

DE-OTHERIZE DIALOGUE PROJECT

www.de-otherize.org



New Orleans, Louisiana | Mar. 2019 | Dialogue Installation @ In Shadow Exhibition

A project made possible by
the [Ibrahim Leadership & Dialogue Program](http://www.ibrahimleadership.org)

Ibrahim
STUDENT LEADERSHIP AND DIALOGUE
MIDDLE EAST PROGRAM WITH **QUEENS COLLEGE**



New Orleans, Louisiana | Jan. 19 | pop-up dialogue session @ Mojo Coffeehouse

A collaboration with displaced people to end the otherization, fear and misconceptions of the Middle East through listening and discussing with each other

OTHERIZE: *verb*
the act of viewing or treating a person or group of people as intrinsically different from and alien to oneself



Originating from a video chat brainstorm between a Syrian refugee and a university student in May 2018, the De-Otherize Dialogue Project was created to build global community through virtual dialogue sessions so Americans and Middle Eastern Youth have the

opportunity to discuss culture, struggle, art and the U.S. Travel Ban from the point of view of the "other"

P U R P O S E
1

**EMPOWER
DISPLACED
YOUTH**

P U R P O S E
2

**CONNECT
PEOPLE
ACROSS
BORDERS**

P U R P O S E
3

**COMBAT
HATE AND
FEAR OF
THE
OTHER**

OUR FOCUS

REPEAL SYRIA
 THE YEMEN
 MUSLIM IRAN
SOMALIA
LIBYA
 BAN NOW

**CALL YOUR REPRESENTATIVE
 AND MOVE THE "NO BAN ACT"
 FORWARD IN CONGRESS**

#NOBANNOWALL #REFUGEESWELCOME
 #NOMUSLIMBANEVER

REPEAL THE U.S. TRAVEL BAN

We aim to spread awareness about the true consequences of U.S. Travel Ban//Muslim Ban on nationals of Syria, Iran, Yemen, Libya and Somalia by amplifying their stories and struggles

Color Your Own Protest Poster

(design: JY, 2019)

ALLOW SYRIAN REFUGEES TO SEEK SANCTUARY IN THE US

By giving Americans an opportunity to speak directly to Syrian refugees, we hope to rally support to #standwithrefugees and increase the refugee cap in the U.S. from 40,000 back to 110,000 and overturn the executive order that bans Syrians from applying for refugee status

SINCE JANUARY 1ST 2018 ONLY

39

OF 12.9 MILLION DISPLACED SYRIANS
 WERE GRANTED ASYLUM IN THE
 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

THAT IS ONLY
0.0003% OF SYRIAN REFUGEES
 CURRENTLY SEEKING SAFETY

RISE UP FOR REFUGEES

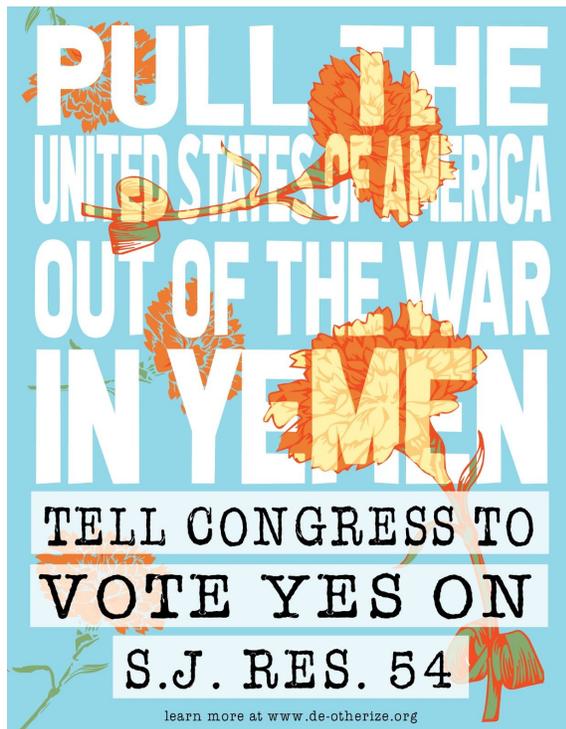
TELL CONGRESS TO LET SYRIANS IN

#NOMUSLIMBANEVER #REFUGEESWELCOMEHERE
 #OVERTURNTHEBAN

de-otherize.org

Refugee Awareness Infographic

(design: JY, 2018)



STOP U.S. MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN THE WAR IN YEMEN

Through art, conversations and social media we called on people to oppose the U.S. role in the war in Yemen and to call their representatives to pass the War Resolutions Act in Congress

Call to Action to pass the War Resolutions Act

Design: JY, 2018

END ANTI-MUSLIM RACISM IN THE U.S.

