

The
SHAFIK GABR
Foundation



Gabr Fellows meeting in Cairo with Chairman Shafik Gabr, December 2021

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE TECHNOEDUCATED

It was a very long time ago. I clearly remember the English School in Heliopolis, a suburb of Cairo, where I attended high school. It was supposed to be a good school then, with good teachers and happy students.

But the enigma of memorization was at its heyday. I hated memorization and had to pin notes on the back of the student in front of me when I was called upon to recite a ridiculous poem or some superfluous mathematical formula. Until one day the teacher asked me to recite from the aisle and I had to swerve my neck like a cobra to see my notes as I answered his rather useless questions. I was no radical but I sincerely believed that using one's grey cells to memorize was a waste of space and a big hurdle to being creative.

I remembered all of that as I was sitting in Caffè Gilli in Florence. Caffè Gilli in Piazza Della Repubblica across from the Savoy Hotel is a wood-panelled iconic gathering spot for people watching and home to the best biscotti and tiramisu.

It was a cool March afternoon and as I was enjoying an espresso and biscotti, I was waiting for three friends to arrive. Giuseppe Matteo, a successful Italian educational technologist straight out of GQ; Dina Helmy, a well-known professor of education in London and published author; and Jack Gordon, a Silicon Valley guru for over a decade.

The three had a serious love for Egypt. Giuseppe invested in Egypt and visited more than six times, Dina was born in Egypt and sponsored the schools for children with special needs and kept close contact with her country of birth. As for Jack, he resided in Egypt twice for three months each time, mentoring tech start-ups.

It was a great coincidence that we were all in Italy at the same time and we agreed to meet over the weekend in Florence, a city of so much positive energy, good food and amazing history. I was there to once again visit the Uffizi Galleries which, like the Hermitage, I can never get enough of.

Giuseppe arrived on the dot, dressed to a T, literally out of central casting. He could easily be eligible to be the next James Bond. Both Dina and Jack arrived a few minutes later – Dina dressed in a beautiful cream suit and Jack in jeans and a black leather biker jacket.

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We all caught up on what has been going on in our lives during this never-ending pandemic since we had not met in person since early 2019 when we attended a tech conference in the US. After some amazing pasta with truffles accompanied with Negronis, we sat on the terrace overlooking the piazza with double espressos.

Jack turned to me and asked how things were going in Egypt. I said there was good news and bad news. The good news, I clarified, was that the economy was buzzing with over 5% growth, Sisi brought back stability and security that Egypt had lost during the debacle of the rule of the Muslim Brotherhood, new infrastructure is moving forward at an unprecedented pace, modernisation is the government's focus despite many hurdles, and cities are sprouting from the north (El Alamein) to the south (New Aswan) plus the New Administrative Capital. On the negative side, I emphasized that two glaring facts stand out. First, the neighbourhood where Egypt is located is in turmoil – Libya, Sudan and the Ethiopian Dam problem. Secondly, the Egyptian people are lagging behind Sisi's agenda. As he races forward, the people are not moving in the same direction.

Dina interjected and said: "I totally agree, I was in Egypt last month and you have summarised matters well, however the only way Egyptians will support Sisi, enhance human rights and encourage democratic practices is via education and understanding the importance of upbringing."

Jack said: "Not only Egypt - the world's education system is outdated and no longer relevant." Giuseppe was nodding in agreement and Jack continued saying that information is a commodity and now it is available for free on the Internet.

Dina added: "The school systems in Egypt and globally have been built on memorisation of information and that is no longer valid. Today you need not memorise anything, you can ask Siri or Alexa or the Google assistant."

Jack reminded us that information is available for us now at zero cost and schools in Egypt have to reinvent themselves.

As they were talking about how technology must be the core of Egyptian education for Egypt to leap forward to a future it deserves, I was remembering a famous statement in an iconic play where the lead actor described Egypt as "balad shahdat" (country of certificates).

Giuseppe, who was listening carefully, said that if Egypt wants to become a member of the 'future tech camp', it must now take the necessary steps to make that happen. Giuseppe asked for a tiramisu and explained the world would be divided soon into the 'future tech camp' and the 'stagnant today camp', with technoeducation being the differentiation. He continued: "This is the whole underlying war between China and America - who will get the technology to make the other irrelevant? Now it's concentrated on military but the key will be the 'technoeducated' human being with the chips."

Dina interjected: "Giuseppe is right, the fact is that a chip in the body of a human being is a plus but it is not enough."

