In our times of fast-paced change, Arab youth have at their disposal greater tools than ever to be change-makers themselves. Through their achievements, the KAAYIA Fellows underscore the power of youth to innovate - and to sustain lasting social change.

These young people are mobilising their peers as volunteers, empowering low-income women to be entrepreneurs, equipping youth with valuable job skills, and bridging critical divides. Some are reviving age-old traditions, while others leverage the power of the Internet and technology in service of others.

This accomplished group of youth enriches the pool of KAAYIA Fellows, who have expanded their leadership skills and social impact. Together, these young people from across the region form a network of visionary youth who are now poised to strengthen one another’s contributions, while inspiring their peers to take action to improve their communities and nations.

The time is now to recognise the achievements and support the efforts of our youth for they represent not only our future, but our present.

Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein

In هذه المجموعة المتميزة من الشباب أصحاب الإنجازات، الذين يتضمنون إلى كوكبة "زملاء جائزة الملك عبدالله الثاني للإنجاز والإبداع الشبابي"، يُعون إنجازاتها وتنوع مواهبها.

وقد أكسبوا مهارات قيادية جديدة، وتمكنوا من توسيع دائرة أثرهم الاجتماعي للنشاطاتها، وتلتزمهم مبادرات "زملاء جائزة"، التي تحتضنها من مختلف مجتمعاتنا العربية، لتشكل شبكة من الشباب القدامى وأصحاب الذوق، يتعاونون فيما بينهم في سبيل تبسيط مشاكلهم الوقاية، وتحسن شبابهم الإبداع، وتحسن التجمعات والتراثية.

إذا نعيش عصر الشباب ومرحلة تقدير إنجازاتهم عبر الدعم والتمكين، ففخورون بإعدادنا ونحترم لنا المستقبل المشرق.
About KAAYIA:

Launched by His Majesty King Abdullah II Ibn AL Hussein at the World Economic Forum in 2007, The King Abdullah II Award for Youth Innovation and Achievement (KAAYIA), celebrates and supports young men and women throughout the Arab region who have pioneered innovative solutions to urgent social, economic and environmental challenges. The Award is designed to promote creative problem-solving and cross-boarder dialogue and cooperation among Arab youth. Through shining a much needed spot-light on youth-led social change, the KAAYIA seeks to encourage present and future generations of Arab youth to assume their roles as active citizens.

The KAAYIA is awarded to youth, aged 18 to 30, across the Arab region. Applications are reviewed against three core criteria; Leadership & Innovation, Collaboration & Partnership, Impact & sustainability.

Each winner receives a monetary award to expand the scope and impact of their work, while all 10 finalists receive a capacity building training and recognition for the exemplary work they are doing.
Ahmad Elawady
Egypt - Ana Al Wazir (I’m the Minister)
Age 28

More than 1,000 people died and 5,000 were wounded during the protests in Egypt that came to symbolize the Arab Spring. Eager to contribute to positive change without endangering lives, Ahmad Elawady began seeking solutions. His search led him to the field of ‘policy analysis’ whereby different problems are analyzed and alternative policies examined to determine which will be most effective at achieving desired goals.

A medical school graduate who teaches at Al-Azhar University, Ahmad founded Ana Al Wazir to empower young activists with the policy analysis tools to pursue their ideas for change without putting lives at risk. Participants begin by attending a two-month workshop during which they identify the issues they seek to address, conduct rigorous research, and develop a policy brief based on their goals and target audience. Next, they learn to advocate for their policies during public debates. Outstanding participants are offered an opportunity to attend international forums with like-minded youth. Lastly, the youth approach their local communities to form advocacy groups to promote their causes.

To date, 35 youth have produced 18 policy briefs on topics related to health, education, drug pricing, media regulation, and the power of law enforcement authorities. Another 400 youth have joined policy advocacy groups, with over 1,000 attending debate sessions.

In the future, Ahmad seeks to launch a youth-run think tank – the first in the Arab world – through which youth formulate and advocate for policies that reflect their needs and aspirations.

