

George W. Bush Institute Women's Initiative Fellowship 2015

<http://www.bushcenter.org/explore-our-work/developing-leaders/womens-initiative-fellowship.html>

<http://www.bushcenter.org/people/emna-2015.html>

2015 WOMEN'S INITIATIVE FELLOW

Emna is leading an organization focused on promoting a multiparty dialogue about counter-radicalism. The organization engages private sector participation and encourages creative cultural and educational approaches. Since October 2012, she has served as an Independent Advisor for a government body tasked with Civil Society and Multiparty Democratic Dialogue. In this role, she develops different scenarios for mediation and confidence building between parties.

Emna serves as professor, part of her research focuses on efforts to counter violent radicalism.

A recognized expert on Tunisian civil society and human rights, she sits on the advisory board different NGO's and is a founding member of several organizations working on issues related to Tunisia's transition into democracy.

UPDATE: MARCH 2016

Emna knew exactly what she wanted to accomplish with the Women's Initiative Fellowship before she even arrived to the United States in March, 2015. By creating a network of women who stand together against extremism through peace and security initiatives, Emna sought to facilitate change in Tunisia through her personal leadership project.

Emna credits three aspects of the Fellowship as having the greatest impact on her professional career. First, the training sessions at Southern Methodist University that prepared her to be an effective leader. Second, the site visits to successful American institutions, which taught her more about American innovation. Third, the advice of her mentor challenged her to dig deeper and push harder to achieve her goals. The combination of new skills and advice empowered Emna to create the Women for Peace and Security (WPS) project.

Upon her return to her country in March, 2015, Emna arranged a conference and networking coalition comprising twenty fund raisers from national institutions and embassies, and 75 leaders who will sign her WPS charter. She took part in a Joint Task Force meeting organized by the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies-African Command (NESA-AFRICOM), which included senior military officials and transnational security experts working to address radicalism, terrorism, trafficking, and crime.

<http://www.bushcenter.org/publications/articles/2017/06/legacy-of-womens-initiative-fellowship.html>

Legacy of the Women's Initiative Fellowship

JUNE 7, 2017 3 MINUTE READ by [Shannon Bradford](#), [Christopher Walsh](#)

WIF graduate Emna Jebblaoui, who is a peace, security, and counter-radicalization expert, recently organized The Women for Peace Media Summit, a media training seminar for women leaders in Tunisia, in collaboration with her WIF mentor, Shirin Taber.

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The Bush Institute believes in the transformational potential of including women more fully in their societies. For this reason, the Bush Institute has endeavored to develop women leaders in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) through the [*Women's Initiative Fellowship*](#) (WIF). Since 2012, the program has graduated four cohorts of women leaders from Egypt and Tunisia. Alumnae include doctors, judges, teachers, and other rising stars who have used skills they honed through the WIF to make lasting impacts in their communities.

Among the WIF graduates is Tunisia's [*Emna Jebblaoui*](#), executive director of the International Institute for Human Development (IDH), who is a peace, security, and counter-radicalization expert. In May 2017, Emna organized [*The Women for Peace Media Summit*](#), a media training seminar for women leaders in Tunisia. She did so in collaboration with her WIF mentor, Shirin Taber, director of the [*Middle East Women's Leadership Network*](#). The conference showed participants how to use their online presence to amplify their work promoting peace and security. Participants included women leaders from the Tunisian parliament, police force, and embassies, as well as representatives from the United Nations and other international organizations. Nine alumnae of the WIF also participated, in addition to one mentor, [*Jenifer Sarver*](#), who served as a workshop trainer.

Emna and Shirin's collaboration not only promoted cross-cultural communication and networking to address skills gaps, but also applied key concepts learned through WIF courses, including influencing others without authority, effective communication, and networking.

Women like Emna are helping transform this emerging democracy as it faces challenges related to the economy and terrorism. She and other women are engaged in building the political and economic infrastructure that helps societies succeed and ensuring that women are heard and included. Fostering institutions that protect all people's basic freedoms, encouraging widespread economic opportunity, and providing space for nonviolent expression of diverse viewpoints, including those of women, are needed for peaceful, prosperous societies to endure. The absence of such infrastructure breeds discontent and extremism.

The Bush Institute will continue to support the voices o

f women like Emna in the MENA region. It is not only in the best interest of those countries for the sake of their prosperity, but also in the national security interests of the United States.