I was listening and shifted in my seat as there was noise from nearby tables and I said: "Having read about Elon Musk's AI brain chip Neuralink and other chips that can monitor and serve certain functions, I believe that chips will play an important role in the future. However, now we must reinvent education using available technology and focus on creative thinking, predictive algorithms, scenario playing, innovation, data-based forecasting and much more."

Jack said: "Yes, no more memorisation. Open-book tests focused on areas where human capacity and knowledge can interact."

Dina turned to me and said: "You spend the most time in Egypt amongst all of us. Sisi is doing a great job on many sectors but Egyptians must catch up and 'technoeducation' is the answer."

I answered: "I agree Dina, and we must not forget parenting and upbringing which is key in the world we live in today." I added: "Providing the next generation with the right values and principles and letting them become independent is a gift to make them stronger and successful in the world of tech that awaits them."

Giuseppe finished his tiramisu with a big smile and repeated his claim that the world will be divided in the 'future tech camp' countries that will act now to implement technoeducation, and the 'stagnant today camp', the countries that will follow today's educational systems that are no longer valid. He got up, raised a glass and said to all of us: "Here is to Egypt embracing technoeducation."

As we were leaving, I remember the saying "If we teach today as we taught yesterday, we rob our children of tomorrow."

FELLOWS NEWS AND UPDATES



LIZ TRAPP

2014 Gabr Fellow Liz Trapp recently acquired a new class on her teaching schedule this coming semester, History of Fashion, and she is beginning the semester with Egypt!

Liz fondly remembers Amina Khalil, the fashion designer, coming to speak to the Fellows during the 2014 Fellowship in Egypt.

The college Liz teaches at is Columbus College of Art and Design, which is among the top fashion schools in the world.

MAGDA KURA

In January 2022, 2015 Gabr Fellow Magda Kura accepted a Senior Product Manager position at Amazon where she will be working on the audiobook product Audible.

She is excited about Audible's international expansion to markets beyond the US and West, and integrations with Assistants like Alexa, Siri, Google Assistant and more.

Please reach out to her if you're interested in her experience working at Amazon, product development or anything related to spoken content: magdakkura@gmail.com



NICK THOMAS

2015 Gabr Fellow Nick Thomas's movie, "The Egyptian Affair", will be filming roughly Feb 20 - March 18 in Luxor and Aswan, including on a Dahabia on the Nile.

If you would like to support Nick, they are looking for a final small amount of funding to cover editing. Please reach out to Nick on nickdresellythomas@gmail.com



Gabr Fellows at the World Youth Forum

Sharm El Sheikh, 10-13 January 2022



The World Youth Forum (WYF) is an annual global event held under the auspices of the President of the Republic of Egypt, President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi.

It is an interactive platform, established in 2017 by a group of promising youth to convey a message of peace, prosperity and harmony to the world. It engages youth from around the globe in an enriching set-up, allowing them to express their opinions and come up with recommendations and initiatives, in the presence of world leaders, prominent decision-makers, intellectuals, and influential figures.

The Gabr Fellows, as promising young Egyptian leaders, were heavily involved in this year's World Youth Forum:



2017 Gabr Fellow Amr Seda at the World Youth Forum with President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi and Mrs Entissar Amer, the First Lady. Amr has also been appointed as the Head of the World Youth Forum Labs (the startup section of the Forum).

المتحدثة باسم المنتدى:

ترقبوا مفاجآت حلوة وتقنيات مختلفة

الحضور وأولوية لنا في النسخة الرابعة من المنتدى. وتابعته المتحدث باسم منتدى شباب العالم، أن الجلسات ستتضمن العديد من المشروعات، وستكون هناك جلسة خاصة للمرأة وتمكين المرأة بجانب جلسات خاصة بمشروعات التنمية وبينها «حياة كريمة»، وجلسات عن العالم ما بعد كورونا وسبل مواجهة التغيرات المناخية.

وأشارت سارة أن هناك أكثر من نصف مليون شخص يريديون المشاركة في المنتدى وهذه شهادة نجاح للشباب المصري القائم على إدارة المنتدى كما أنه شهادة نجاح للدولة المصرية. وتابعته: رغم جائحة كورونا مصر ستستجيب في تنظيم النسخة الرابعة من منتدى شباب العالم، لافتة إلى أن الأمم المتحدة أشادت بشكل كبير بمنتدى شباب العالم.

