



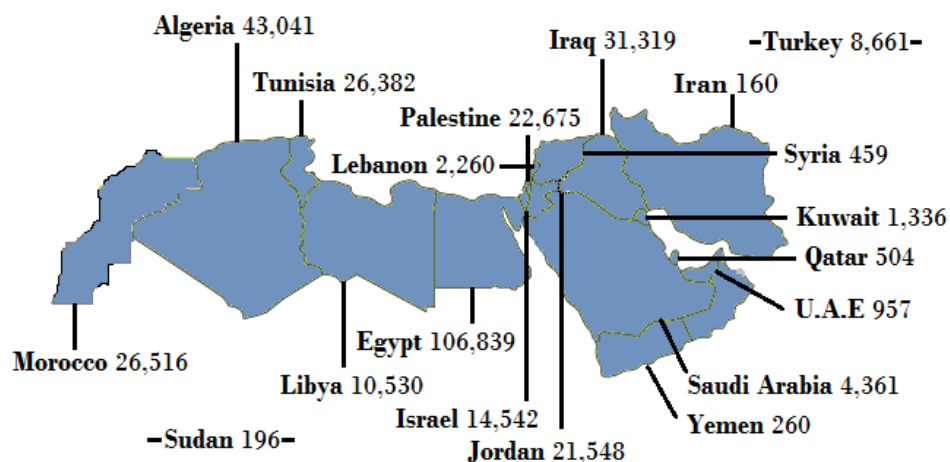
# YALA – YOUNG LEADERS

## ANNUAL REPORT 2013

*With **365,000+** members, YaLa-Young Leaders, the broadest and fastest-growing Middle East and North Africa (MENA) peace movement today, comes to the culmination of its second year of activity. From the launch of new and innovative projects such as YLO@ - the first cross-MENA online academy, and YaLa Café - the new blog platform for young MENA writers and creators; to the first peace initiative drafted by the young generation of the MENA region; to meetings with Facebook, Princeton, Sharon Stone and more; this document aims to summarize everything YaLa-Young Leaders has been engaged in during the past year.*

## 365,000+ YOUNG LEADERS

In the year that passed since our last Annual Report, the YaLa-Young Leaders movement has grown by over 450% - from 80,000+ to 365,000+ members. This exponential growth happens daily, and continues to place YaLa, the largest Middle East Peace Movement to date, as a regional force to be reckoned with. The more we grow the stronger our voice is heard and the greater our ability to make a true and long-lasting impact on the future of the Middle East and North Africa - securing a safe, productive, and peaceful region. YaLa-Young Leaders come primarily from **Egypt, Algeria, Iraq, Morocco, Tunisia, Palestine, Jordan, Israel, Libya, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Syria, Yemen and Sudan**, as well as from the wider international community.



During the past year, the **YaLa Core Group** - YaLa's leadership group of active members from across the MENA region - has seen the addition of many new and talented young members, and has grown to 150 members. The Core Group leads the formulation of YaLa's policies and principles, the administering of the YaLa page, the development of project ideas, and reflection on the processes unfolding in the region. It is composed of an equal amount of men and women, as part of YaLa's core belief in gender equality.

## THE YALA FACEBOOK PAGE

The **YaLa Facebook Page** - <https://www.facebook.com/yalaYL> - continues to be the principle platform of the YaLa community. With each post now being followed by thousands of users, YaLa is aware of the great responsibility as well as potential for raising awareness and positive engagement this platform holds as time passes. An average of 230,000 people a day and average 2.5 million people a month see content associated with the YaLa page.

**YaLa-Young Leaders**

**Founding Organizations:**



### BACKGROUND

The Middle East is on the move. It has seen more changes in the past three years than in the previous three decades. From the Yasmin and Tahrir revolutions, protests across the Arab world, and the struggle for social justice in Israel, the young people of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) have been mobilizing to effect positive change. YaLa was inspired by these movements and created to forge pathways for cooperation between Arab and Israeli young leaders, enabling meaningful change and a better, more peaceful region.

### WHO WE ARE

Founded in May 2011 by the Peres Centre for Peace and YaLa Palestine, YaLa-Young Leaders is a Facebook-based movement of MENA young leaders. Made possible through the innovative use of new technologies, YaLa is at the cutting-edge of fostering dialogue and change. In just two years, the YaLa movement has grown to more than 365,000 members, making it the broadest and fastest-growing Middle East peace movement today. It is a movement for young people, by young people.

### MISSION

YaLa members work together to create and enact a new regional vision of freedom, equality, prosperity and peace. YaLa is more than just a network of activists across the region, it is an identity allowing its members to break down divisions and redraw the map to form a shared community. YaLa connects regional change-makers, allowing them to build their capacities as tomorrow's leaders, while emphasizing core issues such as human rights, gender equality, peace, higher education and economic development.



YaLa Instagram - skies in Sanaa, Yemen.

