

# THE AILEEN GETTY SCHOOL OF CITIZEN JOURNALISM

## Our Vision

YaLa Academy's Aileen Getty School of Citizen Journalism is the only academy in the world exclusively bringing together young Israelis and young Arabs from the surrounding region: a pioneering effort in online education for a Middle East of equality, peace and progress.

The Aileen Getty School of Citizen Journalism trains 400 youth (aged 17-36) per year through a one-of-a-kind interactive online classroom incorporating video lectures from top journalists, new media experts and regional bloggers, live online discussions and peer-to-peer learning on assignments. Key to the success of the program – from its 80% retention rate, to its high level of positive participant feedback and extremely active alumni – is the 1-1 mentoring of each student by YaLa staff, who are experienced young Israelis, Palestinians and internationals. The unique blog, photo and video pieces created by the School's students are published and widely disseminated on new media platforms including YaLa Press and the Huffington Post, thereby bringing a more nuanced view of the region to the world while promoting YaLa's core values of equality, dialogue, understanding and peace.

YaLa Academy is the flagship program of the YaLa Young Leaders Facebook-based movement of nearly 1 million young people from Israel, Palestine, Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen & all across the Middle East. YaLa was co-founded in 2011 by the Peres Center for Peace and YaLa Palestine.

*"The Citizen Journalism Program has given me the opportunity to not only interact with other people outside my bubble, but also learn with them and from them."* **Michal, Israel**

*"Making my voice heard is no longer a dream. Finding people who share the same vision and belief is much easier now."* **Shadi, Palestine**

*"The live discussions with fellow students are the most interactive way of learning in this program. They allow us to learn from each other and from the coordinators while answering the questions about the lecture."*  
**Rahma, Tunisia**

*"I am very happy to be in the Citizen Journalism Program. I take it as an opportunity to gain more knowledge and skills to write stories, share ideas and increase the thinking capacity of my community. Thank you so much."*  
**Donatha, Rwanda**

## Our Structure

The School recruited journalism and new media experts to train and engage young leaders (aged 17-36) from across the Middle East and Africa in the following topics:

1. **'Journalism 101' – writing, editing, interviewing, and ethical journalism;**
2. **Photojournalism** – photography and photo-editing to tell a story through images;
3. **Video Journalism** - shooting, editing and presenting video-based stories;
4. **New Media** – leveraging the power of social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, blogs, etc.) to spread citizen journalism blogs, articles, videos and photography.

Peace, coexistence and dialogue are cross-cutting themes within these four areas to ensure that YaLa citizen journalists use media to reduce tensions and create understanding, rather than fanning the flames of conflict as traditional media so often does.

Each year, the School has two four-month semesters, bringing together **400 students per year from Israel, Palestine, Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen** and all across the Middle East and Africa. The Spring semester is held from March until June and the Fall semester is held from September to December. Through a combination of interactive online platforms, students learn, dialogue, watch video lectures, access resources, and connect with School staff and lecturers.

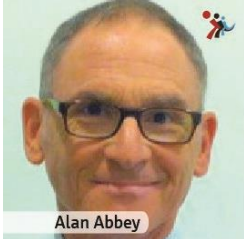
The School's head office is located in Tel Aviv, where the School's curriculum, students and activities are managed by a staff of 6 coordinators and mentors.

### Activities include:

- \* A series of video **lectures** by journalism and new media experts in the four topics;
- \* Biweekly live online **discussions** among students and School staff on our interactive online learning platforms;
- \* Periodic online **Q&A sessions** between students and lecturers;
- \* Collaborative **assignments** in writing, photography and video shared, edited and discussed together by students and Staff in private Facebook working groups;
- \* **Opportunities** for excelling students to win prizes and participate in further study;
- \* Local **workshops** on citizen journalism topics in five countries (Israel, Palestine, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt);
- \* **Publication** of the best blogs, videos and photos on YaLa Press and YaLa's Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages, as well as other media outlets such as **Huffington Post**.

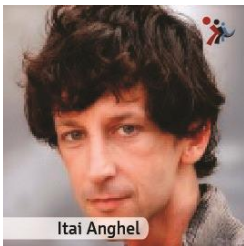
## Our Lecturers

Our distinguished panel of lecturers is composed of renowned journalists, bloggers and social media experts from around the Middle East and the world, including:



Alan Abbey

**Alan Abbey** (U.S./Israel), Director of Internet & Media at the Shalom Hartman Institute and adjunct professor of journalism at National University of San Diego. Previously, he founded **Ynetnews**, the English website of Yedioth Ahronoth, Israel's largest media company, and was Executive Vice President at the **Jerusalem Post** and Editor-in-Chief of JPost.com. *Topic Area: Journalism 101*



Itai Anghel

**Itai Anghel** (Israel) Journalist and War correspondent at **Channel 2**. Itai Anghel covered a high number of conflicts among those: Bosnia, reporting to Galey Tzahal and Haaretz; Rwanda, Kosovo, Yugoslavia, Pakistan and Afghanistan. *Topic Area: Journalism in times of conflict*



Sarah Perle Benazera

**Sarah Perle Benazera** (Israel), Project Manager at YaLa Young Leaders with years of experience in the peacebuilding field in Israel, editor of the YaLa blog platforms YaLa Café and YaLa Press, storyteller and educator. *Topic Area: New Media*