الأعمال ورؤى الشباب. وأوضحت المتحدث باسم منتدى شباب العالم، أن وفوداً من دول مختلفة ومؤسسات ورؤساء دول وصناع قرار سيحضرون المنتدى، حيث بدأ العد التنازلي وجار تجهيز القاعات وورش العمل.

وأشارت سارة إلى أن النسخة الرابعة من منتدى شباب العالم ستشهد تنوعاً كبيراً في الفعاليات وكذلك تنوعاً في الحضور والمتحدثين، حيث سنعلن عن متحدثين جدد للمنتدى في وقت قريب.

وأضافت المتحدث باسم منتدى شباب العالم أن القائمين على المنتدى سيتابعون كافة الإجراءات الاحترازية المختلفة للوقاية من فيروس كورونا من خلال قياس درجات الحرارة الحضور وارتداء الكمامات وإجراء «بي سي آر» والحفاظ على التباعد الاجتماعي، متابعة: وضعا سلامة

أكدت سارة بدر، المتحدث باسم منتدى شباب العالم، أن أكثر من فنان من أبناء الميادين الرئاسية «حياة كريمة»، سيشاركون بعروض فنية، إضافة إلى شباب من حول العالم سيقدمون كذلك العديد من العروض المختلفة، مضيئة، هناك مفاجآت حلوة وتقنيات مختلفة سيجرى عرضها.

وقالت المتحدث باسم منتدى شباب العالم، إن المنتدى توقف سنة كاملة بسبب جائحة كورونا ولكن مصر على أتم الاستعداد لاستقبال النسخة الرابعة، التي ستناقش العالم ما بعد الجائحة عبر 3 محاور على رأسها مجال الطاقة، إضافة إلى مبادرة حياة كريمة وأمثلة أخرى من حول العالم، وكذلك نظم الرعاية الصحية والتكنولوجيا وريادة



سارة بدر

2017 Gabr Fellow Sarah Badr was elected as the official Spokesperson of the World Youth Forum.



2014 Gabr Fellow Nourhan Moussa with Ambassador Jonathan Cohen, US Ambassador to Egypt, at the World Youth Forum.

Egypt's 4th edition of the World Youth Forum was held in Sharm El Sheikh from 10-13 January 2022, with the participation of Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al Sisi, Lebanon's Prime Minister Najib Mikati, and Crown Prince of Jordan Hussein bin Abdullah II, among others.

The forum is held under the slogan of 'Back Together' (after a year's break due to Covid) and was attended by young people from 196 countries.

The World Youth Forum - My Experience

by Sarah Badr, 2017 Gabr Fellow

I have been appointed as the official spokesperson for the inaugural World Youth Forum that took place in Sharm el sheikh 10th – 13th of January 2022. After being postponed for a full year because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we were united again under the motto of “Back Together”. This year’s theme was “The post-pandemic world”. We discussed several challenges that the world is facing such as Energy, Climate Change, Entrepreneurship, Development initiatives, Global peace and Security, Education and Resources Sustainability among many other topics that interests youth and are discussed on the global agendas. The WYF also hosts several side events to ensure youth engagement and at the end of the forum, his excellency the president announces the forum’s recommendations that are overseen by the different institutions.



I was responsible for all the official statements on behalf of the forum and the organizing committee, which was to me an absolute honour and a responsibility that I was honoured to fulfil on behalf of all my colleagues. Through the opening session of the forum, I delivered the welcome address to all our guests and delegations with a group of youth speakers from around the world.

The forum started back in 2017, when a group of youth – I was one of them – suggested and presented the idea in one of the national youth conferences in Egypt to his excellency president Abdel Fattah El-Sisi. The intention was to globalize our national youth dialogues to include youth from all over the world. In the same year the president endorsed the idea, and we were granted his full support to launch the Forum under his auspicious. The forum grew into an international platform for youth to exchange their views on pressing global challenges with top policy and decision-makers. The forum has been endorsed by the United Nations and several international organizations as a platform that empowers youth from all over the world. The WYF was also recognized by both the Human Rights Council in its 41st session and the Social and Economic Council in its 59th session.

The WYF is a true testimonial of how Egypt endorses youth empowerment and its leading role within the Arab and Middle East region. This year I am proud to also announce that the WYF’s organizing committee has been assigned by his excellency the president to organize the COP 27 that is taking place in Sharm El sheikh later this year, a clear sign of his excellency’s trust and faith in our potential, our diligence, and abilities to organize such a monumental and global event. The Year 2022 was also announced by his excellency as the year of Civil society, which reflects a call to action for all our success partners to unite the efforts and ensure a whole-of society whole of government approach.