In a year that has seen much turmoil in the region, YaLa has always remained an unequivocal voice for freedom, equality, human rights and peace; and an unequivocal voice against violence, racism, oppression, occupation, intolerance, and persecution. It has remained faithful to the voice of the people of the region who are working together, despite great challenges, towards a better future.



Most telling perhaps were the times of fighting between Gaza and Israel, during *Operation Pillar of Defense* in November 2012. In times which generally saw great polarization and separation between Israelis and Palestinians, YaLa members stood together strongly in solidarity with the innocent people under fire on both sides, and refused to succumb to the cycle of violence, reaction, retaliation, and assault usually perpetuated by such events. With thousands of members participating in real time, YaLa was able to create not only true dialogue, but a sense of shared purpose, with YaLa members rising to the occasion and proving great maturity.

From Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Sudan, Palestine, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq and Kuwait, we say to the people of Gaza and southern Israel - you are not alone!

- The YaLa Steering Committee



## THE YALA-YOUNG LEADERS DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

1) We believe in the right to life and in freedom: freedom of speech and belief, freedom from fear and want, freedom from harm or persecution and freedom of movement.

2) We believe in equality: gender equality, greater equality in the distribution of wealth, equality of opportunity, equality before the law and the abolition of discrimination of any kind or form.

3) We denounce and oppose all forms of violence, racism, occupation, oppression intolerance & persecution

4) We believe in the right of the self-determination of nations and in the right of all the peoples of the Middle East to live in peace.

5) We believe in the empowerment of women: a greater role for the women of the region, in the spirit of equality and out of recognition that it is crucial for the advancement of our societies.

6) We believe in our right for well-being beyond basic needs: high-quality and accessible education, adequate employment and affordable housing and living costs, as well as personal security, social security, safety from persecution and the guarantee of safety for our communities, national or otherwise.

7) We accept, in full, the United Nation's "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" as published by the United Nations and demand its implementation in the Middle East.

8) We believe in the rights of every people to actively participate in the government of their countries and to affect and shape the form of government according to their choice, beliefs and needs

9) We believe in the importance of culture, science and arts: the freedom to create and express ourselves, freedom to share in the fruits of scientific advancements and freedom to advance science.

10) We see ourselves, the people of the Middle East and not any commodity, as the region's single most-valuable resource.



## YALA PROJECTS

*YaLa-Young Leaders develops and implements a variety of projects for the benefit and well-being of its membership base as well as for the forwarding of its values. Focusing on the added-value that technological innovation can bring for the sake of peace and prosperity, in particular in relation to higher education, economic development and media. **YaLa's Young Leaders Online Academy (YLO@)** - YaLa's flagship project - is an innovative online academic institution for the formation of future regional leadership through online courses by leading academic institutions from around the world. **YaLa Media Café** - YaLa's blog, analysis and photography platform – serves as an outlet for the voices of young people in the MENA region and brings their personal experiences and complex realities to the forefront, a quality that is greatly lacking in available mainstream media outlets dealing with the region.*



# Y.L.O.®.

Yala-Young Leaders Online academy

## YLO@ PILOT OF 2013

*In our last Annual Report, YaLa announced it would be launching the pilot of a first-of-its-kind cross-MENA Online Academy – YLO@.*

On January 26th 2013, YaLa officially launched the YLO@ Pilot, with an inauguration event that took place at our online campus on 'Shaker' - the Facebook-based avatar platform which had partnered with YaLa since its foundation. An Inauguration lecture was given by Princeton Provost and President Elect **Christopher L. Eisgruber** on the subject of Democracy.

Over 200 YaLa students from across the MENA region have started taking online courses together, as well as cooperating with each other on YLO@'s Facebook Group, weekly meetings in YLO@'s Campus, on course discussion forums and personally. Students are currently engaged in 3 courses:

**Networks: Friends, Money and Bytes** with **Princeton University** and Professor Mung Chiang. Throughout the course students explore 20 questions regarding technologies and social networks such as Facebook, Google, YouTube and Mobile Phones, and their engineering.

**Democratic Development** with **Stanford University** and Professor Larry Diamond – which aims to give students an understanding of the political, social, cultural, economic, institutional and international factors that foster and obstruct the development and consolidation of democracy.

**Conflict Analysis** with the **U.S. Institute of Peace** – where students study the concepts underlying good insightful analysis of conflict, in aim to better conceptualize successful conflict management and action.

## THE YLO@ STUDENTS

As stated in YaLa's Declaration of Principles "We see ourselves, the people of the Middle East, and not any commodity, as the region's single most-valuable resource". So the YLO@ students themselves are by far the most inspiring, powerful and important part of YLO@. YLO@ students come from Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Israel, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, and Yemen. Amongst them are university students, from undergraduates to Ph.D.'s, social and peace activists, founders of NGOs, heads of organizations. They are the leaders of today and tomorrow.



### YALA'S ONLINE ACADEMY

YLO@ is not a traditional university or institute of higher education, rather it focuses on the YaLa added-value of preparing a diverse group of young Middle Easterners for an open, peaceful, modern information society. In this light, it aims to supplement the higher education studies of its students, rather than replace them.

