – much to his surprise, the piece was perceived as true, with members of the new majority eager to demonize those who called for justice.

Hellyer also decried the rise of manipulative language; across the board policymakers and political figures have used the fear of insecurity and the language of religion to condone human rights abuses. Instead, he argued, the solution must be citizenship –

Ultimately, activists must work for a system that is willing and able to protect all opinions, despite the efforts of people on all sides of the divides who are unwilling to do so.

although citizenship likewise carries the risk of serving as another tool of exclusion by allowing one party to paint itself as more “Egyptian” than another. Ultimately, activists must work for a system that is willing and able to protect all opinions, despite the efforts of people on all sides of the divides who are unwilling to do so.

Religious diversity in the Arab region is not necessarily limited to Muslim majorities and non-Muslim minorities. Instead, Mariz Tadros, a Fellow at the University of Sussex, Brighton, UK, and member of the board of the Arab Human Rights Fund, noted that diversity cuts between different voices in Islam and indeed, different voices in all four societies. Unfortunately, a number of countries in the Arab region – including Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia – have seen a rise in violence motivated by religion that has dramatically affected regional demographics. Further aggravating these circumstances is the seeming unwillingness of “Islamist” parties and public figures (that is,



H.A. Hellyer

those who want to establish a religious State in compliance with their model of Islam) to cross religious lines and work with representatives of other sects and faiths. Tadros identified two reasons for this isolation: first, citizenship that is too often mediated by religion rather than identity under the State; and second, a disconnect between discourse and reality, with policymakers and political leaders giving lip service to human rights but failing to follow through in practice.

Indeed, Tadros pointed to the security breakdown and dramatic rise of violence against Christians to argue that the language of citizenship has been subsumed by authoritarian regimes and has thus failed. Instead, activists should turn to collective action driven by *al-sha'ab* (the people) to create inclusive societies with universal participation. Collective action includes speaking up against perpetrators of human rights abuses no matter their religious affiliation or country of origin, and supporting fellow activists.

Despite widespread diversity within the region, many Arabs continue to deny the existence of minorities or marginalized voices. Fateh Azzam continued the exploration of excluded communities by highlighting the massive problem of people living in countries in which they do not have citizenship. There are more than 42 million refugees throughout the world and more than 12 million throughout the Middle East and North Africa, including generations of Palestinian refugees and the rapidly growing Syrian exodus. Only a handful of Arab countries have ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention; most countries fail to guarantee rights to refugees but instead leave the care and protection of refugee populations to UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency.

In addition to refugees, there are more than 20 million migrant laborers in the Arab region, including 11 million in the Gulf alone. Operating under the *kafala* (sponsorship) system, migrant workers are at the legal and physical mercy of local sponsors, who often take the workers' passports, compel them to sign inequitable contracts, or force them to work without pay for long hours. Especially vulnerable are domestic workers, who operate behind closed doors without any state-regulated inspections or controls. These individuals (predominantly women), many of whom do not speak English or Arabic, are especially vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

Activists should turn to collective action driven by al-sha'ab (the people) to create inclusive societies with universal participation. Collective action includes speaking up against perpetrators of human rights abuses no matter their religious affiliation or country of origin, and supporting fellow activists.



Mariz Tadros

Finally, Azzam underscored the plight of Stateless persons, including most Palestinians, the Bedouin in the Gulf, and the Kurds. Without State identity or a passport, these individuals are denied proof of education, State-recognized marriage, the right to travel, or even State protection.

The problem of displaced, migrant, and Stateless persons remains vast, and no formula exists to address it fully. Instead, activists must develop deeper understanding of these vulnerable populations and fight to address their needs. Azzam also expressed discomfort with reliance on “citizenship” only, preferring instead the more inclusive promise of equality. Human rights principles, including the fundamental requirement of human dignity and the right to self-determination, represent a basic guiding force that should empower collective action.

Amal Basha, Chairwoman of the Sister’s Arab Forum for Human Rights in Yemen, focused on the region’s majority-minority: women.

Rather than a minority in terms of numbers, women are instead marginalized in terms of rights, privileges, and opportunities. Among numerous hurdles, Basha criticized the tendency of policymakers to trivialize so-called “women’s issues,” such as child marriage or equal representation, by not deeming them “political” enough for national dialogue.

The role of Islam in daily life, she noted, also tends to be raised much more prominently when discussing women’s rights. For example, the Yemeni constitution declared that the country would adhere to international rights conventions but then proceeded to characterize Yemeni women as “sisters” whose rights would be delineated by *Shari’a* law. Arab countries also continue to effectively condone honor killings by giving minor punishments to perpetrators, and the Arab media tends to favor “good” Muslim women who wear the veil. Feminism is largely demonized, and those who advocate for women’s equality are disparaged as Western-controlled agents bent on destroying the traditional family.



Enas Abdel Wanis and Rina Shahrullah

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Amal Basha

In Yemen, policymakers have a tendency to trivialize so-called ‘women’s issues’ such as child marriage or equal representation, by not deeming them ‘political’ enough for national dialogue.

Tearing down the barriers of exclusion and marginalization requires addressing structural issues. Women’s rights advocates must address cultural paradigms surrounding boyhood and masculinity. Minorities must disentangle themselves from the prevailing fiction that autocratic regimes can offer tenable protection, and advocates must not forget that minorities are often no better inclined to protect human rights than the majority regimes. Activists must remain aware of the role of the State in instigating and maintaining religious violence for political gain. The Fellows shared a sense of frustration that, in a sense, the region does not lack vision but rather contains too many conflicting visions that remain unable to co-exist. Creating a “plan for the plan” and identifying actors capable of at least starting to bridge these divides remains of critical importance.

Working Groups on Specific Issues Around Diversity, Inclusion & Vulnerable Constituencies

Knowledge Sharing

When evaluating the need for knowledge, three main questions must be addressed: first, what kind of knowledge do we need? Second, what are the challenges and realities in the region? And finally, how can we build and use the knowledge?

With regards to diversity and inclusion, knowledge must focus on definitions and the common uses of terms at the national, regional, and international levels. Activists must identify and map marginalized groups to ensure that they are incorporated into local and national communities. They must also emphasize the value of diversity and inclusion in new and ongoing research. Building knowledge, in turn, requires funding, dissemination, and the opportunity for new platforms and young researchers to play significant roles. To ensure that knowledge is used, researchers and activists should make knowledge relevant, and in particular bridge the gap between academia and practice.

