

Nizar H. Farsakh

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ENABLING CHANGE AGENTS UNCOVER LATENT POTENTIAL

- 20+ years experience in Leadership, Negotiations, and Public Policy
- Appointed at executive level of government to advise senior Palestinian leadership
- Gifted at bridging gaps in understanding across cultures, multiple stakeholders and build capacity
- Frequently invited by think tanks and the media ([Arabic](#), [English](#)) to comment on Middle East affairs

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Lecturer of International Affairs, **George Washington University**, Washington, DC 2019 – Present

- Teach negotiations at the Elliot School of International Affairs to graduate students using the Socratic Method, role-playing, complex simulations, as well as self-reflection. Converted course to an online one.

Principal, **Farsakh Training & Consulting LLC**, Arlington, VA 2016 – Present

Projects worked on:

- **[Hands Along The Nile](#)**: Trained 30 Egyptian and US Christian and Muslim youth active in religious dialogue on communication, narrative and leadership. Training conducted in both English and Arabic.
- **[UN-ESCWA](#)**: Trained 40 officers from the Arab Ministerial Water Council on water dispute negotiations.
- **[Deep Root](#)**: Training 15 Yemenis (involved in national reconciliation) on leadership and negotiations.
- **[Iraq Leadership Fellows](#)**: Developed 10-month curriculum, trained over 60 Iraqi leaders from different regions and sects to tackle key challenges they faced. Training enhanced organizing and leadership capacity, and rapidly adapt in their highly fluid environment. I continue to consult to some of them to this day.
- **[Harvard Program on Negotiation](#)**: Led 5-day debriefing sessions in N. Ireland for 30 Palestinian and Israeli mid-level professionals and international diplomats to develop negotiations and leadership skills by comparing and learning from North Irish examples and organizations.
- **[Zimam \(counter-radicalization youth movement in Palestine\)](#)**: theory of change, messaging, aligning programs to domestic priorities, enhancing impact through enabling lateral leadership, and strategic scaling.
- **[Auburn Seminary NYC](#)**: Researched and reported on interfaith dialogue in Palestine to assist client assess the pros and cons of working in that space, interview potential partners and present recommendations.
- **[Avi Schaefer Fund](#)**: Trained pro-Palestine and pro-Israel student groups from 5 Ivy League schools to use narrative to address polarization, harness collaboration and mobilize others.

Program Director, **Project On Middle East Democracy (POMED)**, Washington, DC 2013 – 2015

- Mentored 9 partner organizations in the MENA region in policy writing, advocacy and think tank functions; supported audience mapping, editing, and distribution of policy publication in Arabic, English and French;
- Provided technical support for drafting of partner publications, editorial assistance, feedback on policy;
- Traveled periodically to the MENA countries to check on progress of projects with existing partners, strengthen relationships with those partners, and explore opportunities with potential new ones;
- Built strategic partnerships with international groups working with policy NGOs in the MENA region;

Teaching Fellow, **Harvard Kennedy School of Government**, Cambridge, MA (incl. *ad hoc*) 2009 – 2014

- TF with renowned professors, Ronald Heifetz on Adaptive Leadership and Marshall Ganz on Narrative and Organizing. Led two 16-student sections per term, ran weekly meetings, reviewed written work and guided learning. Along with the rest of the teaching team, developed and refined content and pedagogy.
- Active member in [Leading Change Network](#) & [Adaptive Leadership Network](#) for over 10 years. Networks bring together hundreds of alums from the two courses to share learnings and enhance their impact in applying those leadership concepts in government, private sector, and civil society across the globe.

General Director, **Palestinian General Delegation to the US**, Washington, DC 2011 – 2013

- Advised the Ambassador on political, public advocacy, community outreach issues and media strategy;
- Led the delegation's PR and branding effort with various PR firms on current Palestinian issues;
- Drafted/edited Ambassador's opinion pieces and letters to the editor to major news outlets, reviewed staff's written output to ensure it was on message and of high quality;
- Recruited, managed, and evaluated the output and performance of staff in the four departments: Government Affairs (U.S government and Congress), Media, Public Affairs, and Community Outreach;
- Represented the Ambassador in functions whenever required;
- Continued to advise his successor (pro bono) on communication, PR, and advocacy.

Policy Advisor, **Adam Smith International (Negotiations Support Unit)**, Ramallah, Palestine 2003 –2008

- Provided technical and policy support to the various ministries;
- Provided prep and real-time support to senior leaders (President Abbas, PM Fayyad, and various ministers) with senior officials from Israel, US, EU, UN, Arab countries, and other internationals;
- Developed comprehensive negotiations manual (used to this day) for all major border-related issues including accurate depiction of the border which was so accurate the Israeli army adopted it, created territorial exchange analysis tool, developed potential maritime claims currently the basis of the official position deposited at the UN, and devised border regime options currently used at the border terminals;
- Participated in several negotiations rounds following the Annapolis process in 2008 as well as the coordination of Israel's pullout from the Gaza Strip in 2005;
- Drafted sections related to border issues in 'The Agreement on Movement and Access between Israel and the Palestinian Authority in 2005;
- Improved quality of cartographic database as well as the understanding of principles of boundary making in the Ministry of Planning and Palestinian Energy Authority;
- Developed and upgraded the Border Administration's internal regulation to help it reach international standards, build local capacity, and minimize opportunities for corruption.
- Regularly led presentations to senior politicians in various languages.