YLO@ has partnered with top universities such as Princeton, Harvard, Vanderbilt, Virginia, U-Mich, U-Mass, Sabanchi and USIP; with Coursera, the world's leading distance learning platform, which has created an online space especially for YLO@ and its students; and with IT companies and experts such as Microsoft, HP and Facebook, who give applicable training modules in technology and social media for entrepreneurship and social change.

Through collaborative regional study and training, YLO@ is aiming to create a lasting foundation for positive youth cooperation in the Middle East and North Africa, and to strengthen the young generation's ability to utilize modern-world technologies and networks in order to break physical borders and enact a vision of peace and cooperation in the region.



The YLO@ Campus on Shaker

## MENA LEADERS FOR CHANGE

In addition, a select group of 150 students are taking part in YLO@'s **MENA Leaders for Change (MLC)** program, a cooperation between YaLa-Young Leaders and the U.S. State Department, in collaboration with Search for Common Ground. In the program, Israeli and Palestinian students, as well as students from the wider MENA region, study online courses together (detailed below), with the aim of developing their leadership, negotiation and innovation capacities. Throughout the studies, students engage with one another through YaLa's various online platforms, and develop cooperative project ideas. Excelling students are then selected to participate in a workshop at the Dead Sea in Jordan in fall 2013, where they will discuss cooperation and develop projects to promote positive change in the region.

The Online courses studied as part of the program are **Negotiation and Conflict Management** with the **U.S. Institute of Peace** – aimed at providing a thorough conceptual framework to help students structure their efforts in negotiation and develop successful alternatives to violent conflict; and **Leading Strategic Innovation in Organizations** with **Vanderbilt University** and Professor David Owens – aimed at improving participants' ability to manage creativity and lead an innovation strategy in complex organizations.

A group of 30 Israelis and 30 Palestinians - the first session of MLC 2013 - started the program in January, and students have already taken their online courses and begun collaborating on project ideas. A second group of 30 Israelis, 30 Palestinians, and 30 from the wider MENA region have been selected for the second session, and their studies are beginning in June 2013 and will last until September.

## UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS

YaLa has been working to create more substantial partnerships with the universities collaborating with YLO@, which include Princeton, Harvard, Vanderbilt, Virginia, U-Mich, U-Mass, Sabanci and USIP. With **Princeton University**, YaLa is developing a partnership not only on online courses but also on joint projects in education and research; organization of conferences, seminars and other programs of mutual interest; and creating events for interaction between YLO@ and Princeton students. YaLa is working to further expand the partnership with Princeton through the Pace Center for Civic Engagement and the Woodrow Wilson School alumni. In the coming year YaLa will be formalizing similar partnerships with other universities.

Furthermore, the **Paul Bocuse Institute (PBI)** in France has partnered with YaLa to find qualified candidates for their Bachelor in Gastronomy and Management program. YaLa launched a call for applications and together with PBI selected an outstanding YaLa member, **Mohammed AlQaddi** from Jenin, who received a scholarship for the 3 year program in Lyon, France. The Institute will also partner with YLO@ to provide training in management and tourism through their future training center to be established in Jaffa.



## YLO@'S ADVISORY BOARD

### Advisory Board Chair

**Prof. Lawrence Summers** President Emeritus of Harvard and former U.S. Secretary of Treasury

### Advisory Board Members

**Jacques Attali** President of PlaNet Finance

**André Azoulay** senior advisor to King Mohammed VI of Morocco

**Ness Boubekri** Renowned French Producer and Journalist

**Letty Cottin Pogrebin** Co-Founder of Ms. Magazine

**Prof. Christopher Eisgruber** Provost & President Elect of Princeton University

**David Fischer** VP of Advertising and Global Operations at Facebook

**Rula Jebreal** Italo-Palestinian Journalist, Novelist, and Screenwriter

**Prof. Eric Kandel** 2000 Nobel Prize Laureate and professor at Columbia University

**Dr. Maria Klawe** Microsoft Board Director, President Harvey Mudd College

**Bernard Henri Levy** Influential intellectual, philosopher and journalist

**Prof. Nicholas Negroponte** Co-founder and former director of the MIT Media Lab

**Prof. Henry Rosovsky** Former Dean and former acting President of Harvard

**Anron Woolfson** Founder of Howling Wolf Productions & Management

### Department Chairs

**Kamel Hussein** Founder and Managing Director of Ellam Tam

**Amb. Dennis Ross** Former Middle East coordinator under President Clinton

**Sharon Stone** Renowned Actor and social activist

The establishment of YLO@ has been made possible through the generous contribution of the governments of Italy and Norway.



**The Foreign Ministry of Norway**



## YALA MEDIA CAFÉ

***In our last Annual Report of 2012, YaLa presented a Project Book which contained a list of innovative, online, youth-oriented projects in fields such as tourism, language, sports and media.***

In March 2013, YaLa began implementation, with the launch of its new media project [YaLa Media Café](#). While mainstream media is ample with analysis of the Middle East, and mostly following its turmoil and politics, YaLa Café rather aims to bring readers *the actual Middle East*.