Truth Versus Legends

The questions of tolerance, perceptions, and “truth versus legends” are challenging and multi-faceted. To confront intolerance, one must address the root cause, not only the outcomes. For example, when addressing the disempowerment of women, activists should look at men to discover what motivates them to disempower both women and other men. If men can attain human rights, dignity, and personal value, they might feel more comfortable empowering others. Media and culture, the group concluded, can serve as a powerful counterweight to intolerant trends. Television programming, movies, theatre, op-eds, and social media can challenge underlying assumptions and introduce alternative dialogues.



Salzburg Global Fellows during group work

Legitimacy and financing are linked – the more grassroots legitimacy an NGO gains, the easier it is to raise funds.

How Will The Work Be Supported?

Since the 2011 uprisings, the four focus countries have experienced a dramatic increase in the number of active civil society organizations. How these organizations can secure sustainable sources of funding sufficient to support their efforts remains a key question and concern.

Elie Abouaoun, Senior Program Officer on Middle East and North Africa at the United States Institute of Peace, Washington, DC, USA, outlined two types of support required by civil society organizations: local legitimacy and financial resources. The former requires organizations to build reliable, evidence-based knowledge, organize inclusive alliances with relevant stakeholders, and plan for interventions that lead to policy and social change. The latter is often hindered by a sense of fear among prospective donors to publically support human rights and diversity initiatives. Abouaoun noted that the prevailing perception among potential donors is there are more important priorities such as economic development, security, and humanitarian aid. In addition, financial stakeholders remain wary of unaccountable or unregistered NGOs, and many international funders continue to be ambivalent about supporting long-term socio-political change.

Legitimacy and financing are linked, continued Abouaoun – the more grassroots legitimacy an NGO gains, the easier it is to raise funds. Nevertheless, overcoming reluctance by regional donors to support human rights and inclusion-related initiatives will require years of sustained effort. Abouaoun mentioned the example of the Arab Human Rights Fund (AHRF), co-organizer of Session 508, which aims to mobilize funds from the region to support human rights efforts in the region. Despite investing substantial time in reaching out to local donors and the private sector, the response has been underwhelming. In the meantime, independent institutions like AHRF and other regional NGOs do not have the money to sustain themselves without international support. Unfortunately, concluded Abouaoun, international funding will always come with agendas and civil society activists within the region must live with this fact for the foreseeable future.



Elie Abouaoun

Philanthropy is both the mirror and the locale within which the dynamics of political power reveal themselves, observed Sherine El Taraboulsi, DPhil Scholar at the Department of International Development, University of Oxford, UK. To encourage inclusion, activists must first create spaces where a celebration of diversity is possible, which requires accurate knowledge of local needs. Research must be more participatory and activists must look not only to the civil and political spaces but to the economic and social spaces as well. Although economic and development strategies in the four focus countries are fragmented, they still share much in common (such as centralized security states and demographic youth bulges), and potential exists for horizontal and vertical linkages within the region and with the international community.

Moving forward, continued El Taraboulsi, requires the intellectual bravery necessary to critically engage in a human rights discourse in the region and prepare informed interventions. Activists should

A recent indigenous funding study of institutionalized and individual forms of giving, conducted in Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt between 2011 and 2013, concluded that significant potential exists for regional philanthropy, but that the region lacks sustainability and long-term vision.



Sherine El Taraboulsi

work to launch indigenous platforms and holistic, independent, and sustainable interventions. Funding must likewise be sustainable, and civil society must advocate for legal and policy changes (such as tax incentives) that would encourage giving.

El Taraboulsi also lamented the lack of State interest in longstanding forms of indigenous and religious philanthropy that could be (re)vitalized, such as *waqfs* (Islamic organizations dedicated to philanthropy). Indeed, a recent indigenous funding study of institutionalized and individual forms of giving, conducted in Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt between 2011 and 2013, concluded that significant potential exists for regional philanthropy, but that the region lacks sustainability and long-term vision. El Taraboulsi is quick to note, however, that each focus country has a unique philanthropic history that must likewise be weighed in the balance when developing fundraising strategies.

The thousands of new civil society organizations, especially in Libya, are largely self-funded, observed another Fellow; as a result, they are unable to hire experts or highly experienced employees. New organizations also face challenges with efficiency, professionalism,

and security. Diversity, inclusion, and security are reciprocal matters and reinforce each other – as a result, stability and awareness-raising must occur at the same time.

Current priorities include encouraging international organizations (IOs) to work with governments and local NGOs, and convincing these transitional governments of the importance of NGOs in society. Civil society representatives, argued the Fellow, should also be represented in constitutional committees. In Libya in particular, NGOs should develop their role in lobbying governments to adopt policies. Finally, advocates should work for new laws that strengthen the role of NGOs in civil society.

Discussion turned to how to balance the need for international funding with the inherent limitations of funding determined by international, not local, priorities. The Fellows agreed that despite its short-term necessity, international funding will not ultimately suffice for the long-term development of the region. International organizations often come into the region with great intentions, but only fund specific issues that do not necessarily reflect local needs and therefore neglect hundreds of other active NGOs. International grants are often repetitive and short-sighted; they support the same work over and over without actually addressing the capacity needs of advocates on the ground, and operate on timelines far shorter than what is required to build the region's civil society infrastructure. Worse, transitional governments have used acceptance of foreign funding to demonize civil society organizations, forcing them to choose between continuing their operations and losing local legitimacy.

Despite numerous challenges, however, the region is doing a better job of engaging with IOs and in developing, albeit slowly, more local philanthropy. In many circumstances, IOs have begun employing staff and management from local actors, more *awqaf* and community-based foundations operate in the region than before, the corporate sector has expanded the scope of its funding, and regional giving has increased. However, the Arab region remains behind on advocating for and adopting policies that will enable civil society to diversify funding sources.

Despite its short-term necessity, international funding will not ultimately suffice for the long-term development of the region.

Country Reports and Recommendations

At the start of the first full day at Schloss Leopoldskron, a Salzburg Global Fellow from each focus country presented an overview of the current challenges and opportunities, the key issues in terms of diversity and inclusion, and what success might look like in the near and far future in Yemen, Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt. Although these summaries provide an accurate panorama of the social, political, and economic situations in each country, readers should remember that the analyses are shaped by individual perspectives and do not represent the only understanding of local circumstances.

The eight plenary sessions, led by experts from across and beyond the region, fed into four country-focused working groups that provided the Fellows with an opportunity for targeted analysis and sustained, specialized work. The Fellows were charged with two principle goals: first, brainstorming imaginative processes to help shift societal perceptions and ensure legal protection and participation for long-excluded communities and constituencies in each focus country; and second, outlining a concrete roadmap, in the form of preliminary policy proposals and recommendations, for effective diversity and inclusion in the region generally and in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Yemen specifically.