This includes raising awareness and ending surveillance programs in the U.S. that target Muslim communities including the CVE (Countering Violent Extremism), the Watchlist and entrapment

CONFRONT THE CONSTRUCTED FEAR OF THE “OTHER”

To combat the idea that terrorism originates from Islam or the Middle Eastern and to end hate speech and discrimination by finding our commonalities across cultures and building relationships over borders

OUR TEAM



Josie Ygnatowiz is a graduate of UC Berkeley where she received a B.A. in Middle Eastern Studies and a B.S. in Environment & Society. Josie was able to travel across the Middle East through incredible opportunities such as the Critical Language Scholarship, the Foreign Language and Area Studies Scholarship, the MidEast Wire’s Erbil Exchange and the Ibrahim Leadership and Dialogue Program where she met inspiring change-makers, survivors, displaced innovators and creators. As a way to bring these inspiring people and their stories into conversation with Americans, Josie co-founded the De-Otherize Dialogue Project with Yazan in 2018 as a way to bridge the division and stereotypes of the “other” that fuel hateful policies like the U.S.

Muslim Ban. She is passionate about immigration justice, cross-cultural communication and revolutionary education to create a more intersectional, equitable and harmonious world.

Yazan al-Shakoohy is from Latakia, Syria where he studied Mechanical Engineering at Tishreen

University until the war in Syria made it impossible to continue studying. To stay away from the violence and forced military conscription, he fled to Lebanon, then Sudan and then to Erbil, Iraqi Kurdistan. Josie and Yazan met virtually in 2015 through Jusoor’s online mentorship program and since then Yazan has applied to multiple scholarships, programs and visas that have all ended up in disappointment. Because of constant denial and instability, Yazan has developed severe panic attacks and trauma-based depression. Yazan co-founded the De-Otherize Dialogue Project to empower Middle Eastern youth suffering from mental health issues and the trauma of displacement by giving them an opportunity to share their stories with the “other”



Our Storytellers

The project compensates storytellers for joining a dialogue session via video conference and sharing their stories, time and energy with people on the other side.

Poets, students, journalists, musicians, artists...

Our storytellers are from diverse backgrounds yet have all been “otherized” simply because of where they were born