With bloggers from *Palestine, Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, Iraq, Iran, Sudan and Kuwait* (in the few months since its launch, YaLa Café has seen over 50 blogs); with political, social and economic insights by experts from *Ramallah, Tel-Aviv and Washington*; and with photography and music created and selected by members from across the MENA region – YaLa Café shares stories and personal experiences of young people in the Middle East, stories that draw on the deep and complex realities of this region, but preserve their human dimension. For YaLa Café contributors, haunting memories of painful past are not an obstacle, but rather a strong motivation to end misunderstandings and resentments.



YaLa Café is a unique Facebook-based blog platform, thus remaining tightly interlinked with the wider 365,000+ YaLa community on Facebook. It aims to give young people in the Middle East an outlet to voice their own thoughts and their own emotions on topics that concern them - in other words, it is the human face of the Middle East. YaLa Cafe is not about “representing” the Middle East through analysis tables, but rather about “presenting” it, simply and humanly. It is not about explaining, but describing and showing. It is not about convincing, but sharing with those who are ready to listen. And everyone should be ready to listen - because the Middle East youth don't deserve a better future - they need a better present; and they are building it, day after day, step by step.

### BEING A YALA'ER/

**RAHMA SCHAIER**

“..Three days ago, I was at the university waiting to attend a conference about the administrative court in Tunisia. Two friends of mine whom I come to know very recently came by my side and started shouting at me at once: 'We can't believe you joined YaLa!!!' They were so disappointed. They happen to think that I am a ferocious supporter of the Palestinian cause and couldn't find an excuse for me joining YaLa. They just kept saying: 'Unbelievable!'

I guess they thought that I hadn't had a deep talk with myself before joining the community. It may be the same thing for many Arab young people. We don't want to be treated as traitors of the cause. This is practically the case where hitting 'Like' is all about tolerance. I know that being a Tunisian is in many ways easier than being a Palestinian. I was not born in war but this doesn't mean that I don't know what it is like. So, when I see Palestinian youth who are ready to forget and overcome the atrocities of the past, ongoing and future armed conflicts, I understand that peace is equal to life and that those people are no longer ready for destruction and killing for 'sands and stones'..

We are talking about young leaders who refuse to die as a number, who refuse to kill and to hurt and who want their countries to live and prosper. I am one of those young people. I may not be a leader but I joined this community as a simple person who seeks tolerance and understanding. I am not a nationalist; I don't justify wars for land because in war we lose the two things we can never buy back; humans and humanity. Isn't that enough loss?"

**Read more at YaLa Café:**

**<https://www.fanzila.com/yalayoungeaders/blog/>**



**YaLa Instagram - protest for Syria.**



## YALA ADVOCACY

*As promised in our Annual Report of 2012, YaLa has made great efforts in the past year in the field of advocacy. It has continued to strengthen its already strong ties with various governments and institutions throughout the international community, in order to continue to expose them to the needs and aspirations of the young generation in the MENA region, as well as to the YaLa initiatives and members themselves. YaLa has organized and participated in various events, and has taken part in meetings with various stakeholders throughout the year.*

# YALA PEACE INITIATIVE



As promised in our last annual report, on August 25-26th 2012, 18 YaLa-Young Leaders representatives from across the region, young men and women from Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Sudan, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Kuwait, convened in Berlin for a Summit to finalize the **YaLa-Young Leaders Peace and Economic Cooperation Initiative** for the future of the MENA region, which had previously been discussed and debated online. The **Berlin Summit** was organized in partnership with the *Institute for Cultural Diplomacy* in Berlin.

The first peace initiative of its kind, the YaLa Peace Initiative was formulated entirely by the young generation and aimed at expressing their needs and concerns, and offering an alternative trajectory which provides hope in place of despair, change in place of reaction, security in place of fear, freedom in place of oppression, equality in place of inequality, prosperity in the place of poverty and peace in the place of war and terror.



The detailed initiative addresses issues such as democracy, equality and human rights; sectarian, ethnic and national violence and strife; the immediate necessity of negotiating a two-state solution between Israel and Palestine, based on the Barack Obama May 2011 State Dep. speech and the Saudi Peace Initiative, through a comprehensive regional peace process; the ongoing crisis in Syria and other outstanding conflicts in the region; the need for quality education, and specifically higher education, in the region; economic development, specifically that of the young generation, the most valuable and untapped resource of regional economies; and gender equality.

The initiative has been forwarded to regional and world leaders, including U.S. President Barack Obama, the Heads of the European Union, Secretary General of the United Nations, as well as regional heads of state, with the message that the voices of the young Middle Eastern & North African generation are much talked about but seldom truly heard and acted upon.

