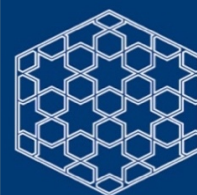




GABR FELLOWS MEETING WITH CHAIRMAN SHAFIK GABR IN WASHINGTON DC, NOVEMBER 2020



The  
SHAFIK GABR  
Foundation

# The Gabr Fellowship Newsletter

December 2020, Issue 41

## IN THIS ISSUE

## The Future of Education

As we reflect on 2020 which has been challenging to say the least, I ponder about the future generations and how they will learn to cope in an increasingly unpredictable world.

Is the education children are getting equipping them in an optimal way to manoeuvre and prosper? I fear this is not the case.

Technology is rapidly moving forward and this has brought changes in almost every aspect of our lives. Surprisingly, education is not a part of this. In a worryingly large number of schools and universities, young people are still being taught in an old-fashioned manner of learning by rote, chasing grades and memorizing without understanding. This needs to change as soon as possible.

Young people first and foremost need to be taught how to think independently and critically. Without this, they will not be able to discern fact from fiction, truth from fake news, and we might end up in an Orwellian world where people have lost the ability to think for themselves. Only by critical thinking, understanding, encouraging innovation and creativity, can we hope for a better world.

I like to think of the Gabr Fellowship as my contribution to the young people who will one day be leaders of the future. Looking back at what we have achieved so far, I have to say I have all the reasons to be optimistic for the years that lie ahead.

**M. Shafik Gabr**

## In Brief...

- Abdel Rahman Amr** Obtains MA Degree
- Ahmed Mostafa** Joins Ministry of State for Information
- Ahmed Radwan** Cast in New Play
- Because Baseball** is Winner of the 2020 Leaders Sports Community Award
- Bryan Griffin** Named Youth Lead
- Fabrice Guerrier** Finalist in Entrepreneur Competition
- Article by **Menna Farouk**: Bedouins Go Back to Their Roots
- Question of the Month**: A Pulse of the Gabr Fellowship Community
- Gabr Foundation **Reading Corner**
- Sarah Derdowski** Welcomes Baby Boy
- Thomas Stein** Launches Fifth in Oak

## News and Updates...

### Fabrice Guerrier Finalist in Entrepreneur Competition



**2018 Gabr Fellow Fabrice Guerrier**, Founder of Syllble Studios, is one of 8 finalists at Street Entrepreneurs Pitch Competition.

Fabrice was peer-selected out of 1,000 businesses from the Washington DC area. Street Pitch will air on December 15 at 7:00pm when the finalists will pitch their companies to a judging panel of experts and investors. The virtual audience will then vote by directly investing in their favourite entrepreneurs. Watch the event live here: <https://www.streetentrepreneurs.org/streetpitch2020>

### Bryan Griffin Named Youth Lead



**2017 Gabr Fellow Bryan Griffin** was chosen as a "Youth Lead" by the Warsaw-based Community of Democracies. The Community of Democracies (CoD) is a global intergovernmental coalition comprised of the Governing Council Member States that support adherence to democratic standards outlined in the Warsaw Declaration. Bryan is the youth lead representing the United States in this year's cohort. Read more here:

<https://community-democracies.org/codyouthleads-bryans-story>

### Sarah Derdowski Welcomes Baby Boy



**2014 Gabr Fellow Sarah Derdowski** and her husband welcomed their second son Julian Derdowski into their family on May 28, 2020.

Sarah is Executive Director of University of Colorado Denver Global Energy Management.

### Ahmed Radwan Cast in New Play



**2015 Gabr Fellow Ahmed Radwan** got cast in a theatre play that will be performed in January 2021 in Cairo.

The play is based on the movie Reservoir Dogs directed by Quentin Tarantino and Ahmed will be playing the role of Mr. White, the protagonist villain from the film, originally played by Harvey Keitel.

## Ahmed Mostafa Joins Ministry of State for Information



**2018 Gabr Fellow Ahmed Mostafa** started a new position as General Supervisor of Media Monitoring and Crisis Management Specialists at the Ministry of State for Information.

In addition, Ahmed obtained his Master's in Euro-Mediterranean relations. The title of his MA thesis is "Change in the position of the Left French parties towards Migration." This was a joint program between Cairo University and the Free University of Berlin.

## Because Baseball is Winner of the 2020 Leaders Sports Community Award



Because Baseball, founded by **2015 Gabr Fellow Kemp Gouldin**, has been named winner of the 2020 Leaders Sports Community Award. The Community Award, in partnership with Facebook, seeks out and celebrates an organization that is using sport to bring a community together, and it is at the heart of the Because Baseball mission to connect communities and build friendships through a common language: baseball.