YAZAN



AREEJ



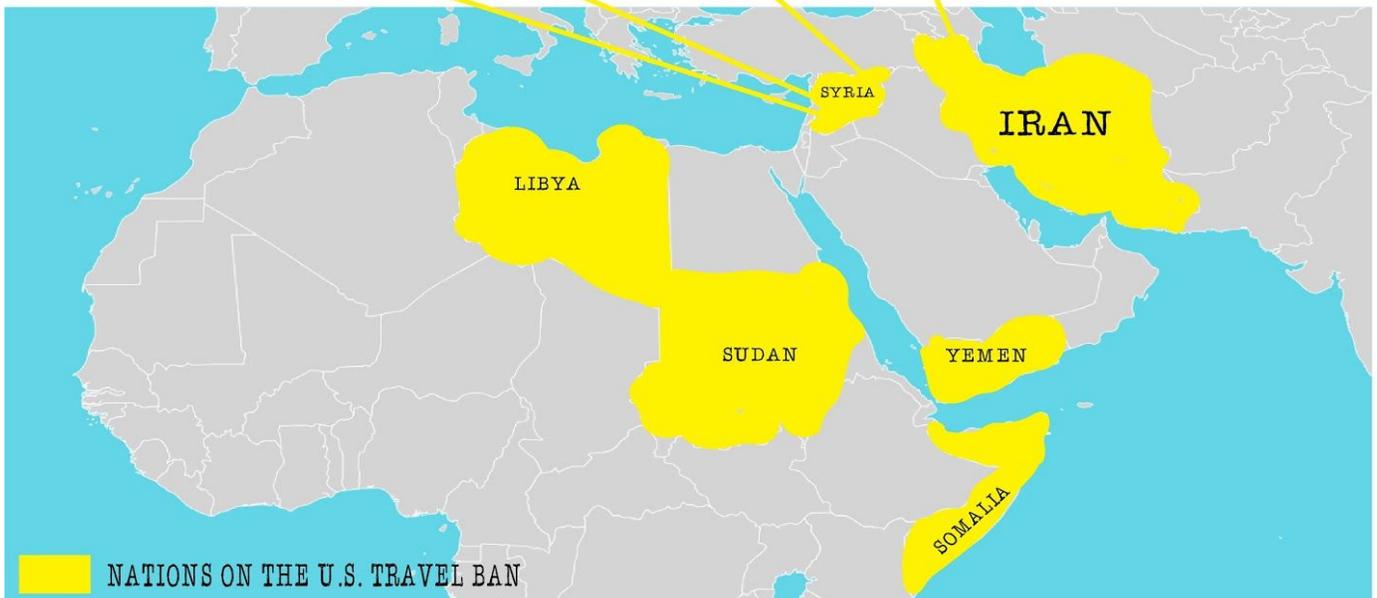
BASHAR



NIL

THE BANNED STORYTELLERS

MIDDLE EASTERN YOUTH AFFECTED BY THE US TRAVEL BAN



ONE YEAR. MANY CONVERSATIONS.



This year we organized
dialogue sessions in over

5 states

and set up our installation in

**art galleries,
coffee shops,**

community gardens,

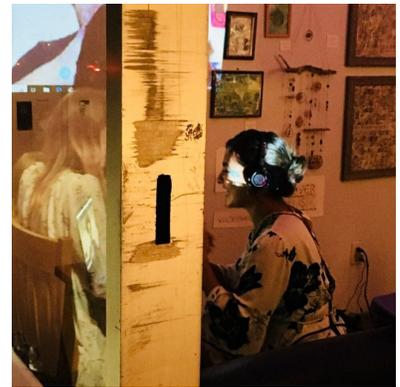
libraries

and public parks

Highlights

August 2018

The De-Otherize Dialogue Project was featured at the Beatnik Art Gallery opening in Joshua Tree, CA where visitors could engage in live discussion with Syrian refugees in the Middle East



October 2018

The De-Otherize Dialogue Project was selected to participate in the NEXUS Fund's Capacity Building Training to combat hate speech and discrimination. We learned about communication strategies to confront dangerous speech, building positive narratives, outreach and connecting with your audience, deconstructing the constructed threat and realizing the different identities used to manipulate power structures and dynamics.

January 2019

The project hosted a dinner and discussion at Grow On Urban Farms in New Orleans, Louisiana where we had Will Picard of the



Yemen Peace Project video in from Washington D.C. to update us on the crisis in Yemen and the state of the Travel Ban for Yemeni refugees. We also had Bashar Balleh and co-director Yazan join us over video to tell their stories and do a live Q&A.

February 2019

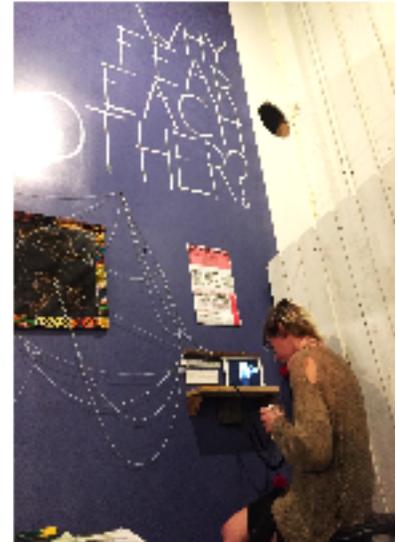
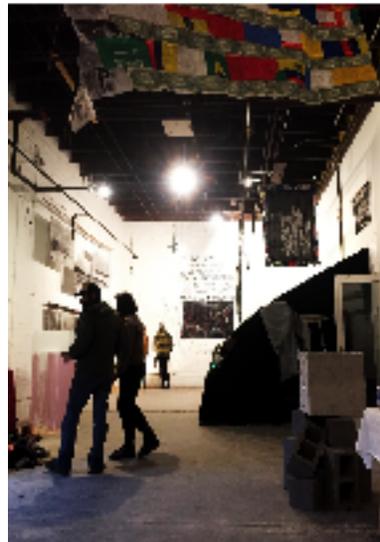
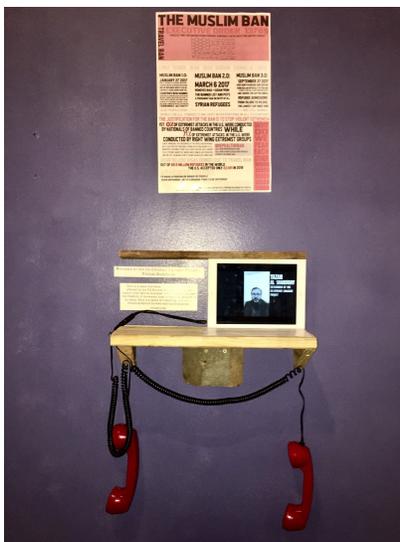
Coffeeshop pop-up dialogue series at Mojo Coffeehouse, we had some technical issues with the series because there was not a strong enough Wifi connection for video chat which hindered the ability for people to ask and answer questions about each other. As well, lots of people engaged with the project but did not want to take the time to talk.