Research Assistant, **Applied Research Institute (ARIJ)**, Bethlehem, Palestine 1999 – 2002

- Developed database for Israeli settlements and their activities including GIS geospatial and trend analysis;
- Drafted proposals and prepared periodic reports on status of Israeli settlement activities to EU donors.

EDUCATION

Harvard Kennedy School of Government, Cambridge, MA 2010

M.A. *Public Administration* (Mid-Career Program)

- Adaptive leadership (orchestrating conflict to enable adaptive change), Moral Leadership, Community Organizing (motivating and mobilizing groups), Narrative in Leadership (tackling: Loss, Difference, Power Inequality, and Change); Communications and Public Speaking; Religion in Global Politics, Ethics of the Use of Force, Power in the 21st Century (Soft Power with Prof. Nye), basic development economics.

King's College London, London, UK 2003

M.A. *International Boundary Studies*, graduated with *merit*,

- Boundary demarcation, disputes, and international law (ICJ case laws; transboundary natural resources (oil, gas, water), maritime boundaries (UNCLOS), border management, geopolitics.

American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon

B.A., *Political Studies* 1999

B.Sc., *Chemistry* 1997

CERTIFICATIONS

Center for Teacher Effectiveness - **Certified Training Associate** (less than 4% get accepted) 2020

Arlington Public Schools - **Challenging Racism: Learning How through Stories and Conversations** 2016

Harvard Kennedy School Executive Education - **Leading Nonviolent Movements** for Social Change 2015

Harvard Kennedy School - **Faith and Leadership** in a Fragmented World 2011

Harvard Law School – **Interested-Based Negotiations** 2004

CLIENTS

Government and Private Sector

U.S.-Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), United States Institute of Peace, Global Young Leaders Conference (Envision EMI, LLC), Global Peace and Development (GPD) Charitable Trust, Adam Smith International, DeepRoot Consulting, Synchrony, Jobs for the Future, DT Global..

Nonprofit and Faith institutions

Oxfam, Konrad Adenauer Foundation), J-Street, One Voice Movement (US chapter), Encounter Programs, Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC), Alliance for Middle East Peace (ALLMEP), Foundation for Middle East Peace, Sixth & I Synagogue DC, Arab America, American Muslim Civic Leadership Institute (AMCLI).

Academia

Harvard Kennedy School Center for Public Leadership, Harvard Kennedy School Future of Diplomacy Project, Harvard Law Program On Negotiations, UMass Boston, George Washington University, American University, University of Maryland, NYU, Columbia University, Princeton University, Cornell University, University of Ithaca, Wesleyan University, St. Cloud University.

Media

MSNBC, NPR, CBC, France 24 Arabic, RT Arabic , TRT World, i24, EFE News Service, Al-Jazeera, Al-Arabiya, Al-Hurra, Voice of America, Voice of Islam.

DESCRIPTION OF TRAININGS

Negotiations: Learn how to uncover one's default negotiations settings that stand in the way of maximizing their interests. By deploying Harvard Prof. Roger Fisher's negotiations gold standard "The 7 Elements", you learn to expand the proverbial pie to get more than what the zero-sum perception suggests. An indispensable skill for your career, your teams, and all other situations in your life where you are trying to extract value.

Strategic Planning: Learn to do SWOT analysis, determine critical success factors, M&E, and draft a road map for the group to achieve goals more efficiently and sustainably.

Scenario Planning: Learn to enhance an organization's resilience by studying and preparing for possible scenarios that might unfold and impact the organization in significant ways. These scenarios are developed by studying key consequential variables that are also highly uncertain and outside an organization's control (e.g. economy, tech evolution, or social attitudes) and then preparing for each. This makes an organization better prepared for possible crises before they hit.

Ladder of inference: Learn to identify how we and others come to our conclusions, then identify the level at which miscommunication happens. Is it at the level of the facts we see, the assumptions we make, the meanings we give, the conclusions we reach, the beliefs we adopt or the actions we take? That in turn allows us to apply strategies to address the roots of the misunderstanding. The trainees learn to draw better conclusions and/or challenge other people's conclusions. The step-by-step reasoning process helps you remain objective and reach a shared conclusion without conflict when working with others or even when challenging them.

Narrative in Leadership: Learn how to purposefully deploy storytelling to mobilize others into action. In addition, a further training goes into analyzing four types of challenges (Loss, Difference, Power Inequality, and Change) to tackle whatever is hampering a group from moving forward. From there, trainees learn how to craft narrative responses that enable the group to respond to those challenges with agency. For people don't resist change, they resist the loss they perceive in the change.

Adaptive Leadership: Learn how to build a group's capacity to stomach change and adapt effectively to evolving environments. Distinguish authority from leadership, role from self, and orchestrate change at a pace your group can tolerate and sustain. Help your group figure out what 1% needs to change in the organization in order to safeguard the remaining 99%; not just to survive but to thrive.

Collaborative Potential: Learn to measure, realize and sustain collaboration across teams, business units and other stakeholders. It entails [Connectional Intelligence™](#) assessments and training customized to the organization's needs. Led as part of Cotential Group with my colleague [Erica Dhawan](#).

Trainings are tailored to the organization's needs so the list above should be taken as a conversation starter rather than off-the-shelf products. The trainings are interactive, enhanced by real-life examples from the US and abroad, and can be led in English, French, or Arabic.