The working groups presented recommendations on the final day. Delegations from Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Yemen each took different approaches to tackling the issues of diversity, marginalization, and improved social and political inclusion, but recommendations consolidated around knowledge-sharing, collective action, policy proposals, and programmatic activities.



Salzburg Global Program
Director Nancy Smith explains
the session's purpose to the
Fellows

Egypt

Realities, Opportunities, and Challenges

Despite the powerful unification of a majority of Egyptian society in early 2011 – which inspired 18 days of mass demonstrations throughout the country and eventually forced former President Hosni Mubarak to step down in mid-February – Egyptian society in late 2013 appears increasingly fractured. Following the removal of President Mohamed Morsi from power in early July 2013 (either by mass demonstrations caused by the loss of legitimacy among the majority of Egyptian, by a military coup, or both, depending on the speaker) the critical question in post-revolutionary Egypt today seems to turn on whether one is “pro-Islamist” or “pro-military”, creating a false binary.

In short, the primacy of the unifying goals of freedom, human dignity, social justice, and an end to poverty has been lost, and instead polarization is much more dominant. As described by one Salzburg Fellow from Egypt, the result is a hotly divided society, in which each “side” consolidates its values and strengthens its identity by defining and excluding the ‘other’. Those that attempt reconciliation or dialogue are isolated and shunned in turn. The resulting overly simplified and inaccurate binary, split between mostly anti-Islamists and non-Islamists who support the military leadership, and Islamists

The revolution has lost sight of the unifying goals of freedom, human dignity, social justice, and an end to poverty, and instead embraced polarization.

The current reality in Egypt is tinged with despair and a sinking feeling that the same mistakes are being repeated yet again.

led unofficially by the Muslim Brotherhood, is further reinforced by a culture of division that turns political disagreement into dehumanization and disgust. Those that seek to break this binary, or who call to account both the pro-army and the pro-Islamist camps are increasingly few and marginalized.

Many of the challenges Egypt faces today stem from a number of interrelated sources. First, the country lacks an institutional culture of diversity, while having a history of it, and consequently lacks tools that would enable opposing groups to communicate and accept particularly political differences. Second, scant attention has been paid to developing a practical form of transitional justice; instead, those in power are preoccupied with revenge and vengeance. By looking backward for punishment, groups reinforce political and social divisions and prevent progress towards a unified Egypt. Third, the public by and large still remains wary of the legal concept of human rights; there is “no right time for rights,” noted one Fellow. And finally, the security apparatuses are rooted in politics rather than safety, resulting in a continual undermining of the very peace these organizations are theoretically charged with keeping. The “war on terror” dynamic is making it difficult for any real work to be done without it being securitized and thus crippled.



Two of the Egyptian delegation: Kamal Sedra and Nirvana Shawky

As a result, the current reality in Egypt is tinged with despair and a sinking feeling that the same mistakes are being repeated yet again.

Recommendations

In planning their intervention, the Egyptian Fellows identified excluded communities along social, cultural, political, and religious axes. In particular, the delegation identified the need to deconstruct the existing binary of favoring either the Muslim Brotherhood or the military. Such divides are hindering democratic progress, especially with regards to diversity and inclusion. As had been emphasized in earlier panels, more than traditional ethnic or religious minorities face exclusion and marginalization; the ever-changing political climate can see one large section of the political landscape in power one day, only to be overthrown and vilified the next.

To this end, the Fellows propose a serious engagement with the issue of transitional justice. These measures require both actual justice—in the Egyptian case, a judicial mechanism that tries equally all persons who perpetrated crimes against the Egyptian people, regardless of political affiliation—and truth and reconciliation, with all parties being open to determining the truth and moving forward together. Space needs to be created to examine the issues relating to impunity, responsibility, and accountability, in addition to reconciliation. However, warned one veteran Fellow, if transitional justice mechanisms are to be introduced, those involved must address the specific Egyptian situation rather than simply copying another country's model—context remains critical.

The Fellows will also seek to combat the popular attitude that inclusion in general and human rights norms in particular are mere western values. Fellows from the Egyptian delegation will encourage local civil society members to find a new language to galvanize support for inclusion and diversity. They plan to form coalitions of mutual interest by identifying and bringing together actors from civil society and the government who share similar goals. In addition, civil society should establish administrative units made of representatives of both civil society and the government to carry out these projects. The activists will also take advantage of a number of existent laws and leverage existing policies and procedures into progressive action by finding clever ways to encourage the government and others.

More than traditional ethnic or religious minorities face exclusion and marginalization; the ever-changing political climate can see one large section of the political landscape in power one day, only to be overthrown and vilified the next.

In addition, the Egyptian delegation believes that progress requires the co-ordination of civil society and government efforts, rather than a perpetuation of the view that the government is a separate and unrelated entity. Instead, the delegates noted that the government should be given the opportunity to solicit assistance from civil society. Nevertheless, civil society needs to be able to operate independently of government and the state, which may seek to co-opt and thereby marginalize its work. Collaborative efforts will urge reform of institutional mechanisms to enforce existing codes of ethics. Finally, activists should consider the need for affirmative action programs and quotas for marginalized groups, including women, youth, and religious minorities (including Christians).

In essence, the strategy has two components. The top-down element involves the identification of government stakeholders who share a common agenda and might be willing to consider alternative ideas. The Fellows are already connected with individuals in government ministries and councils, and can use these networks to reach out to other interested actors. The bottom-up element requires building a culture of compassion, particularly through the use of words and symbols that touch people emotionally. It is clear, however, that the ongoing ‘war on terror’ dynamic will place a great deal of stress on any such work, and this needs to end in order for progress to be made.

Libya

Realities, Opportunities, and Challenges

Following more than forty years of oppressive rule by Muammar Gaddafi, Libyans of all ages, ethnicities, and religions came together in 2011 to topple his regime. At least half of the population contributed to the revolution in some way: selling personal possessions to raise funds, joining local councils, lobbying NATO, or sacrificing their lives. In the subsequent elections, more than 60 percent of the country participated with unprecedented collaboration – there were no major security issues and militias worked together to ensure safety at the polls.

The promise of elections, however, has been met with the failure of representation. As described by a Salzburg Global Fellow from Libya, the General National Congress (GNC) lacks the basic infrastructure and transparency necessary to ensure legitimacy and effective

In Libya, the promise of elections has been met with the failure of representation.



governance. There are, for example, no bylaws on how representatives should vote, no voting records, no local or national offices where representatives can meet with constituents, no support staff to review policies or prepare legislation, and no uniform means of remaining in contact with constituents.