## EXCERPTS FROM THE YALA PEACE INITIATIVE AUGUST 25-26<sup>th</sup>, 2012

"On behalf of the 250,000 YaLa-Young Leaders, we call for a future which puts an end to strife and conflict in the region, denouncing and opposing all forms of violence, racism, occupation, oppression, terrorism, and persecution; a future which sees an era of cooperation and shared prosperity, one in which the voice of the young generation is not only heard but leads the way to societies that are based on inclusiveness and accountability, freedom and equal opportunity, solidarity and respect; a future of peaceful relations between societies and nations based on the equal right to self-determination, safety and wellbeing."

"YaLa-Young Leaders calls upon the regional and international private sector to invest in the development of abilities and economic opportunities for the young generation of the Middle East and North Africa, and to promote YaLa through support of youth-directed projects, as proposed by this Initiative, which address livelihoods and quality of life for the young generation as well as regional cooperation as a basis for peace and prosperity in the Middle East and North Africa."



YaLa Instagram - YaLa member from Palestine supporting Pal. U.N. bid.



# THE SECOND YALA PEACE CONFERENCE

On December 18th 2012, YaLa held its **2nd Online Peace and Economic Cooperation Conference**. The conference was held at the YLO@ Campus on the online avatar platform 'Shaker'.



**With over a million people** following YaLa posts during the conference, conference participants from across the region received addresses from leading world and regional figures including Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas; Israeli President Shimon Peres; US Under-Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy & Public Affairs, Tara Sonenshine; Director General of UNESCO Irina Bokova; Former US Middle East Envoy, Amb. Dennis Ross; Facebook Vice President of Advertising and Global Sales, David Fischer; Italian Director General for Development Cooperation, Ambassador Elisabetta Belloni; Microsoft Corporate Vice President for Strategic and Emerging Business Development, Dan'l Lewin; Princeton University Provost and President Elect, Prof. Chris Eisgruber; NBA Commissioner, David Stern; renowned actors Sharon Stone and Kathleen Turner; Middle Eastern metal band, Orphaned Land; and musicians and peace activists, Achinoam 'Noa' Nini and Mira Awad. All expressed unequivocal support for the YaLa movement, its goals and ideals.

At the conference, the **YaLa Peace Initiative**, devised at the Berlin Summit, was presented to the wider YaLa community, emphasizing the need to foster a regional coalition of progressive forces in order to affect decision and policy makers; as well as the need to exert further pressure on regional and international stakeholders to move forward immediately to a viable regional peace process, something which we are able to do more and more forcefully as our member base continues to expand.

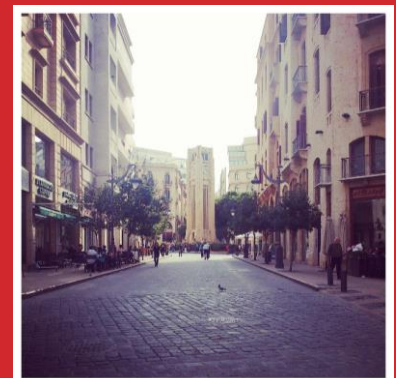
## QUOTES FROM YALA PEACE CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

"On behalf of Barack Obama, Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton and the people of the United States of America, I am pleased to join the thousands of young people gathered in this virtual space for the 2nd YaLa Peace and Economic Conference. We look to online outlets such as YaLa - young regional leaders like you who can engage virtually, express opinions and put forward solutions on issues of regional peace and economic cooperation. Already YaLa has grown its members to over 200,000 in 18 months, that's 200,000 voices speaking for equality, prosperity and peace, 200,000 working for mutual security and understanding."

– TARA SONENSHINE  
U.S. UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE

"You carry the greatest burden of change but you are the strongest advocates for positive, progressive transformation. We need your leadership more than ever today to end conflict, to promote dialogue and mutual understanding. I've been pleased to follow the YaLa Young Leaders movement from its beginning, and I'm impressed by its evolution"

–IRINA BOKOVA  
DIRECTOR GENERAL OF UNESCO



YaLa Instagram – Downtown Beirut

# VISIT TO FACEBOOK



**June 2012**

On June 25-26<sup>th</sup>, YaLa members Amr ElSalanekly from Egypt and Nimrod BenZe'ev from Israel were invited to visit Facebook headquarters in Menlo Park, California. They were received by **Facebook Vice President David Fischer**, and met with a team of middle managers who are working together with the YaLa team to further develop its pages and projects. The YaLa representatives also gave a presentation to numerous Facebook employees from all sectors of the company on the YaLa peace movement, during a "Lunch and Learn" event. YaLa has enjoyed close relations with Facebook since its establishment in May 2011, and the visit to Facebook headquarters served to further develop this key partnership.



# VISIT TO PRINCETON

**October 2012**

To kick off its partnership with YaLa, Princeton hosted an event about YaLa and its academy on October 15<sup>th</sup> 2012. Three YaLa representatives were invited and accommodated by Princeton, and took part in a panel discussion entitled **"Digital Pathways to Peace? Online Dialogues in the Middle East"** alongside Princeton faculty, namely Prof. Amaney Jamal, Professor of Politics and Director of the Mamdouha S. Bobost Center for Peace and Justice at Princeton; and Prof. Mitchell Duneier, the Maurice P. Professor of Sociology at Princeton University. During the event, co-hosted by the Woodrow Wilson School of International Affairs and the Office of Religious Life and moderated by Provost and President Elect of Princeton Christopher Eisgruber, YaLa representatives got the chance to present the YaLa-Young Leaders movement and YLO@, and discuss the needs of youth in the region.