To watch Sarah's interview,

[CLICK HERE](#)



QUESTIONS 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.) Do you think Mark Zuckerberg's Metaverse is a good idea?

Yes - 24%

No - 41%

Unsure - 35%

2.) Do you believe that the C-19 pandemic will be over by the end of 2022?

Yes - 41%

No - 59%

Unsure - 0%

3.) Do you think COP26 achieved significant steps in fighting climate change?



Yes - 15%

No - 62%

Unsure - 23%

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

As the U.S. Pulls Back From the Mideast, China Leans In

By Ben Hubbard and Amy Qin
The New York Times, 1 February 2022

BEIRUT, Lebanon — In January alone, five senior officials from oil-rich Arab monarchies visited China to discuss cooperation on energy and infrastructure. Turkey's top diplomat flew in to talk about opportunities for economic collaboration, and Iran's foreign minister pressed for progress on \$400 billion of investment that China has promised his country.

As the United States, fatigued by decades of war and upheaval in the Middle East, seeks to limit its involvement there, China is deepening its ties with both friends and foes of Washington across the region

China is nowhere near rivaling the United States' vast involvement in the Middle East. But states there are increasingly looking to China not just to buy their oil, but to invest in their infrastructure and cooperate on technology and security, a trend that could accelerate as the United States pulls back.

For Beijing, the recent turmoil in neighboring countries like Afghanistan and Kazakhstan has reinforced its desire to cultivate stable ties in the region. The outreach follows the American military's withdrawal from Afghanistan after 20 years, as well as the official end of its combat mission in Iraq. That, along with the Biden administration's frequent talk of China as its top national security priority, has left many of its partners in the Middle East believing that Washington's attention lies elsewhere.

Beijing has welcomed the chance to extend its influence, and Arab leaders appreciate that China — which touts the virtue of “noninterference” in other countries' affairs — won't get involved in their domestic politics or send its military to topple unfriendly dictators. And each side can count on the other to overlook its human rights abuses.

“There is a feeling in the region that the United States is actively on the way out, and that's an opportunity for China,” said Gedaliah Afterman, head of the Asia Policy Program at the Abba Eban Institute of International Diplomacy at Reichman University in Israel.

China's interest in the Middle East has long been rooted in its need for oil. It buys nearly half of its crude from Arab states, with Saudi Arabia topping the list, and it is sure to need more as its economy, the world's second largest, keeps growing.

But in recent years, China has also been investing in critical infrastructure in the region and making deals to supply countries there with telecommunications and military technology.

Chinese state-backed companies are eyeing investments in a maritime port in Chabahar, Iran. They have helped to finance an industrial park in the port of Duqm, Oman, and to build and operate a container terminal in Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates' capital, as well as two new ports in Israel.

Such moves reflect Beijing's view of the Middle East as crucial to its Belt and Road Initiative, a sweeping plan to build international infrastructure to facilitate Chinese commerce.

China hopes to link markets and supply chains from the Indian Ocean to Eurasia, making the Persian Gulf region “a really important hub,” said Jonathan Fulton, a nonresident senior fellow for Middle East programs at the [Atlantic Council](#).

In its business-focused dealings in the region, China has not directly confronted the United States. But it often promotes itself as an alternative partner for countries that question Washington's model of development, or its history of political and military interventions.

“At a time when United States is facing ups and downs in its domestic and foreign policies, these countries feel that China is not only the most stable country, but also the most reliable,” said [Li Guofu](#), a researcher at the China Institute of International Studies, which is overseen by the Chinese Foreign Ministry.

[CLICK HERE](#)  to read more

Disclaimer: The views presented in this article are the author's alone and do not represent the opinion of the Foundation.

ABOUT THE FELLOWSHIP

Launched in 2012, the Gabr Fellowship programme helps to connect and build constructive relationships between future leaders between the ages of 24 and 35. Each year, the Fellowship consists of 20-24 Fellows, half of which are men and the other half women, with an equal distribution between participants from the United States and Egypt. The Fellowship also accepts applicants from Jordan, Lebanon, France and the United Kingdom. Fellows represent a variety of sectors, including the arts, law, finance, tech, non- profits, and entrepreneurship – both business and social.

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 Egypt. Together, they explore one another's cultures, political realities, business trends and their goals for the future.