Coupled with 70 to 80 percent absenteeism, the GNC is accused of taking incredibly high salaries and incredibly poor decisions. Among the latter are increases in public sector salaries for employees who don't do any work; the transfer of subsidies to cash payments; a prohibition on interest that has frozen the economic sector by discouraging banks from issuing loans; and a political isolation law that prohibits anyone who held leadership positions in the previous regime from holding power for the next ten years. Producing the election laws for the Libyan Constituent Assembly should arguably have taken a month, but instead lasted a full year.

Accordingly, the post-revolution government has little to no accountability and lacks public confidence. Worse, the GNC has not stood up to the militias. Although approximately 30,000

Libyan film-maker Murad Gargum leads group work conversations with (l-r) Anas Abdel Wanis, Marwa Sharafeldin, and Aimee Thomson

individuals fought in the revolution itself, the number of militia members has swelled to more than 250,000, most of whom receive state-sponsored salaries but whose loyalties may not lie with the State. The fragmentation of military power into self-identified groups has undermined the possibility of a national police or army. Militia connections are now an essential part of daily life; indeed, as characterized by a Libyan Fellow, the militias are now holding government to ransom and running the country.

Socially, Libya faces increased crime and terrorist activity, resulting in corruption, a growing drug and human trafficking trade, kidnappings and assassinations of prominent political figures, and a general loss of optimism and trust. Economically, the high cost of subsidies and public sector and militia salaries are set to cripple any recovering economic growth. Politically, social movements are asking for the resignation of the GNC in early 2014, but fears remain that the militias will ensure the entrenchment of a new regime. In addition, divisions pitting Islamists against everyone else continue to smolder in the background.

Despite numerous challenges, hope persists. Most Libyans want to remain in a single and unified country and most want women to play a role in governance. Indeed, the results of a recent survey conducted by the Benghazi University Center for Law and Research, presented at the session by a Libyan Fellow, reveal that the majority of Libyans believe in democracy, equal participation for women, and freedom of expression and religion. The effort now turns to instigating dialogue, transparency, and public participation.

Recommendations

Despite the national unification that inspired the uprising, post-revolution Libya has become fragmented. In response, the Libyan delegation framed their intervention as “strength in diversity,” using the three unifying pillars of common purpose, acceptance, and tolerance to work towards a unified Libyan identity. To carry this ultimate goal forward, the delegation developed five objectives.

First, they plan to build diversity awareness by developing a multi-stakeholder media and communications strategy that will seek to

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Libyan Fellows Rihab Elhaj and Samira El-Masoudi

entrench citizen rights and responsibilities. Such a strategy would involve campaigns, social media, print media, and other popular media outlets. Points of action include working with the Ministry of Education to facilitate the integration of human rights values into the curriculum at schools and universities, and collaborating with the Ministry of Awqaf and mosques to spread the message of diversity throughout religious institutions. Lectures and debates on diversity and related issues would give voice to marginalized groups and encourage social dialogue.

Second, the Fellows want to build the capacity of civil society to effectively promote diversity and inclusion. Activities will involve training of trainers and workshops focused on negotiation skills but tailored to the unique Libyan context. The delegates would also like to take advantage of existing media collectives (for example, the Association of Libyan Photographers) to organize media workshops and enhance the expression of diversity.

Third, the delegates will develop regional collaborative linkages on diversity. Specific activities would include the production of music, documentary films, and cultural group festivals that celebrate the message of diversity and inclusion. In addition, cross-regional cultural

The Libyan delegation framed their intervention as 'strength in diversity', using the three unifying pillars of common purpose, acceptance, and tolerance to work towards a unified Libyan identity.

events would facilitate the exchange of experiences on tolerance, acceptance and common purpose.

Fourth, the Libyan Fellows will develop and reform policy to ensure actual inclusion and diversity. The delegates envision the creation of an inclusive task force made up of civil society members, youth activists, and legal experts to lobby for articles of inclusion in the to-be-drafted constitution. Workshops would allow Libyan activists to benefit from the experience of others in the region (for example, the excellent constitutional monitoring currently taking place in Tunisia).

Finally, the delegates will identify champions for diversity by connecting with popular cultural or social figures and encouraging them to speak publically in favor of inclusion. They also plan to secure the sustainability of concerted efforts by cultivating funds, both indigenous and international, to allow these broad efforts to continue.

Speaking broadly, the Libyan delegation aims to build a database of civil society; considering the recent mushrooming of grassroots efforts, the Fellows recognize the importance of remaining cognizant of available resources and potential allies. In addition, the Fellows believe that all objectives require buy-in from and active engagement with the private sector, government, and civil society.



Isrra Nuri Abu-Shaala leads discussions with Hauke Hartmann, Salem Mohamed, Belabbes Benkredda and Rina Shahrullah

Tunisia

Realities, Opportunities, and Challenges

The revolution in Tunisia was the result of endemic economic and social problems – in particular, high unemployment and the marginalization of the interior regions. Unfortunately, instead of providing solutions, the revolution has introduced a number of new problems. Salafists, rural populations, and the Jewish religious minority figure highly among excluded populations. Politicians involved in the old regime have also been technically excluded from the post-revolution government, but some are reemerging under the guise of new political parties or taking advantage of their power to influence current politics. The power of the president is also incredibly limited, especially in the face of Ennahda, the majority party that controls the most important ministries. Politics are dogged by an unwillingness to compromise.

Rates of corruption and especially nepotism have increased post-revolution, and policymakers have been unable to reign in rampant unemployment. The government has also begun cracking down on freedom of expression, jailing artists and rappers for politically-tinged songs. In addition, Tunisia is now confronting terrorist activity from extremist minorities targeting those that are “different” or secular.

Despite these challenges, the revolution has inspired some positive developments. Civil society has blossomed, with organizations such as I WATCH (observing the constituent assembly and organizing a model constituent assembly that allowed youth to engage in political life and prepare recommendations), Marsad (monitoring the work of the constituent assembly), and others. The introduction of free and open elections has also allowed the people, for the first time, to elect their political representatives.

Success, as the delegates would describe it, would be policies that tackle endemic economic problems, especially unemployment. Policymakers should also be pushed to set an upcoming date for elections and to finish the constitution. Currently, a national dialogue between Ennahda and other political actors is attempting to craft joint solutions, but the key question is what will happen after the elections. If the majority party retains power, activists are concerned about whether they will respect the constitution or make negative amendments.