## YALA SUPPORTERS

Palestinian President **Mahmoud Abbas**  
 Israeli President **Shimon Peres**  
 Founding Director of the Umm el-Fahem Art Gallery **Said Abu-Shakra**  
 Renowned Actor **Anouk Aimée**  
 Renowned Musician **Mira Awad**  
**Andre Azoulay** of Morocco  
 His Holiness **Pope Benedict XVI**  
 Quartet Representative **Tony Blair**  
 UNESCO Director General **Irina Bokova**  
 Former U.S. President **Bill Clinton**  
 Former U.S. Secretary of State **Hillary Clinton**  
 Facebook Vice President **David Fischer**  
 2011 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate **Leymah Gbowee**  
 Microsoft Vice President **Dan'I Lewin**  
 Vice President of Innovation at the Woodrow Wilson International Center **Aaron David Miller**  
 Executive Vice President at International Creative Management **Esther Newberg**  
 Renowned Musician **Achinoam "Noa" Nini**  
 CEO of HBO **Richard Plepler**  
 Co-founder of Ms Magazine **Letty Cottin Pogrebin**  
 Former U.S. Middle East Advisor **Amb. Dennis Ross**  
 Head of the Cameri Theatre **Noam Semel**  
 U.S. Under-Secretary of State **Tara Sonenshine**  
 NBA Commissioner **David Stern**  
 Renowned Actor **Sharon Stone**  
 H.R.H Prince **El Hassan Bin Talal of Jordan**  
 Renowned Actor **Kathleen Turner**



YaLa Instagram - graffiti in Beirut's streets, on Baharaini revolution.

# FC BARCELONA



**November 2012**

YaLa

continued its partnership and MOU with Spain's Barcelona Football Club, based on the shared belief that sports in general, and football in particular, are a common language that can play an important role in developing mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence. In November 2012 **YaLa's 3<sup>rd</sup> Delegation to Barcelona** took place, with 6 YaLa members, composed of two Israelis, two Palestinians, one Sudanese and one Tunisian. They had the chance to attend training sessions, watch a match between Barca and Celta-Vigo, and most importantly, engage in a unique and powerful peace-building experience by traveling together and sharing this unique opportunity, building the kind of lasting relationships of trust and friendship that are so necessary for the bettering of relations in our troubled region. Following this successful trip the FC Barcelona Foundation decided to become further engaged with YaLa, and agreed to provide online training material as part of YLO@ and YaLa Sports for Peace.



## MEETINGS BETWEEN PALESTINIANS & ISRAELIS

Palestinian and Israeli YaLa Leadership members continue meeting on a monthly basis throughout the year. These meetings are meant both to continue to strengthen YaLa's Leadership, in which Palestinians and Israelis are key – strengthening their friendship and their shared commitment to improving the lives of all people of the region, and specifically bringing an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which is central not only in local but in general regional discourse; as well as to discuss and develop YaLa policies, principles and action. This group continues to grow as more and more Palestinian and Israeli members join YaLa and YaLa's Leadership, through YaLa's page and various projects.



### YALA PARTNERS AND SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

Austrian Study Center for Peace and  
Conflict Resolution

FC Barcelona

The Clinton Global Initiative

Coursera

Facebook

The Foreign Ministry of Italy

The Foreign Ministry of Norway

Harvard University

Hewlett Packard

The Institute for Cultural Diplomacy

Institute Paul Bocuse

Leo Savir Foundation for the  
Mediterranean Vision 2020

Microsoft

Princeton University

Shaker

The Shengen Peace Foundation

U-Mass Boston

The United States Institute of Peace

The U.S. State Department

UNESCO

Vanderbilt University

The Woodrow Wilson International  
Center



YaLa Instagram – YaLa members  
meeting in Jerusalem

# MENA-U.S. RELATIONS

YaLa continues to believe it is absolutely crucial to create a strong link between the United States and its current Administration, and the progressive forces in the region, to serve as a lifeline for hope in the MENA region.

## MENA-US DIALOGUE CONFERENCE

**December 2012**

In December 2012, YaLa-Young Leaders organized a **Conference on MENA-US Dialogue** aimed at analyzing and developing the relationship between the MENA region and the US, a relationship which, following hope sparked by President Obama's Cairo Speech in 2009, has been deteriorating. Following the outbreak of violence in the Gaza strip and southern Israel, which exemplified once again that civilians are those who pay the dearest price for the stagnation of the status-quo between Israel and Palestine, the conference was organized out of belief that the alleviation of the situation is only truly possible with the US taking an active role. In this light, the conference also aimed at strengthening the link between young American leaders (from US civil society, businesses, government, and academia) and YaLa's leadership.

