



2014 GABR FELLOWS MEETING WITH REVEREND RAPHAEL WARNOCK, WHO WAS ELECTED THIS MONTH TO REPRESENT THE STATE OF GEORGIA IN THE US SENATE, AT THE EBENEZER BAPTIST CHURCH IN ATLANTA, GA



The
SHAFIK GABR
Foundation

The Gabr Fellowship Newsletter

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Zoom Fatigue

Firstly, Happy New Year one and all. I hope 2021 brings us, above all else, health and peace.

I have often talked and written about the importance of direct, face-to-face communication, and at no other time has this been more challenged than in the previous year.

Face-to-face replaced by face-to-screen, Zoom has become the ubiquitous and predominant mode of communication. And whilst we surely need to be grateful for what new technologies enable us to do (namely, video calls with family, friends and relatives who we are unable to visit), does this perhaps become a hindrance when it comes to business?

A recent article described a phenomenon known as Zoom fatigue thus: "Zoom Fatigue Syndrome is a condition that is caused by excessive participation in seemingly endless meetings, discussions and lectures on Zoom. Symptoms include bleary eyes, extreme boredom and a tendency to switch off video while doing other things but pretending to stay engaged."

We have become bombarded with endless webinars, Zoom sessions, online conferences, discussions and presentations, almost daily. And, while I do not doubt the value of some of them, I wonder, at what point do webinars become their own purpose, and step into the area of self-promotion rather than meaningful, effective debate? At this point, I am "Zoom-ed out."

M. Shafik Gabr

News and Updates...

Michael Matthiesen's Career Move



2017 Gabr Fellow Michael Matthiesen completed his internship with Federal Public Defenders Office. During his intership Michael tried to get at-risk prisoners off on compassionate release as COVID-19 was plaguing the prison systems, and many older prisoners were dying.

Additionally, Michael started a Research Assistantship with GW Law Dean Dayna Matthew. He is helping her edit her book "Just Health" and helping her teach a class.

Magdalena Kura's success in Bread Finance



2015 Gabr Fellow Magdalena Kura has been Senior Product Manager at Bread Finance, a fin tech startup, since April 2020.

Bread Finance has just been acquired by Alliance Data, and the acquisition means a lot more responsibility for Magda and new challenges in 2021. "It's been thrilling to work on the intersection of e-commerce and payments, an industry that has been fueled by COVID", she says.

Shehab Farouk in the OAC Arbitration Committee



2014 Gabr Fellow Shehab Farouk was chosen as a member in the committee for drafting the arbitration rules of the Oman Commercial Arbitration Centre (known as OAC) which was successfully published in the official gazette on 6 December 2020. Shehab was the only non-Omani participant in the committee.

The OAC was established in 2018 as the first institutional arbitration center in the Sultanate of Oman.

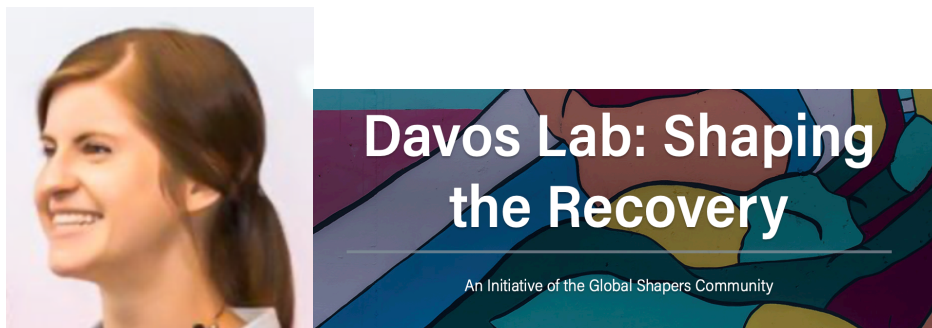
Nathan Thomas Starts Podcast



2014 Gabr Fellow Nathan Thomas started a podcast called 'Trendlines' to offer a thoughtful millennial take on politics and culture by following the modern trendlines. He recently hosted a podcast with **2015 Gabr Fellow Nick Thomas** – you can listen to the podcast here:

<https://anchor.fm/trendlines/episodes/Drop-a-Pin-with-an-Independent-enqr3h>

Alexis Taylor Selected as Davos Lab Taskforce Member



2016 Gabr Fellow Alexis Taylor was recently selected as a Davos Lab Taskforce member based on her work co-founding of Reimagine Society, a project aiming to connect young leaders around the world and reflecting on the future they want to create.

The Davos Lab Taskforce is an initiative of the World Economic Forum, which aims to mobilize youth across the world and equip them with the knowledge, networks, and tools needed to shape the world's post-COVID recovery.