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Recommendations

The Tunisian Fellows divided their assessment between civil and political rights and socio-economic rights, identifying youth, religious minorities, former regime officials, and women as the most marginalized groups within the former category and youth, persons with disabilities, and citizens living in the interior regions of the country, as the most excluded in the latter category.

For youth, the delegates recommended that the minimum ages of eligibility to serve as president, a member of parliament, or as a judge be aligned with the age of suffrage (i.e. 18 years). They also advocated for a 15 percent quota of representatives under the age of 30 (with gender parity) in Parliament and general gender parity among the remaining members. Under socio-economic concerns, the Tunisian Fellows zeroed in on creating equal opportunities for recent graduates and especially reinstating the principle of meritocracy rather than the current system that favors youth who were imprisoned during the uprisings. They would also like to see greater youth participation in public dialogue.

Regarding religious minorities, the delegates expressed deep frustration with the draft constitution that establishes all Tunisians as equal before the law yet restricts the office of Presidency to a member of the Muslim faith. This religious requirement means that Christians, atheists, and especially Jews (of whom there are more than 3,000 still in Tunisia) cannot become President, representing a fundamental political and social exclusion. The delegates will advocate for the removal of the religious requirement from Article 73 of the proposed constitution and ensure full rights for all Tunisians regardless of religious affiliation.

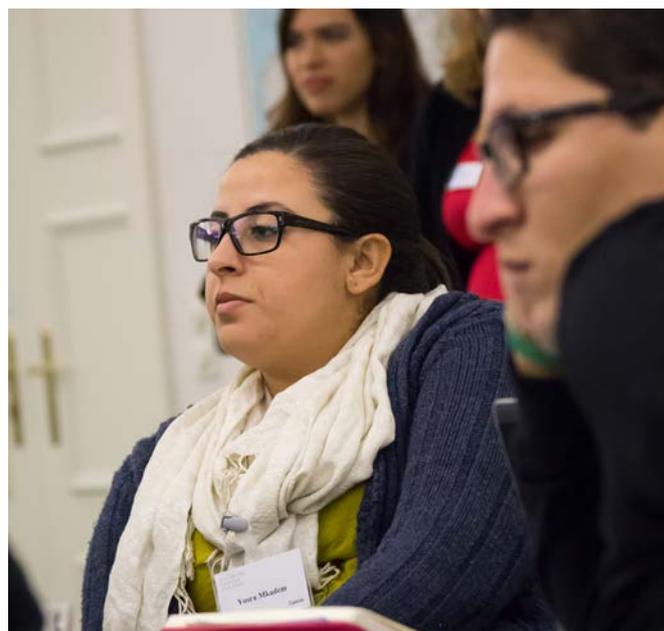
Citizens living in the interior regions face particular challenges because they have long been deprived of economic development; as a result, the Tunisian Fellows identified empowerment of local communities and community-based organizations as the first step to enable these regions to organize and demand equal rights. Civil society actors could facilitate local conflict resolution and exchange between regions, allowing the interior governing bodies to swap expertise and knowledge, a strategy already used successfully by one Fellow to address water issues. Once the local communities have prioritized their needs and joined forces with fellow communities, they can more

effectively voice their demands on a national level. In addition, the delegates plan to institute an awareness campaign for rural women to inform them of their civil, political, and economic rights.

Finally, the Tunisian Fellows discussed how to reinforce and implement current law to promote greater socio-economic participation among persons with disabilities. In particular, the delegates would like to see greater access for persons with disabilities in public transportation, schools, and public buildings. They suggested that NGOs should coordinate with the institutes and entities that work with persons with disabilities to hold awareness days and mediate with the government. While existing laws do provide some protections (that need to be enforced), Fellows want to advocate for new laws to reinforce the protections for persons with special needs.

The ultimate challenge, reflected the delegates, is that Tunisia boasts vast resources but lacks the capacity to coordinate among resource-holders. Attention must turn to developing expertise that is connected to the needs of local Tunisians.

Despite the long and daunting list of tasks, the Tunisian Fellows were pleased to discover that among their respective networks, they



Tunisian Fellows Siwar Aouadi and Yosra MkaDEM

are connected with the organizations and activists that are already working on these issues. To existing projects, the Fellows want to bring coordination and expansion. In particular, they want to adopt successful projects to other regions, and facilitate exchanges to share successful experiences among relevant stakeholders.



Tunisia participant Youssef Belgacem

Yemen

Realities, Opportunities, and Challenges

The current situation in Yemen is complicated and unpredictable. Negotiations between the revolution and the prior regime, coordinated by the Gulf Council, resulted in the exit of former President Ali Abdullah Saleh in early 2012. The goal was a political and peaceful transfer of power with the resulting government consisting of 50 percent old regime members and 50 percent revolutionary leaders. Because the revolution had been infiltrated by old regime members, however, the uprising has been less of a revolution and more of a political crisis. Nevertheless, the past several years have witnessed some changes and improvements, including the

removal of an oppressive and corrupt president and an opportunity to reform Yemen into something other than a police state.

Unfortunately, the 50/50 government is weak and, the Fellows feel, largely corrupt and armed conflict, particularly between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims, remains a serious risk. In addition, the South – which previously faced discrimination as a quasi-colonized state – has begun to agitate for independence. The cumulative effect of these hurdles pushed one Salzburg Global Fellow from Yemen to wonder if the uprising had been a mistake.

Excluded groups include pan-Arab nationalists, socialists, liberals, and especially women. While women are not barred from public office, only one woman has been elected to fill the 301 seats in the Yemeni Parliament and only thanks to a concerted cross-party effort. Even when women do manage to join political life they are most often delegated to “soft” issues. Outside of politics, women are even further marginalized. According to the Yemeni Fellows, women make up just over eight percent of salaried, formal workers – most women are expected to achieve nothing more than maintaining roles in the home. Over half of the female Yemeni population does not receive even a basic education, with only one third reaching the secondary level. Child marriage is also an issue of great concern in the country; according to UNICEF, almost a third of girls were married by the age of 18 in the past decade, with more than one in ten married by the time they were just 15 years old. In spite of the political uprising, these social divisions persist.

Recommendations

The two Fellows from Yemen focused on encouraging the inclusion and empowerment of women and girls into the socio-political sphere. Their intervention involves a three stage approach: political and policy dialogue, gender mainstreaming, and specific action. Targeting government and civil society, the Yemeni delegation laid out a multi-year approach with fixed goals for two and five years that will create sustainable action in the areas of governance, employment and economic activities, education and society, health, and gender-based violence.