Rina Castelnuovo

**Rina Castelnuovo** (United States), **New York Times** photojournalist based in Jerusalem. Former photographer of the Associated Press, Time Magazine Freelance Photographer, and the Stern Magazine. *Topic Area: Photo-journalism*



Mohammed Daraghme

**Mohammed Daraghme** (Palestine), Senior Correspondent for **Associated Press** based in Ramallah, former journalist for Alquds Palestinian newspaper and Alayam newspaper. Daraghme joined the Associated Press in 2000 reporting from the West Bank, Gaza, Syria and Egypt. *Topic Area: Social Media and Mobile Activism*



Joe Federman

**Josef Federman**, (United States), Senior editor and writer for the **Associated Press** in Israel and the Palestinian Territories. Federman has been a chairman of the local Foreign Press Association, an organization that promotes press freedom and safety in Israel and the Palestinian areas.

Topic Area: Journalism 101

## Our Lecturers



Hanane Harrath

**Hanane Harrath**, (Morocco), Journalist, peace activist and blogger. Harrath is a specialist in politics in the Arab world and religion, chief editor and presenter of a debate program on French and European policy on the Moroccan TV; regular columnist on **TV5 Monde**.

*Topic Area: Journalism 101/Social Media and Mobile Activism*



Talia Levin

**Talia Levin** (Israel) Journalist and columnist. Levin writes weekly columns for Maariv newspapers, and contributes to **Times of Israel**. Furthermore, she works as a facilitator for new journalist on the topics of creative writing and writing workshops.

*Topic Area: Journalism 101*



Ohood Muraqten

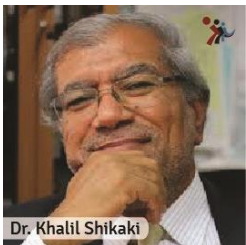
**Ohood Muraqten** (Palestine), expert in Television and Media with over five years of experience in communications, social justice and peace-building. Ohood worked for YaLa Palestine as project coordinator; facilitator for Search for Common Ground, and Media officer for Palestinian Anti-Corruption Commission. *Topic Area: Video-Journalism*



Orit Perlov

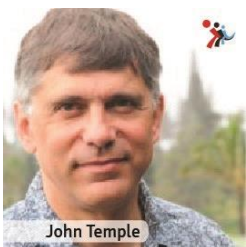
**Orit Perlov**, (Israel), is a social media analyst who follows and analyzes the discourse on the social networks in Arab states. She is the former co-editor of the Israeli Foreign Ministry website in Arabic.

*Topic Area: Social Media and Mobile Activism*



Dr. Khalil Shikaki

**Khalil Shikaki** (Palestine) Director of the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research and professor of Political Science. Since 2005 he has been a senior fellow at the Crown Center for Middle East Studies at Brandeis University. *Topic Area: Journalism 101*



John Temple

**John Temple** (United States), former Managing Editor of **Washington Post** & former President of FirstLook Media. Temple has straddled both the editorial and business sides in a number of news organizations, including at the Rocky Mountain News, where he was editor, president and publisher.

*Topic Area: Journalism 101*



THE AILEEN GETTY FOUNDATION



## Our Model

By integrating the citizen journalism lectures, discussions and assignments into the daily social media experience of our participants, the program has maintained student **retention rates of approximately 75-80%**, well above the norm of any other online education model. For example, according to its founder, Coursera only has 4 to 9% of students complete their online courses.

Pioneered in a pilot program supported by the U.S. Institute of Peace, which took place between September 2014 and January 2015, the School leverages a Facebook-based system of collaborative, peer-to-peer journalism. Every writing, photo and video assignment is posted, reviewed, discussed and edited in closed Facebook working groups facilitated by YaLa staff and mentors. The online lectures, chats, collaborative writing and student feedback all take place through the Facebook groups and YaLa's Academy's interactive website.

Like a university campus, YaLa has created a hybrid social and educational space. But quite unlike a university campus, YaLa's Citizen Journalism program connects the entire Middle East and Africa region online, providing **free, accessible and high-level training that breaks down borders**, barriers and stereotypes.

Accordingly, our students rate the experience as overwhelmingly positive. When asked to rate the overall program, 92% of pilot program students rated it highly, including 38% rating it as "lifechanging" (awarding it the maximum score of 7) and another 54% rating it as very positive (scores of 6 or 5).

## Our Platforms

YaLa's innovative new media platform - **YaLa Press** (<https://yalapress.wordpress.com>) - serves as a stage for YaLa bloggers, as well as a collaborative platform for the students of the YaLa Academy's Aileen Getty School of Citizen Journalism to publish their pieces and co-manage the portal. The School's country chapters in Israel, Palestine, Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt will become hubs for local content on the platform and catalysts for local citizen journalism including video, photography and blogs in English, Arabic, Hebrew and French. It is not about "representing" the Middle East through expert analysis, but rather about "presenting" it, simply and authentically. YaLa's unique blogs have been featured on several partner media outlets including a regular column on the **Huffington Post**.

Over the past three years, YaLa Press has opened a unique window into the lives of young people across the region, publishing nearly 300 blogs written by young people from Palestine, Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Iraq, Sudan, Yemen and beyond. YaLa Press is bringing to the world the human dimension of the Middle East through stories of the real-life experiences of young people in the region.

Apply now: [bit.ly/296Y7Ah](https://bit.ly/296Y7Ah)