

inTalk ZOOM-Session

Tuesday, 30th June 2020 6pm CET

with Amro Selim

ACD-Agency for Cultural Diplomacy Ambassador for Media2030 and Chairman for Elmoustkbal /Egypt on his new published book "Life Triangle: A new hope to save MENA region from destruction"



Amro Selim
"Life Triangle": a new hope to save MENA region from destruction
From Conflict to Peace



Chairman of Elmoustkbal for media, policy studies, Master's researcher in political science, launched in 2018 'Sustainable Development for Peace' initiative, chosen by UNESCO within the international jury of the MIL City Week 2018 award, also as member in the international committee organizing the Global Media and Information Literacy Week 2020.

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Agency for Cultural Diplomacy

InTalk transcript

Amro Selim is the master's researcher in political science and chairman of the Elmoustkbal association for media, policy studies, launched in 2018. In 2019 Amro Selim became ACD-cultural ambassador for Egypt. Our cooperation is based on intercultural exchange on current global discourses, mainly focusing on art/poetry, language translations and media promotion.

Hello Amro, welcome to our intalk Session and kindly thank you for accepting my invitation to introduce your new published book!

Could you please tell us more about the book title and the content?

It was a challenge to find appropriate book title as it is my first published book. However, the "Life triangle" expresses the strategy which has been invented and announced in the book as the peaceful settlement of conflicts, so I think, this title can raise reader's curiosity and also spotlight the main theme composed in three major parts of the book.

Starting with Media Bell, which is a tool that enables early media warning of conflicts before they occur, the second component of the "Life triangle" include political aspects of national reconciliation within the community between the warring parties, and the third component spotlights the UN Sustainable Development Goals as the main source for development of the regional and transitional cooperation to enhance economic development as one of the main bricks for peace building.

Amro, you have forwarded to me your book to read in PDF-doc, thank you! My first impression by reading relates to the simply understandable language/writing style of your viewpoint narrative. It was easy for me to follow your thoughts and also to understand your point of view, as the text contains evident examples from highly relevant documents such as those from the United Nations reports. a.o. as well as stories from people directly affected by conflicts in the region and photo images.

Who is actually your target audience and why?

My target audience are at one hand the civilians, ordinary people, because it is the main victim of the ongoing conflicts in the region. Furthermore, I am also addressing the United Nations and other powerful major international organizations and leaders as my target audience, to share with them the point of view through the lens of practitioner and researcher in the field from

the civilian sector. The main point I have tackled in my book is the global interdependence and the effects of conflicts in the MENA region (Middle East and North Africa region) on the world economy. My examples and suggestions should trigger the “narrow minded” political decision makers as well as young generation to inter-connect and to widen their perspectives, to shape their critical thinking and to act as responsible citizens by bringing their voice onto political stage. I have shared some simple practical examples and life stories from ordinary people whose life and future of their children is affected by political conflicts, families that have been devastated, refugees and displaced persons, who are the main victims of conflicts and civil wars around the world. From my opinion, the will for peace and change can grow from its necessity, in recognition of the global interdependence. Digital media is a powerful tool for promotion of values, connected with peace and progress through cooperation and shared benefits. Its influential power on behavioral change needs to be used for greater purposes.

Can you share some example about media use for peace building?

How you reach your target group/audience, which promotion strategy are you using? Any social media page or other tools?

Some of my colleagues, Egyptian journalists, published news about my book and it spread widely in the Egyptian and Arab media, such as in the largest newspaper in the Arab world Al-Ahram, as well as the official news agency in Egypt, Middle East News Agency. I have also created an information campaign to promote the book using social media, and to ensure the distinctive impact of the book, I sent information letters to ambassadors from different countries in Egypt. To widen my audiences and to ensure international outreach, I have translated and published my book in two languages: my native language Arabic and English which is globally used by most people.

Beside of audience development by use of translations and publishing your book in two languages, how you perceive your insights in "another" language and what was helpful by "thinking your content" in another language?

I speak English and use this language in my media campaigns, but by writing this book, I have faced many challenges, especially by finding appropriate translation of passages which are contained with my personal, emotionally colored opinions. The book translation was done by use of some online program and by support of my friend who helped me by editing and lecturing the content. This cooperation by composing the book content in two languages was also crafted with intensive exchange about the content from two different perspectives. My colleague supported me by reaching out to people affected by conflicts in the region who shared their life stories and experiences. This part of the book brings evident examples for readers and illustrates the facts which I have tried to underline. So, the process of translation from Arabic to English was followed by contextual “translation” of my situational analysis on conflict resolution in MENA region into life stories of directly affected people. Emotional closeness by writing in Arabic was different by thinking and writing the content in English as English is for me “another” space, not so familiar as Arabic, so I was more aware about making mistakes, trying to find appropriate term, compose meaningful content, and could observe my work more critically, somehow also from “distance” as a reader. It was almost an artistic experience by translation.

At some point in your book you address the increased economic challenges during the C-19 crisis, mentioning the arts and sports as “non-efficient professions and activities for employment and income stability”. Could you explain why you think that way and how can art, sports and creative opportunities- as evident tools for mental health (referring to the comprehensive WHO report on Art&Health 2019) in challenging times be encouraged and

professionals from those fields get supported in order to save their jobs and on the other hand, support people all ages and professions to find creative and constructive solutions and spend time with reflective and perspective opening activities?

From my perception, sports and arts are entertaining activities, pleasures of life, and have their own importance, but my point in the book is, that it could be considered as a second step, after setting priority on basic needs for existence, especially in societies such as in Alsace, that are in need for “basics to survive”, such as food, health care, water and housing. I think it is difficult to tell a sick and hungry person to listen to the music or do sports, to feel better, as such activities belong to the second stage, after providing basic necessities for life, such as food, water, home.

We can discuss about role of arts and sports for management of crisis, mental health and more by another opportunity, as it is not in the main focus of your book, but it can be considered as a tool for media promotion of values and activities which will encourage behavioral changes and development of skills of competences for better life conditions.

I agree with you and also see the arts and sports as powerful tools for conflict management, peacebuilding, reconciliation, etc. but as said, from my perception, it would be on the second stage of development, after ensuring priorities related to basic existence.

What would be your main message for readers, from the book:

From the painful-to peaceful- through cooperation: we are all connected.

If we look to the global effects of the recent crisis urged by Covid-19, and how pandemic have changed the course of people lives across world, there is no other option to survive, than to acknowledge the fact, that there is no chance to “win” this battle as a single person, nor as a state, only together, as responsible world citizens! One by one, from individual level, to the state level, we all have to act responsibly!

So, “leave no one behind” as well proclaimed in the UN Agenda2030!

Conflicts and crises in the MENA region, as well as conflicts in another regions needs to be considered as a global issue, also by civilians from abroad. Solidarity, cooperation and partnerships at the global level will have stronger impact and longer lasting effects on peace and stability. The lockdown during the pandemic may be considered as a chance for all humans to reflect on life values and opportunities within the larger context, as responsible individuals and global citizens.

Thank you!

Tatjana Christelbauer, on 30th June2020

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