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Within two years, the delegates want to see the implementation of a 30 percent quota for women within the executive, legislative and judiciary branches of government and 50 percent representation of women within the constitutional drafting committee. Affirmative action programs should enable women to break into previously shuttered fields. The delegates would also like to see the introduction and implementation of laws that criminalize domestic violence and female genital mutilation, raise the minimum age of marriage to 18 years, and amend the personal status law, the penal code, and electoral law. Following the conclusion of the current National Dialogue Conference (NDC), independent institutions should be established to monitor implementation of NDC recommendations.

Within the Women's National Commission (WNC), the delegates hope to push for a policy of inclusion by ensuring that youth, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups are included in the language of the Constitution, the media, and educational fields. In particular, the WNC should work to increase the budget for women's and early child education and provide free access to healthcare for women from low-income families.

Turning to civil society, the Yemeni Fellows would like to see increased capacity-building efforts for national and local NGOs and increased financial support for ethnic and cultural associations. Micro-finance projects should be encouraged. In addition, the delegates want to expand their work with artists for advocacy purposes (such as caricature art, street theater, puppetry, and film) and encourage increasing collaboration with state and non-state actors (such as imams, influential male and female sheikhs, and teachers). At the same time, the delegates want to develop and carry out awareness campaigns in partnership with the Yemeni media and NGOs to educate society on women's rights.

Within five years, the Yemeni delegation hopes to implement gender mainstreaming. This includes the adoption of non-gendered language in all official governmental policies, laws, and educational materials, and the creation of an incentive program for organizations and institutions that employ more than 40 percent women. In addition, the government and civil society should work together to create and support safe houses and shelters for the homeless, internally displaced persons, the elderly, and those with special needs. Finally,

community dialogue initiatives can work to develop moderate and enlightened religious discourse.

Among civil society, the Yemeni delegation would like to see the creation of popular education centers in Sana'a and in rural areas to facilitate dialogue exchange, and the establishment of advocacy groups in universities throughout Yemen. In particular, the Fellows want to encourage the development of community cooperatives and the creation of a weekly television show dedicated to women's issues and rights.

Looking at the aggregate, the international community has committed to help rebuild and strengthen Yemen, and has especially committed substantial financial resources. The capacity of local civil society actors to absorb and utilize this funding, however, is still limited. Few organizations are actively promoting women's rights on the ground, and emerging groups need training. Critically, the humanitarian crisis in Yemen and the lack of basic services from the State limit the ability of civil society to implement broader social movements. Instead, the Yemen Fellows affirmed the need to begin with community-building efforts that bring neighbors together in support of one another; civil society can then use these grassroots networks to begin implementing small women's rights projects locally.



Yemeni Fellow Marooj Alwazir

Next Steps & Closing

Reflecting on the prior four days, the Salzburg Global Fellows expressed a shared appreciation for the opportunity to exchange knowledge and experiences at a regional level. After several years – indeed, several decades – of challenging work, activists are eager for new strategies, programmatic training, and hope.



Salzburg Global Fellows of Session 508

For a region that lacked a strong civil society prior to the 2011 uprisings, discussions during Session 508 revealed that a number of groups are already working towards many of the goals identified by the Fellows. What is needed now, as the Fellows return to their home countries (be they one of the four focus countries or elsewhere in the world) is improved linkages and support between these various groups to amplify their impact. A great pool of passion and talent pervades the region; this now needs to be harnessed through knowledge exchange and capacity building. Participants recognized that while actions need to be focused locally and nationally, regional information-sharing and strategizing helped them to see specific challenges in a new light and gave them fresh ideas on how to reframe hurdles and implement new approaches.

As the Fellows left Schloss Leopoldskron, the work of Salzburg Global Seminar continues: helping to support in-country taskforces* to formulate “roadmaps” of how to achieve greater inclusion and diversity across the region, and working with its session partner, the Arab Human Rights Fund, to establish future continuation of the program.

“Please consider us a faithful and long-term partner,” Fateh Azzam, (then) Board Chair of the Arab Human Rights Fund, told the Fellows in his closing remarks. Nancy Smith, Program Director at Salzburg Global Seminar echoed the Fund’s commitment, stating, “We will be following up with you to determine how Salzburg can best facilitate this new work that you are leading. There is no question that these transitions will continue to be challenging and we want to do what we can to support your efforts in meeting the promises of the uprisings to create more open and inclusive societies.”

The revolutions started nearly two years ago, and although the dictators have been removed from the session’s four focus countries, the hard work of building inclusive and diverse democratic society will not be over anytime soon.

** In March 2014, select participants were reconvened to re-examine the (rapidly changing) context and refine recommendations and plans in a session entitled: Supporting Diversity and Inclusion in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Yemen. The report can be accessed online: www.SalzburgGlobal.org/go/544/report*

Appendix I

Interviews and Podcasts

Interviews and podcasts were conducted with the following session participants:

Ghanim Al Najjar

“The human rights discourse is vastly improving”

Professor says meeting new activists at MENA session has given him hope

www.salzburgglobal.org/news-media/article/ghanim-al-najjar-the-human-rights-discourse-is-vastly-improving

Fateh Azzam

“There are a lot of challenges to progress”

Board Chair of Arab Human Rights Fund speaks to Salzburg Global as MENA session convenes

www.salzburgglobal.org/news-media/article/fateh-azzam-there-are-a-lot-of-challenges-to-progress

Amal Basha

“I am fortunate to be here”

Yemeni human rights activist delighted to return to Salzburg Global

www.salzburgglobal.org/news-media/article/amal-basha-i-am-fortunate-to-be-here

www.soundcloud.com/salzburgglobal/amal-basha

Belabbes Benkredda

“The Arab Spring is on life support”

Munathara Initiative founder says optimism caused by movement has faded

www.salzburgglobal.org/news-media/article/belabbes-benkredda-the-arab-spring-is-on-life-support

www.soundcloud.com/salzburgglobal/belabbes-benkredda

Sherine El Taraboulsi

“It is very diverse”

Oxford-based researcher discusses philanthropic landscape within Arab region

www.salzburgglobal.org/news-media/article/sherine-el-taraboulsi-it-is-very-diverse

Rihab Elhaj

“Very few things were done right initially”

New Libya Foundation president speaks to Salzburg Global about Libya’s transition process

www.salzburgglobal.org/news-media/article/rihab-elhaj-very-few-things-were-done-right-initially

www.soundcloud.com/salzburgglobal/rihab-elhaj

Jeanne Elone

“The discussions have been very helpful”

TrustAfrica officer takes part in Q&A about the MENA session and her work

www.salzburgglobal.org/news-media/article/jeanne-elone-the-discussions-have-been-very-helpful

Ahmed Gebreel

“It was about dignity and respect”

Former diplomat discusses cause of Libyan Revolution and effect on human rights

www.salzburgglobal.org/news-media/article/ahmed-gebreel-it-was-about-dignity-and-respect

Hauke Hartmann

“They are consciously shut out”

Senior project manager at German think-tank Bertelsmann Stiftung highlights civil society representatives’ exclusion in MENA region

www.salzburgglobal.org/news-media/article/hauke-hartmann-they-are-consciously-shut-out
www.soundcloud.com/salzburgglobal/hauke-hartmann

Kawa Hassan

“It should lead to something tangible”

Hivos Knowledge Officer calls for practical ideas to stem from MENA session

www.salzburgglobal.org/news-media/article/kawa-hassan-it-should-lead-to-something-tangible

Azza Kamel

“We have to ask ourselves – who makes the news?”