## Abdel Rahman Amr Obtains MA Degree



**2017 Gabr Fellow Abdel Rahman Amr** finished his Master's degree in the summer.

Recently, he worked as a Research Assistant for the Institute for the Study of Teaching and Learning in the Disciplines (ISTLD). He worked on a project called *Transitioning Social Justice Pedagogy & Learning Online: Successes, Challenges & Future Opportunities*, helping ISTLD to evaluate difficulties and possibilities of online learning in Canada in response to C-19 lockdown from a social justice angle.

## Thomas Stein Launches Fifth in Oak



**2017 Gabr Fellow Thomas Stein** launched a new product from his personal inventions line. It is a kit to flash age whiskey cocktails wine and tequila. It is called Fifth in Oak.

Thomas is the Director of Business Development at American Trust Administrators in Kansas City.



## The Power of Connecting - Gabr Fellows Meetings in November



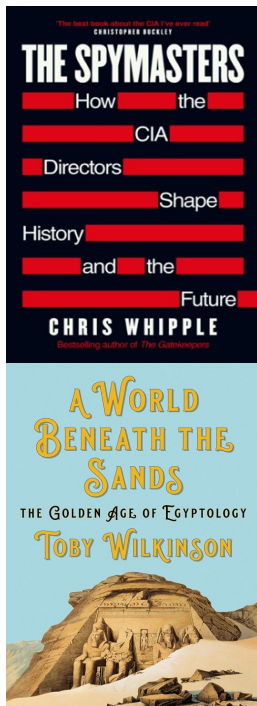
Mr Gabr continues with meeting the Gabr Fellows on his travels to Cairo and Washington DC.

On 8 November in Washington DC, the meeting was held at Mr Gabr's home and was attended by Suzanne Youngner (2014 Gabr Fellow), Kemp Gouldin (2015 Gabr Fellow), Leisel Bogan (2016 Gabr Fellow), Katherine Tan (2016 Gabr Fellow), Charles Truxal (2018 Gabr Fellow), and Fabrice Guerrier (2018 Gabr Fellow).

On 27 November, the meeting was held in Cairo. The Fellows present were Hadir Helal (2015 Gabr Fellow), Yasser El Zahhar (2016 Gabr Fellow), Soaad Hossam (2018 Gabr Fellow), Ahmed Mostafa (2018 Gabr Fellow), Youssef El Toukhy (2016 Gabr Fellow) and Sara Hesham (2017 Gabr Fellow).

These meetings are invaluable for Fellows from all years to get to know each other and update one another as well as Mr Gabr on their lives, careers, and plans. They also provide chance to discuss current world issues from different angles and perspectives.

## Gabr Foundation Reading Corner



The Foundation Reading Corner encourages Fellows to critique the books that have been recommended to them in each issue. For this issue, Mr. Gabr recommends *The Spymasters: How the CIA Directors Shape History and the Future* by Chris Whipple and *A World Beneath the Sands: The Golden Age of Egyptology* by Toby Wilkinson.

From the *New York Times* bestselling author Chris Whipple, *The Spymasters* is a remarkable, behind-the-scenes look at what it's like to run the world's most powerful intelligence agency, and how the CIA is often a crucial counterforce against presidents threatening to overstep the powers of their office.

In *A World Beneath the Sands*, acclaimed Egyptologist Toby Wilkinson chronicles the ruthless race between the British, French, Germans, and Americans to lay claim to Egypt's mysteries and treasures. He tells riveting stories of the men and women whose obsession with Egypt's ancient civilization helped to enrich and transform the West's understanding of the Nile Valley and its people.

# Bedouins Go Back to Their Roots in Egypt as COVID-19 Hits Tourism

by Menna Farouk, 2017 Gabr Fellow

SAINT CATHERINE, Egypt - For years, Um Saad has been urging fellow Bedouins to tend their orchards and vegetable patches in the mountains of Egypt's South Sinai. It took a pandemic for them to listen to her.

Tourism, her community's main source of income, has been wobbly for years - rattled by militant attacks and political unrest. But COVID-19 has decimated the sector, encouraging many Bedouins to go back to the livelihoods of their ancestors.

"This is one good thing about the coronavirus," said Um Saad, 75, sitting outside the house where she has lived for decades near the town of Saint Catherine, occasionally hosting foreign visitors hiking in the mountainous region.

"For me, agriculture and tourism have always been in parallel. But agriculture is the major source of sustaining life here," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Since the pandemic brought tourism to a virtual standstill in March, hundreds of Bedouins have returned to their plots in the mountains of Saint Catherine, which have often served as a haven in times of political upheaval and war. "We experienced that also during the January 25 Revolution in 2011 and the Iraqi-Kuwaiti war in 1992," said Ahmed Farhan, a Bedouin in his late 30s, who arrived back in the region in May after losing his job as a tour guide.

The revolution that toppled late President Hosni Mubarak nine years ago, and the 2015 bombing of a Russian passenger jet, dealt sharp blows to Egyptian tourism from which it had only just recovered when the coronavirus outbreak hit.