At the conference YaLa members from Palestine, Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Israel and the US met with **Special Advisor for Youth Engagement at the US State Department, Andrew Rabens**, and US Embassy and Consulate representatives, to discuss and devise a joint action plan. Discussions touched upon subjects such as US support for effective institution-building for progressive forces in the region; non-aid-based models for economic cooperation; the urgency of promoting a resolution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict; the need to improve mutual respect of cultural differences between US and MENA region societies; education exchange as a model for MENA-US relations, as exemplified by YLO@; and the effective use of the YaLa-Young Leaders platform for the enhancement of this dialogue.

## YALA-USA

As an outcome of the Conference on MENA-US Dialogue, YaLa has also begun to strengthen its dialogue with the United States and its Administration, Congress, civil society, foundations and companies, through the creation of YaLa-USA under the auspices of the **Woodrow Wilson International Center** and actor **Sharon Stone**.

The first YaLa- Young Leaders office to open outside of the Middle East & North Africa, **YaLa-USA's** functions will include serving as a gateway for YaLa's efforts to reach the American Government, Congress, civil society and the private and political sectors – and attaining institutional, political and financial support; creating "friends of YaLa" in Congress; developing relationships between American young leaders and young leaders in the MENA region; enhancing the exposure of YLO@ to academic institutions in the USA and Canada, with the purpose of bringing professors, institutions and students on board the YLO@ effort; and bringing YaLa campaigns to an American audience through exposure and periodic events.

## YALA IN THE MEDIA

YaLa-Young Leaders has been the subject of hundreds of articles in international media, including pieces in the New York Times, Washington Post, Der Spiegel, CBS News, The AP Wire, regional TV programs including Israel's Channel 2, and many more.



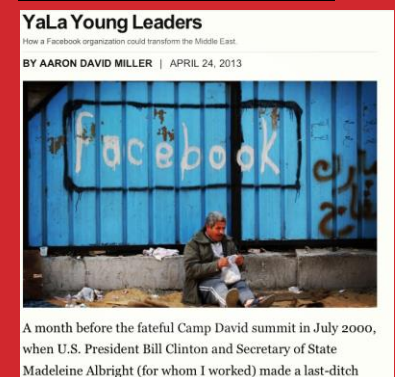
[YaLa-Young Leader from Tunisia  
Interviewed on French Television]

The latest article on YaLa was written by Aaron David Miller in the Foreign Policy Journal, entitled "[YaLa-Young Leaders How a facebook organization could transform the Middle East](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/04/24/ya_la_young_leaders)".

"Through the power of Facebook, YaLa has spread through the region. In a way, YaLa can be defined as a meeting point between Tahrir Square and Rothschild. Rather than meet once a month, as Israeli and Arab negotiators might do, YaLa allows thousands of interactions a day on a variety of issues from protests in Egypt, to Syria, to the latest international crisis between young Arabs and Israelis who physically cannot engage. To imagine thousands of young Arabs and Israelis with 24/7 access to one another is to imagine the future."

To read the full article:

[http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/04/24/ya\\_la\\_young\\_leaders](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/04/24/ya_la_young_leaders)



A month before the fateful Camp David summit in July 2000, when U.S. President Bill Clinton and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright (for whom I worked) made a last-ditch

## PRESIDENT OBAMA'S VISIT TO ISRAEL AND PALESTINE



**March 2013** President Obama's historic visit to Israel and Palestine was an opportunity fully embraced by YaLa-Young Leaders to reiterate its calls for peace in the Middle East and North Africa including the return to negotiations between the Palestinian Authority and Israel. YaLa members not only attended the President's speech in Jerusalem on March 21<sup>st</sup> 2013 and shared their reflections on the visit through [articles](#) in *The New York Times* and *YaLa Media Café*; but most importantly, YaLa seized the important opportunity to address both **Palestinian President Abbas** and **Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu** with a letter supporting the clear message emanating from President Obama's speech, and with a call for the uncompromising involvement of the young generation in shaping the region and leading it towards peace, security, democratization, and prosperity - a reality of which a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is an essential component.

In his speeches, President Obama illustrated a reality in which extremist voices seem to drown out all others coming from the region. A significant part of YaLa's role has been, and continues to be, amplifying a different voice from our region, following the President's advice that our hopes must light the way forward. Our own voice is one of moderation, uncompromising in only one sense – regarding our own future.

## YALA VISIT TO WASHINGTON DC

On June 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>, YaLa representatives from Israel and Palestine will be travelling to Washington DC to promote YaLa-Young Leaders among American institutions, partners, organizations, academia and the general public. As part of their visit, the YaLa representatives will be presenting YaLa at the **Woodrow Wilson International**

**Center**, as well as meeting with top officials from the **White House, State Department, Congress, the World Bank, the United States Institute of Peace, J-Street, the American Task Force on Palestine, the New York Times, AIPAC**, and **the National Democratic Institute**.