Feminist activist speaks to Salzburg Global about Egypt’s transition process

www.salzburgglobal.org/news-media/article/azza-kamel-we-have-to-ask-ourselves-who-makes-the-news

www.soundcloud.com/salzburgglobal/azza-kamel

Ann Elizabeth Mayer

“This is now a very legitimate exercise”

Professor says talking about human rights in the Middle East has now become normal

www.salzburgglobal.org/news-media/article/ann-elizabeth-mayer-this-is-now-a-very-legitimate-exercise

www.soundcloud.com/salzburgglobal/elizabeth-ann-mayer

Amr Shalakany

“We still have time”

Law professor left encouraged by MENA discussions

www.salzburgglobal.org/news-media/article/amr-shalakany-we-still-have-time

Appendix II

Session Participants

All positions correct at time of session (November 2013)

Enas Abdel Wanis

Head of Documenting & Monitoring, National Council for Civil Liberties & Human Rights, Benghazi, Libya

Elie Abouaoun

Program Officer North Africa and Iraq, United States Institute of Peace, Washington, DC, USA

Esra Abu-shalaa

CEO, Be Positive, Tripoli, Libya

Ghanim Al Najjar

Lecturer Kuwait University, Qadiseyah, Kuwait; Board Member, Arab Human Rights Fund, Beirut, Lebanon

Morooj Alwazir

Co-Founder; Human Rights Community Organizer; Photographer, #SupportYemen, Sana'a, Yemen

Siwar Aouadi

Euro-South Project Co-ordinator, BBC Media Action, Tunis, Tunisia

Fateh Azzam

Chair, Arab Human Rights Fund, Beirut, Lebanon

Amal Basha

Director, Sister's Arab Forum for Human Rights, Sana'a, Yemen

Youssef Belgacem

Executive Board Member & Co-founder, I WATCH, Tunis, Tunisia

Belabbes Benkredda

Founding Director, Munathara, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Samira El-Masoudi

President, Libyan Women Union, Tripoli, Libya

Sherine El Taraboulsi

Independent Research & Policy Consultant, Oxford University, Oxford, United Kingdom

Rihab Elhaj

President and Co-Founder, New Libya Foundation, Tripoli, Libya

Khaled Elkadiki

President, Libyan Academic Organization, Benghazi, Libya

Abdulkhakem Elkhamri

Project Coordinator, Libyan Center for Democracy and Human Rights, Tripoli, Libya

Jeanne Elone

International Criminal Justice Program Officer, Trust Africa, Dakar-Fann, Senegal

Murad Gargum

Film Maker, Libyan Center for Development and Human Rights, Tripoli, Libya

Ahmed Gebreel

Political Adviser, National Transitional Council, Tripoli, Libya

Hauke Hartmann

Senior Project Manager, Bertelsmann Stiftung, Gütersloh, Germany

Kawa Hassan

Knowledge Officer, Hivos, The Hague, Netherlands

H.A. Hellyer

Fellow, The Brookings Institution, Cairo, Egypt

Azza Kamel

Executive Director, Appropriate Communication Techniques for Development (ACT), Heliopolis, Egypt

Samah Krichah

Member of the Orientation Council, Labo Democratique, Tunis, Tunisia

Laith Kubba

Director and Sr. Program Officer, MENA, National Endowment for Democracy, Washington, DC, USA

Mohamed Tammem

Mahjoub Mission Manager, Al Bawsala, Tunis, Tunisia

Iman Mandour

Board Member, Center for Egyptian Women Legal Assistance (CEWLA), Cairo, Egypt

Ann Elizabeth Mayer

Associate Professor of Legal Studies, University of Pennsylvania, PA, USA

Yosra MkaDEM

Regional Coordinator, I WATCH, Tunis, Tunisia

Salem Mohamed

Legal Counsel, ABA-ROLL, Cairo, Egypt

Sri Nuryanti

Researcher, Indonesian Institute of Sciences, Jakarta, Indonesia

Mohamed Sallam

Director, Pan Afrikan Center, Augsburg College, Minneapolis, MN, USA

Kamal Sedra

Founder and manager, DISC Development; Senior Technical Advisor, ICT4Peace Foundation, Cairo, Egypt

Rina Shahrullah

Head of Postgraduate Study of Law, Universitas Internasional Batam (UIB), Batam, Indonesia

Amr Shalakany

Associate Professor in Law, The American University in Cairo, Cairo, Egypt

Mokhtar Shaluf

Chairman, Rased Organization, Misurata, Libya

Marwa Sharafeldin

Board Member, Musawah Global Movement for Equality and Justice in the Muslim Family; Co-founder, Network for Women's Rights Organisations, Cairo, Egypt

Nirvana Shawky

Regional Director, Crisis Action, Cairo, Egypt

Mariz Tadros

Fellow, University of Sussex, Brighton, United Kingdom; Board Member, Arab Human Rights Fund, Beirut, Lebanon

Aimee Thomson

New York University School of Law, New York, NY, USA

Jan Claudius Völkel

BTI Regional Co-ordinator for Middle East and North Africa, Cairo, Egypt

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Oscar Tollast

Communications Intern

Session Parter – Arab Human Rights Fund

The Arab Human Rights Fund (AHRF) was formed at the behest of the Arab region’s human rights community to serve as a support foundation with an enduring commitment to the region, to the full spectrum of human rights, and to the painstaking work of building the region’s human rights infrastructure through financial and technical support. The Fund defines “all human rights” as those enumerated in the International Bill of Rights and all international instruments dealing with human rights and humanitarian law, and the “Arab region” as the member countries of the Arab League. Since its inception in 2008, the Fund awarded over 130 grants totaling more than \$3 million to over 100 human rights actors including groups, organizations, and individuals to support a wide range of human rights efforts in 20 Arab countries.