March 2019

In February 2019, the De-Otherize Dialogue Project was asked to collaborate in an art exhibition on immigration justice in downtown



New Orleans at the Julia St. Gallery. The exhibition took place over two weekends and included two dialogue sessions with Syrian refugees, a “virtual storybook” in which guests chose from a collection of video stories and interviews we gathered from people in the Middle East and an action night/ presentation on the consequences of the Travel Ban.



2018 - 2019 BUDGET

Expenses	Notes	Cost
Middle East & US coordinators, speakers & staff pay	Paychecks for refugees for sharing stories, time & interviews; paychecks for US and Iraq based coordinators for organizing	1,260
Event venues, food	Renting space for dialogue sessions and exhibition showcases, food & refreshments	690
Media & marketing	Flyers, website, educational materials, Art & graphics	380
Dialogue installation set-up	Projector, headphones, iPad, portable installation set-up for virtual dialogue	670
Total	May 2018- May 2019	\$3,000

2019-2020 FUTURE GOALS

With an expanded budget we hope to continue another year of advancing the vision of the Ibrahim Leadership and Dialogue Program to build bridges, facilitate cross-cultural understanding and connect “others” across borders.

NEXT STEPS

- **Expand the staff from one US-based coordinator to include:**

- A full time Middle East Coordinator
- Media/website intern in the Middle East
- 2 - 3 storytellers in the Middle East (speakers for dialogue sessions)

* Most speakers & staff will be paid through Western Union due to the lack of bank accounts, wiring and financial apps available in Yemen, Syria, Iran and Iraq

- **Create a pop-up dialogue cafe**

- A safe place people can talk with the “other” through video chat while having coffee and breakfast

- **Build a portable installation for public spaces**

- Create a portable design that can be launched in crowded spaces to engage with people that would not normally have an opportunity to speak to someone in the Middle East
- Wifi hotspots for US and Middle East coordinators for set-up and co-events

- **Create a network of chapters to host dialogue sessions**

- Create a network in which there are facilitators all over the country that host dialogue sessions with refugees and Youth across the Middle East to build bridges
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2019-2020 PROPOSED BUDGET

Expenses	Notes	Cost
Staff Fund	<p>Yazan, Middle East Coordinator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Event coordination, Arabic- English translation, storytelling <p>Josie, US Coordinator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Graphics, website mgmt, social media, - Event coordination <p>Speakers, Intern Stipend & Storytellers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pay for speakers is \$30/hour - Pay for intern tbd 	<p>2000</p> <p>2000</p> <p>1000</p>
Event Fund	Renting space for dialogue sessions and exhibition showcases, food & refreshments	1200
Media & marketing	Flyers, monthly website fee, educational materials, Adobe software for art & graphics, video editing software for interviews//stories	1000
Dialogue installation set-up	Wifi hotspots in US + Monthly data Wifi hotspots for speakers in the Middle East	800
Total	May 2019 - May 2020	\$8,000

A special thanks for inspiring and supporting this project

In 2009 a distinguished American Muslim family, S.A. Ibrahim, his wife Nina and son Winston expanded their philanthropic mission to combat hatred, violence and enhance understanding of the Middle East by launching a student travel and exchange program, The Ibrahim Student Leadership & Dialogue Program. The Program encourages and helps to sponsor Student Alumni when they return from their journey to engage in creative and impactful programs like the De-othering Dialogue Project.

In gratitude and appreciation to

S.A. and Nina Ibrahim

Winston Ibrahim

Larry and Susan Sills

Professor Mark Rosenblum

and all the sponsors and collaborators
who work tirelessly for a more
harmonious and healthy world.