Find more information about the initiative here: <https://adobe.ly/3mhfEoV>

Judson Moore's Exponential Happiness



2015 Gabr Fellow Judson Moore wrote his first book entitled *Exponential Happiness: How to identify and pursue life goals starting at a young age*. The book is a guide to Judson's insights and life hacks for discovering and achieving one's goals. Judson is a Kentucky-born technophile who calls Texas home and currently lives in Germany, where he works as a product management professional. Get the book here: <https://www.amazon.com/Exponential-Happiness-identify-pursue-starting-ebook/dp/B07YYMZD4T>

Dalia Younis's Music Endeavours



2017 Gabr Fellow Dalia Younis was featured in Egyptian TV host and journalist Mahmoud Saad's show. Watch the performance on Dalia's official Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/dalia.ihab.younis>

Dalia is a medical doctor by training, a content creator and strategist in the development sector by profession, but by passion she's an independent music artist. She started many community-based singing initiatives, joined choirs, facilitated song creation workshops, wrote notations for a capella and studied music-theory.

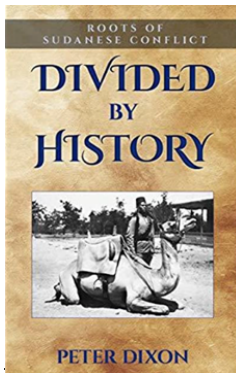
Gabr Fellows Meeting in December



On 6 December in Egypt, Mr Gabr held a meeting with the Gabr Fellows at ARTOC HQ in Mokattam, Cairo. The meeting was attended by Nourhan Moussa (2014 Gabr Fellow), Youssef El-Toukhy (2016 Gabr Fellow), Amr Seda (2017 Gabr Fellow), Sara Hesham (2017 Gabr Fellow), Ibrahim Hammouda (2017 Gabr Fellow), Muhammad El Hawary (2018 Gabr Fellow), and Soaad Hossam (2018 Gabr Fellow).

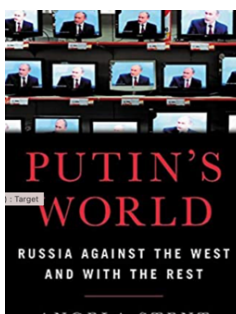
These meetings are invaluable for Fellows from all years to get to know each other and update one another as well as Mr Gabr on their lives, careers, and plans. They also provide chance to discuss current world affairs from different angles and perspectives.

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 *Divided by History: Roots of Sudanese Conflict* by Peter Dixon and *Putin's World: Russia Against the West and with the Rest* by Angela Stent.

Sudanese civil wars were not ended by formation of a new state. Violence has continued in South Sudan and we see today that the North is by no means peaceful. And much of Sudanese history has been about intervention and domination by foreigners. By telling the stories of some of these outsiders, *Divided by History* digs out the historical roots of Sudanese conflicts.



From renowned foreign policy expert Angela Stent comes a dissection of today's Russia. *Putin's World* looks at Russia's key relationships – its downward spiral with the United States, Europe, and NATO; its ties to China, Japan, the Middle East; and with its neighbors, particularly the fraught relationship with Ukraine.

The Shafik Gabr Foundation's flagship initiative, *East-West: the Art of Dialogue* organizes an annual exchange program, the Gabr Fellowship, for young emerging leaders from the East and West to join forces to develop and implement projects addressing critical issues in their countries. The mission of the Fellowship is to promote greater mutual understanding by building bridges between the two cultures by instigating dialogue and the exchange of ideas between emerging leaders from the United States and the Arab World.

The initiative has been extremely successful ever since its initiation in 2012, and we are proud to currently have 120 Fellows who are still very much engaged with the Foundation. In addition to engaging with key stakeholders in business, government, academia, religion, science, tech, and finance, all Fellows are tasked with forming multinational teams to complete an action project. These projects empower the Fellows as inter-cultural ambassadors, amplifying the Fellowship's reach and impact.

The Fellows have already made an impact through their projects, including the launch of an Egyptian Little League Baseball Network, the creation of a virtual networking platform between MBA students in the United States and Egypt, and the training of nurses, to name but a few.

Ultimately, through hands-on activities, rigorous discussions, cultural site visits, and the collaborative action projects, the Fellows have a greater understanding of both countries and the potential for success and ongoing challenges each region faces.

Before COVID-19 struck, we had the best intentions of continuing this tradition in 2020 and have had more than a hundred excellent candidates from Egypt, the US, UK and France. As we were preparing to shortlist the candidates, the pandemic struck. It has not been an easy decision to make to postpone the Fellowship, however, the safety of the Gabr Fellows is our first and foremost priority. The next iteration of the Fellowship is planned for 3 months after the end of COVID-19. We sincerely hope to be able to hold our next iteration of the Gabr Fellowship in the Autumn of 2021.

Sponsor a 2021 Gabr Fellow

Sponsoring a Gabr Fellow for the 2021 Fellowship Program goes beyond financial support—it helps build bridges of cross-cultural understanding between the East and the West.

The sponsorship package costs \$35,000 which includes the sponsoring of a Fellow who can carry the name of the individual, organization, or corporation making the contribution.