The Fund is dedicated to strengthening not just the work of human rights organizations and defenders in the Arab region, but also to securing resources for human rights initiatives and the human rights community from foundations and individuals in the region and among the Diaspora, and to promoting social justice and human rights philanthropy to ensure sustainable support for the long-term efforts of human rights defenders in the region. The Fund envisions a day when the efforts of human rights defenders and organizations are sustained by the beneficiaries of their work—the people of the Arab region itself.

Although regional funding for human rights requires time to build trust, support from AHRF in the meantime helps to protect groups from accusations of doing the bidding of “foreign” interests, and affirms the need for organizations to look inward and to be attentive to the communities they serve. The Fund also actively strives to become a resource for grant makers who seek to make use of rights-based approaches in their funding work in a number of fields, bringing a unifying framework that seeks to emphasize the inter-related, inter-dependent and indivisible nature of the demands being voiced on a number of fronts—social, political and economic—across the region.

Appendix III

Salzburg Global Seminar Staff

Senior Management

Stephen L. SALYER, *President & Chief Executive Officer*
Patricia BENTON, *Vice President & Chief Operating Officer*
Clare SHINE, *Vice President & Chief Program Officer*
George ZARUBIN, *Vice President & Chief Development Officer*

Program and Administrative Staff

Thomas Biebl, *Director, Marketing and Communications*
Diasmer Panna Bloe, *Program Director*
Jemma Clerkin, *Program Associate*
Charles E. Ehrlich, *Program Director*
Jochen Fried, *Director of Education*
Rachelle Giard, *Individual Giving Manager*
Benjamin W. Glahn, *European Development Director*
David Goldman, *Associate Director of Education*
Michaela Goldman, *Intern Program Manager*
Louise Hallman, *Editor*
Jan Heinecke, *Fellowship Manager*
Astrid Koblmüller, *Program Manager*
Jackie Koney, *US Development Director*
Camilla Leimisch, *Assistant, Registration Department*
Tatsiana Lintouskaya, *Program Director (on leave)*
John Lotherington, *Program Director*
Sharon Marcoux, *Financial Manager, US*
Paul Mihailidis, *Program Director,*
Salzburg Media Academy
Edward Mortimer, *Senior Program Advisor*
Daniel O'Donnell, *Development Associate*
Beth Pertiller, *Director of Administration*
Bernadette Prasser, *Program Officer*
Michi Radanovic, *Asst. Director Finance & HR Assistant*
Ursula Reichl, *Assistant Director Finance, Salzburg*
Manuela Resch-Trampitsch, *Director Finance, Salzburg*
Marie-Louise Ryback, *Program Consultant,*
Holocaust Education and Genocide Prevention Initiative
Astrid Schröder, *Program Director,*
Global Citizenship Program
Katharina Schwarz, *Special Assistant to the President*
Susanna Seidl-Fox, *Program Director, Culture and the Arts*
Nancy Rae Smith, *Program Consultant*
Ginte Stankeviciute, *Program Associate*
Julia Stepan, *Program Associate*
Eszter Tóth, *Program and Development Assistant*

Hotel Schloss Leopoldskron

Richard Aigner, *Hotel Operations Manager*
Margit Fesl, *Housekeeping Supervisor*
Gerhard Haumtratz, *Service Supervisor*
Ernst Kiesling, *Executive Chef*
Karin Maurer, *Reservations and Revenue Supervisor*
Matthias Rinnerthaler, *Maintenance Supervisor*
Karin Schiller, *Sales and Marketing Manager*
Daniel Szelényi, *General Manager*
Natascha Weissenböck, *Events Coordinator*
Veronika Zuber, *Events Coordinator*

Seminar Interns

(at time of program)

Molly Bruce, *Library*
Laura Dick, *Program*
Bettina Lemm, *Program*
Posey Swope, *Program*
Oscar Tollast, *Communications*

Report Author: Aimee Thomson is an American second-year law student at New York University (NYU) School of Law, where she focuses on international human rights law as well as privacy and civil liberties in the context of national security. She currently serves as legal chair for the NYU chapter of the Iraqi Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP), a law student-driven organization that provides legal services to Arab and Afghan refugees seeking resettlement in the United States. She has previously interned with the Project On Government Oversight (POGO) as a Ford Foundation Law School Public Interest fellow. Prior to law school, Ms. Thomson served as the operations and compliance officer for the Arab Human Rights Fund (AHRF), and continues to support its work as a consultant. She holds a B.A. in political science and physics from Colorado College and has studied Arabic in Lebanon, Syria and Tunisia.

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BMW F

Capital Group Companies

Salzburg Global Seminar would like to thank the Session speakers for their assistance in developing this program and for generously donating their time and expertise, and to all the participants that contributed their intellectual capital and superior ideas.

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Salzburg Global Seminar

Salzburg Global Seminar was founded in 1947 by Austrian and American students from Harvard University. Convinced that former enemies must talk and learn from each other in order to create more stable and secure societies, they set out to create a neutral international forum for those seeking to regenerate Europe and shape a better world. Guided by this vision, we have brought over 31,000 participants together from 160 countries for more than 500 sessions and student academies across cultural and ideological barriers to address common challenges. Our track record is unique – connecting young and established leaders, and supporting regions, institutions and sectors in transition.

Salzburg Global's program strategy is driven by our Mission to challenge present and future leaders to solve issues of global concern. We work with partners to help people, organizations and governments bridge divides and forge paths for peace, empowerment and equitable growth.

Our three Program Clusters - Imagination, Sustainability and Justice - are guided by our commitment to tackle systems challenges critical for next generation leaders and engage new voices to 're-imagine the possible'. We believe that advances in education, science, culture, business, law and policy must be pursued together to reshape the landscape for lasting results. Our strategic convening is designed to address gaps and faultlines in global dialogue and policy making and to translate knowledge into action.

Our programs target new issues ripe for engagement and 'wicked' problems where progress has stalled. Building on our deep experience and international reputation, we provide a platform where participants can analyze blockages, identify shared goals, test ideas, and create new strategies. Our recruitment targets key stakeholders, innovators and young leaders on their way to influence and ensures dynamic perspectives on a given topic.

Our exclusive setting enables our participants to detach from their working lives, immerse themselves in the issues at hand and form new networks and connections. Participants come together on equal terms, regardless of age, affiliation, region or sector.

We maintain this energy and engagement through the Salzburg Global Network, which connects our Fellows across the world. It provides a vibrant hub to crowd-source new ideas, exchange best practice, and nurture emerging leaders through mentoring and support. The Network leverages our extraordinary human capital to advise on critical trends, future programs and in-region implementation.

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