To learn more, visit: www.hybeg.org
Amani Qubati
Yemen - Empowerment for Yemeni Youth
Age 23

Amani Qubati grew up in Taiz, Yemen’s third largest city, where she has worked tirelessly to promote the voices and role of youth in decision-making. “Youth, women, and people with special needs have long been marginalized,” says the 23-year-old, now pursuing a university degree in human resource management. “Young people have great potential — and ideas — but if they don’t have a voice and can’t get elected, they can’t change much.”

At the age of 21, Amani co-founded Empowerment for Yemeni Youth, a local, non-governmental organization, as a first step in creating the country’s first and only local Youth Council in 2012. Today, the 41-member Youth Council credits itself with the passage of 219 policy recommendations. Among the issues the group has advocated for are health insurance for low-income individuals, greater minority rights, and improved sanitation services. Because of the Council’s efforts, Amani says local government meetings are more transparent, with greater accountability.

To achieve their goals, Amani and her peers offer awareness-raising workshops to empower local citizens to play a more active role in community affairs and elect qualified leaders. To date, more than 8,200 people have participated.

Amani says her life experiences – of being a woman in a male-dominated society and working to put herself through college – have only deepened her resolve to lead positive change. Her long-term goal? To run for local elected office, she says, and some day, maybe even the presidency.

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ورش تحفيز جمعية يارا في مهارات القيادة — ومن أجل زيادة الوعي البيئي، أطلقت أمير "يارا"، ضمن جهود سلسلة من المنتجات الصديقة للبيئة، بما في ذلك معجون أسنان طبيعي، وصواني مصنوعة من المجلات والنباتات التي تسمى "نوتيلا الصبار"، المعاد تدويرها، وتباع في علب زجاجية معاد الاستخدام، علمًا بأنه تم توظيف عدد من النساء ذوات الدخل المحدود لتعبئة هذه المنتجات.

وفي مبادرتها الرئيسية المقبلة "يارا"، وهي جمعية تسعى إلى التصدي لمشكلة أطفال محرومين من التعليم. وتمحور إستراتيجيتها حول إشراك الطلاب الأكثر حظًا في تغطية تكاليف التعليم أقرانهم الأقل حظًا. يقول أمير، "يرى يارا التساؤلات الاجتماعية من خلال تفكير جديد يهدف إلى إيجاد الحلول المبتكرة والقابلة للتطوير من أجل التحديات الاجتماعية والتعليمية.

"للاطلاع على المزيد، يرجى زيارة الموقع الإلكتروني www.YARA.org".

أمير شحادة: مؤسس جمعية يارا وهماميها العام، يهدف أمير شحادة، مؤسس جمعية يارا "Enterpreneur"-aged 27، إلى إلهام الأشخاص على اكتشاف مهاراتهم القيادية في مجالات متعددة. كما عمل على إضفاء روح التعضينة والghiwm في حالات مثيرة، كما عمل على إضفاء روح التعضينة والghiwm في حالات مثيرة، حيث أطلق "يارا"، ضمن جهود سلسلة من المنتجات الصديقة للبيئة، بما في ذلك معجون أسنان طبيعي، وصواني مصنوعة من المجلات والنباتات التي تسمى "نوتيلا الصبار"، المعاد تدويرها، وتباع في علب زجاجية معاد الاستخدام، علمًا بأنه تم توظيف عدد من النساء ذوات الدخل المحدود لتعبئة هذه المنتجات.

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Amir Shihadeh Jordan - YARA (Youth Association for Reality & Awareness) (Youth Association for Reality & Awareness) (Youth Association for Reality & Awareness) (Youth Association for Reality & Awareness) (Youth Association for Reality & Awareness)
Fine dining takes on a new meaning when the host is Haitham Shoman and his peers from "Dinner in the Dark." Three years ago, Haitham teamed up with members of the Egyptian Medical Students Association to raise awareness of the needs – and talents – of the estimated 800,000 Egyptians who are blind.

This led them to design an annual dining experience during which top celebrities enjoy an elegant meal in a darkened, 5-star restaurant with eight visually-impaired children. The celebrities must find their way to the table, select dishes from a braille menu, and navigate the food on their plates. The result is both messy and mind-expanding as the stars learn about the interests and hobbies of the younger diners. Says Haitham, a soon-to-be surgeon, "What people realize is that when you close your eyes, your other senses go to work. This is part of what makes blind people so talented."