<http://www.bushcenter.org/publications/articles/2018/03/international-womens-day.html>*

2. [*EMNA JEBLAQUI*](#),

a 2015 [*Women's Initiative Fellow*](#) from Tunisia, serves as executive director of the International Institute of Human Development and professor of Letters, Arts, and Humanities at the University of Manouba. An expert in peace, security, and counter-radicalization, Dr. Jebblaoui is currently launching Women 4Peace and Security, which aims to put Tunisian women at the core of national efforts to consolidate peace and security and promotes women as the key to countering terrorism at its roots.

<http://www.bushcenter.org/publications/articles/2018/03/eya-tunisia.html>

<http://oursecurefuture.org/blog/notes-field-experts-weigh>

Our *Notes from the Field* series is designed to highlight the opinions and advice of Women, Peace and Security experts around the world. In this series, we hope to bring attention not only to the tireless work they've been doing, but also to their plans for the future.

Dr. Emna Ben Abdelhamid Jebblaoui has been a university professor at the University of Manouba in Tunis since 1999, and the Founder and Executive Director of the [International Institute of Human Development](#) (IDH). Launched in 2013, IDH focuses on promoting new research on Islam and new strategies to counter radicalism. The organization engages private sector participation and encourages creative cultural and educational approaches ([videos](#), [rap songs](#), [trainings](#)). Dr. Jebblaoui is passionate about women's, youth, and minority rights in Tunisia and North Africa.

1. What are you currently working on?

On the academic level, I am working on new understandings of Islamic sources. In the NGO world, I am the Executive Director of the International Institute of Human Development. Over the course of 2016-2018, IDH is working on the Women 4Peace and Security (W4PS) Platform, which aims to put Tunisian women at the heart of national efforts to consolidate peace and security.

2. What is the thing you want to change most in the world?

I want to be part of a high-level movement of research on Islam. I aim to produce creative ideas to reform discourses on and interpretations of Islam, in order to make Muslim women and citizens more free and to allow them to bloom.

3. How do you use Women, Peace and Security and UNSCR 1325 in your work?

The Women 4 Peace and Security network is a platform that aims to contribute to the efforts to adopt a national Tunisian plan for UNSCR 1325 and to increase awareness and knowledge of the resolution, which is followed in particular by the 2242 resolution promoting the role of women as actors who can counter terrorism at its roots.

We are partnering with an NGO of policewomen (Ligue Nationale Tunisienne de la Femme Policière, LNTFP). We have already trained 60 policewomen on UNSCR 1325, and are looking for support to train others.

4. What keeps you up at night?

My freedom to say what I want to say, to wear the clothes that I want to wear, without the pressure of any traditions or any ultra-conservative establishment. My security, my prosperity, and thoughts about what kind of country Tunisia will be in the coming years. What kind of emerging democracy will my son live in? Will North and West African transnational security vulnerabilities be challenged by women and civil society actors?

Will I be safe? Will I be still free to share my thoughts and my beliefs, as radical groups target free thought? Now we see radical lobbying groups having money, power, and preaching an ultraconservative Islam, and worse—refusing all other, more tolerant interpretations and ways of being Muslim or non-religious in a Muslim country.

5. What has surprised you the most about this work?

What surprised me most about Women 4Peace Platform is that producing short films (3-7 minutes in length) was a big success, and that producing counter-narratives through videos and storytelling can be very powerful messaging. Youth actors were also a powerful and positive surprise. We made workshops with teenagers to write slogans against terrorism and the slogans were more interesting and creative than elder beneficiaries, and even more interesting than those of their professors.

6. What should we pay attention to now?

“More research, more political will and more women to prompt the message,” as stated in the IDH credo.

We should encourage research on Islamic studies by scholars and academics in universities and think tanks to improve understandings of the peaceful message of Islam, and to prove that violence and terrorism are linked to biased, fascist interpretations by some violent groups. Then we should use results of this research to produce counter-messaging and spread it through media and social media. We are already producing 24 short films with stories of women and men who did something for peace. We're currently looking for some funding to make the subtitles in order to spread our message on a global level.

On Mother's Day of this year, OSF published a blog on the importance and impact of mothers. One of IDH's most recent videos further illuminates the influence mothers indeed have in preventing and reversing radicalization. Watch the full video [here](#).

I was also member of Lend Network an initiative launched on 2012(Leaders engaged for New democracy Network) led by Club de Madrid and Community of Democracies founded by Mrs Albright

http://nextgenerationdemocracy.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Booklet_interactivo.pdf

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<http://www.clubmadrid.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Participants-BUENO.pdf>