Gathering crops from the newly replanted garden tended by his father before him, Farhan said he produces enough to feed himself and sell the surplus. He no longer wants to return to his former work taking tourists to Mount Sinai. "This life is the best. I'm eating healthy food, drinking clean water from the wells here and also making money out of the crops that I grow. What more could I need?" said Farhan, who grows grapes, honey, almonds and vegetables.

## SURVIVAL STRATEGY

Tourism accounts for up to 15% of Egypt's gross domestic product (GDP) and officials have said the country was losing about \$1 billion each month since COVID-19 shut borders and airports.

One of Egypt's biggest tourism draws, alongside historic sites such as Luxor and the Pyramids of Giza, are the sandy beaches of the South Sinai - home to the Sharm el-Sheikh resort.

But visitor numbers in the city have been just 10% of last year's levels in recent months, officials said in September, and

thousands of staff have been laid off due to lockdown closures and subsequent social distancing measures.

The bustle of Sharm el-Sheikh and other coastal resorts is a sharp contrast to life in and around Saint Catherine, which lies 1,600 metres (5,200 feet) above sea-level.

In the highlands around the town, Bedouin tribes have a long history of small-scale farming and goat herding before a boom in package tourism in the 1980s led many to abandon their ancestral land and farming traditions. Different Bedouin tribes live across the Sinai, with traditional livelihoods tied to the region's diverse climate and landscape, whether raising camels in the desert to fishing along the coast.

They are known for being expert at adapting to the region's harsh conditions and other challenges, said Ben Hoffler, co-founder of the Sinai Trail, a hiking tourism project. "The Bedouin economy is a diverse one. It's part of their economic survival strategy. If one sector of the economy goes down they revive other sectors until things improve," he said. "This is exactly what the Bedouin are doing now."

## SUSTAINABLE

Before the 2011 revolution scared visitors away, tourism revenues were at record highs in Egypt, bringing in \$13 billion per year. The industry had started to rebound in the last two years.

Many Bedouins will likely return to tourism when the pandemic passes, Hoffler said. But at the same time, the crisis has reminded many younger Bedouins of the need to keep their options open. "The capacity to live from the land is something that sets the Bedouin apart and its economic advantages - and the extra safety it gives - is more clear than ever in a pandemic," he added.

South Sinai's governorate launched a series of agricultural projects in August in Saint Catherine to support Bedouin communities, including plans to build greenhouses, training programmes and the distribution of olive seedlings.

In Cairo, the national government has earmarked billions of dollars for developmental projects in the Sinai to expand agricultural lands and make better use of water.

But Sheikh Saad, 52, who has come back to his orchard after working for 30 years as a tour guide in Mount Sinai, said many Bedouins would not need much persuasion to continue looking after their fruit trees and vegetable gardens. "More and more Bedouins will start to look for resources in the mountains," he said. "They have realized that taking care of these resources is sustainable unlike tourism which can dwindle at any time."

**Disclaimer:** The views presented in this article are the author's alone and do not represent the opinion of the Foundation. This article was originally published in Reuters: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-egypt-tourism-bedouins-feature-trfn/bedouins-go-back-to-their-roots-in-egypt-as-covid-19-hits-tourism-idUSKBN27M1F2>

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



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

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

### 1. How do you see US-Egypt relations under President Biden?

Enhanced: 44%

Diminished: 56%

### 2. Will the US-China cold war continue under the new US Administration?

Yes: 67%

No: 18%

I don't know: 15%

### 3. Will the Egypt-Ethiopia Nile Dam conflict be resolved in 2021?

Yes: 22%

No: 56%

I don't know: 22%

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

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY



December 1: Nancy Habib, 2014 Gabr Fellow



December 1: Shehab Farouk, 2014 Gabr Fellow



December 9: Alex Goldmark, 2013 Gabr Fellow



December 11: Leisel Bogan, 2016 Gabr Fellow



December 15: Ahmed El Assal, 2014 Gabr Fellow

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY



December 16: Beth Cartier, 2013 Gabr Fellow



December 17: Zeyad El Kelani, 2014 Gabr Fellow



December 22: Nick Thomas, 2015 Gabr Fellow



December 23: Becca Doten, 2013 Gabr Fellow



December 26: Soaad Hossam, 2018 Gabr Fellow



# The Gabr Fellowship Newsletter

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

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



Ludwig Deutsch, *The Scribe*, 1894, oil on panel, The Shafik Gabr Collection

Connect with us



<https://eastwestdialogue.org/>

[info@shafikgabrfoundation.org](mailto:info@shafikgabrfoundation.org)

**The Shafik Gabr Foundation**  
400 North Capitol Street NW, Suite 585  
Washington, DC 20001

7 Hassan Al-Akbar Street  
Cairo, Egypt, 11571