The highly-publicized events have increased interest in and support for the blind, with a major telecommunications company now installing voice-recognition software into mobile phones to facilitate their use among the visually-impaired. The group's next major event will raise funds to expand educational and training opportunities for blind children, while engaging doctors and hospitals in providing sight-restoring surgeries.

"Our message to the children we work with is to not think of themselves as disabled," says Haitham. "Rather, they're regular people with supernatural talents."

To learn more, visit: www.emsa.org.eg

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Haitham Shoman
Egypt - Dinner in the Dark
Age 24

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After witnessing the chaos and confusion the public experienced in accessing basic health care services in Sudan, Mazin Khalil came up with the idea of creating a comprehensive database of the medical resources patients most needed and where to find them. The result was SudaMed, an online portal where users can search for a doctor, pharmacy, or hospital, and explore treatment options.

The idea took off with the SudaMed website now receiving 24,000 unique hits per month. Registered on the site are more than 6,000 doctors, 400 hospitals, and 1,700 pharmacies.

And that was just the beginning. Mazin has since expanded SudaMed’s services to include a range of for-profit ventures (e.g., the sourcing of medical supplies, medical marketing consulting, and the training of health professionals). He has also initiated a series of charitable activities, including a 24-hour medical help line, a hypotherapy program serving children with cerebral palsy, and a medical discount card for those unable to afford treatment, to name a few.

Through SudaMed’s social enterprise model, 70 percent of the income derived from its for-profit ventures is used to support its charitable work. What’s next? Mazin is creating a training facility where both medical professionals and the general public can learn basic life support techniques, such as CPR. He also hopes to expand SudaMed’s reach to Jordan and Dubai.

To learn more, visit: www.sudamed.sd.
For Nadia Arouri, dance is a powerful tool to address complex social challenges, including low self-esteem, alienation, and emotional trauma. “Dance enables people to find peace in themselves and their surroundings,” says Nadia, who founded I CAN MOVE in 2011 as a first step in creating a community dance movement in Palestine.

“Many Palestinians suffer from post-traumatic stress as a result of growing up under military occupation and facing daily violence,” says Nadia. Dance is unique in its ability to mitigate the impact of long-term emotional stress through nurturing physical, emotional, cognitive, and social resiliency, she adds.

I CAN MOVE pursues a comprehensive approach to healing marginalized populations – including disadvantaged children, the disabled, and the elderly – beginning with the training of a core group of 12 advanced dance instructors. Next, groups of 80 to 250 people attend dance classes over the course of 5 weeks, culminating in a public dance performance. Past events have focused on themes such as exile (2011) and child labor (2013). The result is cathartic for both the dancers and the audience. By publicizing its performances through the media, I CAN MOVE seeks to influence public opinion and policies on issues such as the rights of street children.

In the first half of 2013 alone, I CAN MOVE trained 20 trainers, reached 250 children, and entertained 3,000 audience members. By expanding the program in schools and universities, Nadia seeks to sustain its impact well into the future.

To learn more, visit: www.yante-icanmove.org
“Creating more young entrepreneurs in Jordan isn’t a choice, it’s a necessity,” affirms Nedaa Kharoub, pointing to the country’s limited natural resources and growing youth population in search of livelihoods.

To nurture an entrepreneurial mindset among the nation’s youth, Nedaa co-founded Trip to Innovation (TTI). TTI pursues a three-phased approach to introducing youth to the world of entrepreneurship. It begins by hosting awareness-raising workshops targeting college students. The events, held in inspiring venues across the country, spur young people’s creativity while sparking innovative thinking. For those with a business idea they wish to develop, TTI offers technical trainings where youth gain practical skills in business planning, budgeting, and conducting market analyses. In the final phase, TTI connects aspiring entrepreneurs to companies and mentors to help incubate their ideas.

Recognizing the importance of exposure to entrepreneurship early in life, TTI also targets high schools, engaging students in interactive games and sharing stories of successful entrepreneurs. Nedaa takes pride in TTI’s national reach, with its activities spanning eight governorates, including more isolated rural areas.