Sponsors will be recognized in all Foundation publications, marketing materials, and at all events. You may find information about how to become a Sponsor, Corporate Patron, or provide Unrestricted Support here: eastwestdialogue.org/fellowship/how-to-support

Apart from sponsoring a Fellow, contributions to the Foundation of any amount, big or small, are encouraged and welcomed with sincere gratitude.



'Lift like a girl': Documentary celebrates Egypt's female weightlifters

by Menna Farouk, 2017 Gabr Fellow

CAIRO (Thomson Reuters Foundation) - On a busy street corner in the Egyptian city of Alexandria, an open-air training camp for female weightlifters has been inspiring women to reach the top of the sport for two decades - smashing taboos in the process.

It also inspired Egyptian filmmaker Mayya Zayed to spotlight women's success in the male-dominated sport in "Lift Like a Girl", a documentary that has won acclaim at international film festivals in recent months.

Zayed said she hoped her film would raise awareness about weightlifting among women and girls, and encourage more to follow their dreams - even if that means challenging gender stereotypes in socially conservative countries like Egypt.

"Usually the term 'lift like a girl' has a negative meaning, but our documentary is bringing a whole new meaning to the term - an empowering meaning aimed at inspiring current and future generations," Zayed, 35, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

"In weightlifting, women usually do much better than men, but they are not given enough support," she said, referring to the strong performance of her country's female weightlifters in international competition.

But many women give up on their passion for the sport because they cannot afford it, or because of societal and family pressures for them to marry and have children, she added.

"Lift Like a Girl" traces four years in the life of Zebiba, a girl from Alexandria who started training at Captain Ramadan's camp when she was nine, and follows her transformation into a fierce, medal-winning competitor.

The outdoor camp, which is located on a vacant lot surrounded by chain-link fencing, has been producing champion female weightlifters for more than 20 years.

They include Captain Ramadan's own daughter, Nahla Ramadan - a former world weightlifting champion and Olympic athlete, and Abeer Abdel Rahman, the first Arab woman to win two Olympic weightlifting medals.

"I was inspired by the winning of Nahla in the World Weightlifting Championship back in 2003 and from there I started my journey to know more about how she got there," Zayed said.

"I went to the camp and I found a unique world that had no (financial) capabilities but produced champions who competed in world tournaments," she added.

'BELIEVED IN EQUALITY'

Captain Ramadan, a former Olympic weightlifter who used to bear the financial cost of the training himself and train girls for free, died in 2017.

"He was a great man who believed in equality and the right of women to follow their dreams regardless of any social stereotypes," Zayed said.

Since his death, women weightlifters at the camp have started fundraising to help girls continue their training for free. Ramadan's daughter Nahla and his son Nehad now manage the centre, which does not receive external funding.

Zayed is planning to go to schools and universities as well as conduct panel discussions and workshops to highlight the challenges women face in the sport, and hopes to drum up some extra funding for the cash-strapped camp.

According to the 2015 Global Gender Gap Index, Egypt ranks low in gender equity compared to other nations.

The Index, which measures disparities between men and women across countries, ranked Egypt 136th out of 145 nations.

"We are still struggling with the great challenge of women under-representation at workplaces in general and sport in particular - not to mention a sport like weightlifting," said Randa Fakhr El-Deen, a women's rights activist and executive director of the NGOs Union on Harmful Practices Against Women.

Celebrating women champions not only serves to inspire women, but helps erode gender stereotypes, she added.

"Lift Like A Girl" premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in September and won the Golden Dove for Best Film in the German Competition, Long Film category, at the International Leipzig Festival for Documentary and Animated Film in October.

It also won three awards, including an audience award, at the 42nd Cairo International Film Festival, this month.

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-women-weightlifting-interview-t/lift-like-a-girl-documentary-celebrates-egypts-female-weightlifters-idUSKBN28W1ZV>

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. COVID-19: Will You get vaccinated when you get the opportunity?

Yes: 79%

No: 7%

I don't know: 14%

2. Have you experienced what some term 'Zoom fatigue' in the past year (the tiredness, worry, or burnout associated with overusing virtual platforms of communication)?

Yes: 72%

No: 24%

I don't know: 4%

3. In 2021, do you see yourself working from:

Home: 62%

Office: 28%

Other: 10%

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



January 1: Sherif Soliman, 2017 Gabr Fellow



January 1: Shehab Farouk, 2014 Gabr Fellow



January 11: Bassma Fahim, 2015 Gabr Fellow



January 12: Reem Soliman, 2013 Gabr Fellow



January 14: Daniel Lansberg-Rodriguez, 2013 Gabr Fellow



January 26: Mohammed Mubarak, 2013 Gabr Fellow



January 27: Bryan Griffin, 2017 Gabr Fellow



January 27: Katie Applebaum, 2018 Gabr Fellow



January 29: Alexis Taylor, 2016 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/>



Tadeusz Ajdukiewicz, *A Caravan Crossing the Desert*, 1890, oil on canvas, The Shafik Gabr Collection

Connect with us



<https://eastwestdialogue.org/>

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