### YALA'ERS ON OBAMA'S SPEECH IN THE N.Y. TIMES

"President Obama did yesterday in Jerusalem what he does best — he stirred up a vital commotion of hope and a sense of agency, which many of us Israelis have been lacking...he managed to make us, the young people sitting in the room, lose our self-image as victims, nurtured by Israeli politics and politicians, and replace it with one of capacity and capability – to effect change, not be fearful of it. We regained our ability to hope, and with it came a sense of our responsibility and potency that many of us have been shunning for too long, including vis-à-vis our political leadership. Now it's our duty to deliver."

-Nimrod, YaLa Core Group member

"I had a heartache: as an Arab sitting in the third row, after spending seven hours driving on the roads and waiting under the burning sun to attend his address and aspiring to find peace in his word...listening to the first 15 minutes of his speech, on how the Jewish people suffer and how they always lent a helping hand with no one to appreciate it, when we all know this is not the whole truth...My ache was eased when eventually he revealed the ugly truth: of how both peoples are suffering; how the Palestinians' right to live life has been stolen from them.. He shared with us mesmerizing moments he spent with Palestinian girls and young people. The applause was a bit lower, but there is still hope, since both Arab and Jewish youngsters gathered today with aspiration to make a change and to make peace."

-Maria, YaLa MLC program



YaLa Instagram - YaLa members from Israel & Palestine at a Race for Peace

# GENDER EQUALITY

**March 2013**

As stated in YaLa's Declaration of Principles and emphasized in its Peace Initiative, YaLa views a greater role for the women of the region, in the spirit of gender equality, as key in order to achieve peace and prosperity in the Middle East and North Africa. In 2013, in addition to highlighting International Women's Day and promoting discussion on gender equality on the YaLa page, YaLa established a **Gender Equality Working Group**, comprised of YaLa young women from Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Israel, Palestine and Lebanon, who drafted a **YaLa Declaration on Gender Equality** after months of research and discussion.



The declaration is a call to action on six points, from elimination of violence against women to the implementation of international conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women which states "the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields." The declaration was presented by representatives of the YaLa Gender Equality Working Group from Morocco, Tunisia, Palestine and Israel, in March 2013, in an event featuring renowned actor Sharon Stone (via video call) and regional media.

## YALA – JOIN US!

Join us on our Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/yalaYL>

Check out our website:

<http://yalayl.org/>

Follow us on twitter:

[https://twitter.com/YaLa\\_YL](https://twitter.com/YaLa_YL)

Watch our YouTube Channel:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/YaLaYLM>

Follow YaLa Café:

[https://www.facebook.com/yalaYL?sk=app\\_233582996694452](https://www.facebook.com/yalaYL?sk=app_233582996694452)



### NOTE FROM AMB. URI SAVIR FOUNDER OF YALA

I would like to thank the unique YaLa Staff, who have put in tireless effort in the second year of YaLa's activity, continuing to run and coordinate YaLa's various projects, initiatives, advocacy campaigns, and ongoing dialogue and peace-building efforts.

#### These include:

Moty Crystal and Ilan Gafni;

Thaer Abdallah, Nimrod Ben-Ze'ev, Ohod Murqaten, Megan Hallahan, Ranya Fadel, Tom Dolev, Samia Hathroubi, Naama Shamgar, Sarah Benazera, Ori Cohen, Efrat Yerdav, Arik Segal, Steven Winston, Hanane Harrath, and Yael Mizrahi.

In addition, I would like to thank the many interns and volunteers who have joined its ranks throughout the year.

#### These include:

Lea Ledwon, Stuart Baldock, Jelena Majinski, Aaron Richards, Mateusz Maciag, Henriette Chacar, Udi Goren, Karen Bernstein, and Israel Rubenstein.

Finally, I would like to thank all YaLa Core Group members, who comprise YaLa's leadership from across the region. Without your efforts and daily engagement, the YaLa-Young Leaders movement would not be what it is today.

Wishing you all a great new YaLa year, a year of hope and peace.

*Uri Savir*



YaLa! Let's do it!



## LOOKING AHEAD

*In the coming year, YaLa will continue to forward its peace advocacy with vigor, through its large and growing network of partners and supporters from governments, institutions, civil society, world and regional leaders, and the general public - with the aim of bringing peace and prosperity to the people of the region, and of creating opportunities for young leaders in the region to lead the path towards it. On the 24<sup>th</sup> of October 2013, YaLa will hold its 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual YaLa Conference. YaLa is looking forward to the culmination of YLO@'s pilot year and the conclusion of the MENA Leaders for Change program with a seminar in the Dead Sea. YaLa hopes to establish partnerships that will enable the expansion of YLO@ to additional students and development of new Departments and Programs in 2013-2014. YaLa is also looking forward to the further development of YaLa Media Café and to the contribution of many new bloggers and photographers from across the region to this unique media platform. Last but not least, YaLa is pleased to announce the replication of the YaLa model in other regions of the world, with the creation of YaLa Africa, launched in February 2013, and already consisting of more than 20,000 members.*