To date, more than 1,500 youth have engaged in TTI’s activities, with over 10,000 visitors benefiting from its online resources. With TTI’s support, 12 businesses have been established, including a wind energy enterprise that is now creating jobs.

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The second largest city in Jordan, Irbid is known as a university hub with more than 70,000 students. Seeking to maximize the talents and contributions of the city’s younger residents, Saeed Abu El Hassan founded the Irbid Youth Volunteers. “Youth in Irbid have a lot of energy,” says Saeed. “They want to do something with their lives. We give them the channel.”

In the last year alone, the group’s 70 members have mobilized 1,000 volunteers to carry out community projects benefiting 20,000 people. Projects range from diverse cultural events to weekly community clean-ups, from healthy living activities to providing much-needed services for orphans, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities.

From its headquarters, the Irbid Youth Volunteers offer training in assessing community needs, project planning, management, and the use of technology to reach goals. Participating youth learn teamwork, communication, and leadership skills they can use later in their careers.

The organization benefits from Saeed’s professional expertise as a graphic designer whose handiwork is displayed on banners, t-shirts, and other promotional materials. Its slogan, “One city, one family,” reinforces a unifying message. While the city’s sizeable foreign student population once felt marginalized, new avenues exist to celebrate their diverse cultures.

Looking ahead, Saeed plans to replicate the group’s model in four additional Jordanian cities, as well as in Libya, Kuwait, and Yemen, with the help of its international student members.

To learn more, visit: www.facebook.com/irbid.youth.volunteers
“The problem with education is that authority is centralized,” says Yasmin. “The focus on memorization and standardized testing fails to address the diverse needs and aspirations of the learner.”

Soon afterward, Yasmin abandoned the corporate world, immersing herself in alternative educational theories. Today, her philosophy revolves around what she calls “dream-driven development,” or education that empowers students to pursue their interests and dreams, making them responsible for their own learning process. In 2010, Yasmin founded Educate-Me, a nonprofit foundation serving the Konayyesa neighborhood of Giza. Her goal: to design, test, and refine an alternative educational strategy. Based on five learning pillars (Ask, Know, Cog, Nurture, and Play), Educate-Me encourages underprivileged children to follow their passions. Parents and community leaders are also engaged in achieving learning outcomes.

In 2012, more than 40 children benefited from Educate-Me’s unique methodology. “People say these kids are hopeless, but they’re really brilliant,” says Yasmin, who plans to use the knowledge she’s gained to establish an alternative school in the future.

To learn more, visit: www.educateme-egypt.org

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In 2009, Zeina Saab met a young girl in a rural village who proudly shared her dress sketches. "They were incredible," recalls the 29-year-old, who at the same time knew the girl would likely never have a chance to become a fashion designer because of her life circumstances. The encounter motivated Zeina, two years later, to launch a pilot project to connect four disadvantaged youth to the people and opportunities they needed to pursue their passions. The pilot’s success — along with the 30-minute video Zeina made to document the process — has inspired hundreds to support her cause.

Today, as Founder and Executive Director of the Nawaya Network, Zeina works to connect vulnerable youth to the resources needed to develop their talents and interests. "Often you hear stories of youth resorting to crime and violence because they have no hope," she says. "We focus on their passions so they’re engaged in something meaningful."

Through Nawaya’s online platform, youth share their dreams in short videos, with viewers given a menu of ways to respond — with training, skill building, materials, mentoring, jobs, and financial support. Nawaya’s innovative solution enables low-income youth, many of whom lack access to the Internet, to tell their stories to a wide audience that can take action with the click of a button.

By leveraging the power of social media to access people and resources, Zeina seeks to empower hundreds of disadvantaged youth throughout the Arab world.