2018 Gabr Fellows visit the World Bank, Washington DC

In addition to engaging in deep discussions with key stakeholders from both countries in business, government, academia, religion, science, tech and finance, all Fellows are invited to form multinational teams to complete an action project. These projects empower the Fellows as inter-cultural ambassadors, amplifying the Fellowship's reach and impact.

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 become part of an international cohort dedicated to building a more equitable and peaceful world.

The Gabr Fellows have acquired a greater understanding of both Egypt and the United States and the challenges faced by both communities. Having served as cultural as well as linguistic ambassadors to one another, they then return home to play the role of diplomat, introducing Egyptians and Americans to a people, a culture and a future never before explored in this way.

Together, they are creating the legacy of 'The Gabr Fellowship': an international cohort dedicated to pursuing cooperative, collective solutions to their regions' most pressing issues.



Gabr Fellows with Egypt's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister Sameh Shoukry



Gabr Fellows take on the Pyramids

SUPPORT THE FOUNDATION

The Shafik Gabr Foundation invites you to invest in the future and partner with the Foundation using one or more of the following means:

Sponsor a Fellow - Individuals have the opportunity to nominate a Fellow and if selected, sponsor their participation in the Gabr Fellowship. Sponsors will be recognised in all Foundation publications, marketing materials, and at all events.

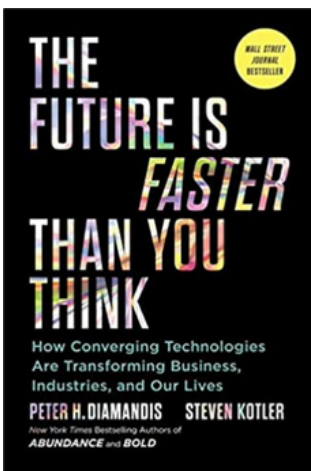
Corporate patron - Corporations can nominate Fellows for participation in the Fellowship Foundation and sponsor their participation on a company-wide level. The company will be listed in all publications, the logo will be presented on the Foundation's homepage and be given visibility at all events in the United States and Egypt.

Unrestricted support - A general operating grant can empower the Foundation to continue to invest in innovative platforms to facilitate ongoing dialogue between the East and West. From new technologies to expanding the programme to more countries and a greater number of participants, the Fellowship can create a broader multiregional impact.

To support the Foundation,

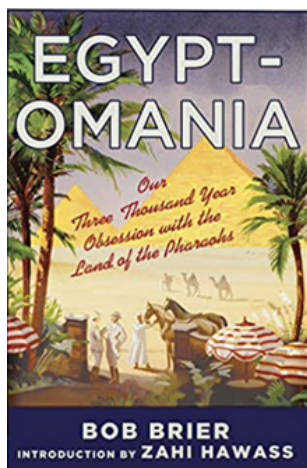


Gabr Foundation Reading Corner



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 Future Is Faster Than You Think: How Converging Technologies Are Transforming Business, Industries, and Our Lives* by Peter Diamandis and Steven Kotler, and *Egyptomania: Our Three Thousand Year Obsession with the Land of the Pharaohs* by Bob Brier.

In *The Future Is Faster Than You Think*, Diamandis and Kotler, bestselling author and peak performance expert, probe the science of technological convergence and how it will reinvent every part of our lives—transportation, retail, advertising, education, health, entertainment, food, and finance—taking humanity into uncharted territories and reimagining the world as we know it.



In *Egyptomania*, Bob Brier, one of the world's foremost Egyptologists, explores the burning fascination with all things Egyptian and the events that fanned the flames--from ancient times, to Napoleon's Egyptian campaign, to the discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb by Howard Carter in the 1920s. Drawing on his personal collection, this is an inventive and mesmerizing tour of how an ancient civilization endures in ours today.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO OUR FEBRUARY FELLOWS!



Kevin DeWar
2016 Gabr Fellow
February 1



Jessica Mulligan
2017 Gabr Fellow
February 6



Julie Yang
2018 Gabr Fellow
February 8



Muhammad Nagi
2015 Gabr Fellow
February 12



Thomas Stein
2017 Gabr Fellow
February 18



Mohamed Ismail
2015 Gabr Fellow
February 26



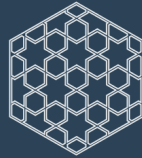
Bryan Griffin
2017 Gabr Fellow
February 27



Reham Salem
2017 Gabr Fellow
February 28

February

Monthly Newsletter



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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/>



Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Egyptian Girl*
oil on canvas
The Shafik Gabr Collection

Connect with us



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The Shafik Gabr Foundation

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