To learn more, visit: www.nawaya.org

Zeina Saab
Lebanon - The Nawaya Network
Age 29

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Zeina Saab
Lebanon - The Nawaya Network
Age 29
Nabil Alyousuf
Nabil Alyousuf & Associates
United Arab Emirates

Laith Al-Qasem
Arabian Business Consultants for Development

Laith Al-Qasem currently holds several positions: Chief of Party of the USAID Funded Jordan Economic Development Program, Chairman of Arabian Business Consultants for Development, and Chairman of RUBICON (Jordan Training Technology Group). Mr. Al-Qasem also a board member of several Jordanian NGOs including the Young Entrepreneurs Association, Partners Jordan for Democratic Change, Al-Aman fund for Orphans and Thayyt Um Ali.

Mr. Al-Qasem’s career spans both technology and investment. He served as Chief Executive Officer of the Jordan Technology Group (JTG) from 1990-2003 where he was intimately involved in 16 technology oriented start-up companies. Mr. Al-Qasem was an equity and fixed income investment manager at the Arab Jordan Investment Bank from 1988-1989. Previously, he was the marketing and finance manager for Royal Jordanian’s Engine Overhaul facility from 1986-1988, and an engineer with the Jordan Electricity Authority in 1985. Mr. Al Qasem began his technology career as an engineer for Hughes Aircraft Ground Systems Group in Fullerton, California from 1983-1984.

Mr. Al Qasem is a Georgetown Fellow, where he received an M.B.A with a concentration in finance and investment management, he also graduated Summa Cum Laude from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor where he received a B.Sc. in Mechanical Engineering.
Dr. Suhair Al-Qurashi

Dar Al-Hekma College

Saudi Arabia

Dr. Suhair Al-Qurashi is the President of Dar Al-Hekma College, one of the first and leading private colleges for women in KSA. She received a Ph.D in Education and an M.P.E in Educational Research from Cambridge University, U.K.; an M.Sc. in Management Organizational Development, from United States International University, California, USA; a B.Arch. in Architecture from the American University in Beirut, and a Masters in Business Administration from Babson College in Boston.

Dr. Al Qurashi has participated in several executive leadership trainings in Oxford University, Harvard University and Pennsylvania University. As a specialist in evaluation of higher education and quality management, Dr. Al Qurashi initiated and successfully pursued the institutional accreditation of Dar Al-Hekma College with the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) which the College received after 3 year long process.

To enhance opportunities for growth and expansion, Dr. Al-Qurashi has actively cultivated partnerships with academic, cultural and scientific institutions and organizations around the world. She has forged academically productive partnerships with universities such as the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, School of Architecture and Planning at University of Colorado; College of Engineering and Hasa Business School at University of California and others. Dr. Al Qurashi received several awards and honorary appointments amongst them the award of distinction from Mr. Tamman Salam, the Lebanese Culture Minister and Ms. Bahia Hariri, the Lebanese Minister of Education, for her outstanding contributions to higher education.

Dr. Al Qurashi has participated and presented papers in numerous national and international conferences.

Assessment Committee Members

Ziad Haddara

My Middle East

Lebanon

Ziad is the Co-Founder and Chairman of “My Middle East” www.mymiddleeast.me, a socially responsible private travel business to the Middle East and East Mediterranean. “My Middle East” designs customized private trips for its guests while ensuring the local community directly benefits from the execution of those trips.

He is also a senior partner at “Ahead of the Curve www.aheadofthecurve.com where he heads the social entrepreneurship unit.

Prior to that, Ziad was the Regional Project Manager of UNDP/ICTDAR (ICT for Development in the Arab Region). Based in Cairo, Egypt, ICTDAR was a regional program of the UNDP that focused on the use of technology and social networking as a tool for development with the objectives of increasing access to knowledge, building capacities, creating jobs, and reducing poverty in the Arab region. Special focus was given to youth capacity building, women’s rights and empowerment, and micro businesses. Flagship programs included an initiative to promote active and responsible citizenship, leading to the creation of socially responsible projects at the community level.

Ziad was also the UNDP Project Coordinator for the National e-Strategy in Lebanon, where he created the e-Strategy Implementation Plan in coordination with national stakeholders. Preceding that, he worked in the United States as Director of Client Relations and General Project Manager of a management consulting firm focusing on digital business strategy and knowledge management projects.

He holds a Bachelor of Architecture from the American University in Beirut, and a Masters in Business Administration from Babson College in Boston.
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