

YARA ZALZAL

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Passionate and committed writing consultant with a demonstrated history in the nonprofit and humanitarian fields, particularly in peacebuilding, international human rights, and humanitarian law, among others. My expertise extends to governance, public policy, poetry, as well as advocacy for animal rights and welfare. My continual growth and adaptability are credited to exceptional writing, translation, proofreading, critical thinking, and organizational skills.

EDUCATION

American University of Beirut - Beirut, Lebanon **2017**

Master of Arts in Public Administration

Thesis: *“The governance of non-profit organizations in Lebanon”*

American University of Beirut - Beirut, Lebanon **2014**

Bachelor of Arts in English Language

American University of Beirut - Beirut, Lebanon **2014**

Diploma in Media and Communication

American University of Beirut - Beirut, Lebanon **2013**

Bachelor of Arts in Public Administration with a minor in public policy

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Frolicsome Writer - Beirut, Lebanon

Founder and Writer (www.frolicsomewriter.com)

2013 – Present

- **Drafted grant proposals for a variety of local and international non-governmental organizations and small businesses.** This involved extensive research on available calls for proposals, conceptualizing projects based on provided information, creating logical frameworks, timelines, and budgets for the proposals, and, when necessary, actively pursuing specific grants.

The range of topics covered in these proposals included promoting ownership of international humanitarian norms, enhancing the protection of civilians in the Middle East, improving community security and access to justice in Lebanese host communities, empowering Palestinian refugee women in Lebanon to play a stronger role in security, civil peace, and political life, implementing community policing for heightened security, developing social entrepreneurship skills in North Africa and the Middle East, fostering agricultural prospects in Lebanon, teaching participative street art and clowning to youth in Lebanon as tools for improving local communities' wellbeing, supporting psychosocial wellbeing, and safeguarding children and youth by facilitating their comprehensive personal development through activities such as football and educational support, among other diverse topics.

Donors included: UNDP, UNESCO (BERYT), Embassy of Finland in Lebanon, Ministry of the Swiss Confederation represented by the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, acting through the Embassy of Switzerland in Lebanon, ECHO, UNHCR, USAID, Wijhat, Intercultural Innovation Hub, Asfari Foundation, Clowns Without Borders, Safir, Democracy Reporting International, UNDEF, Embassy of Germany in Lebanon, Regional Development and Protection Programme for Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq, among others.

- **Conducted proofreading and translation services for various technical and non-technical materials,** including reports, studies, articles, and books across diverse fields such as humanitarian norms, protection of civilians in armed conflict, conflict resolution, peacebuilding, municipal police, forced separation and intercountry adoption, alternative care, sports, education, agriculture, human

security, animal rights, local development, arts, and engineering. Translations were performed proficiently between English, French, and Arabic.

- **Provided consultancy projects for non-governmental organizations** including offering guidance for start-ups on registration process, revamping the profile of certain nonprofits, and helping them design projects, and issue yearly plans and strategies.
- **Guided several PhD and Master students** in their dissertation writing process and provided in-depth and final proofreading., around topics related to humanitarian access, human rights, international humanitarian law, arts, and public policy, among others.
- **Translated and proofread several studies/reports/trainer guides** for NGOs from/to English, French and Arabic, around IHL, IHRL, social challenges, education, peacebuilding, history, conflict resolution, as well as genealogical writings, and biographies, among others.
- **Engaged in writing business proposals**, leveraging my expertise to craft compelling and comprehensive documents aimed at securing opportunities and partnerships for the organization. This involved a meticulous blend of persuasive writing, industry knowledge, and a keen understanding of client needs to create proposals that not only met but exceeded expectations.
- **Played a key role in copywriting for several businesses**, contributing to the creation of engaging and impactful written content. This encompassed tasks such as capturing the essence of each business, developing persuasive messaging, and ensuring a consistent and compelling narrative across various communication channels. The copywriting efforts aimed to enhance the businesses' visibility, resonate with the target audience, and ultimately contribute to their overall success.

Notable Projects:

- Wrote several proposals for several parties, including Permanent Peace Movement, Geneva Call, Badael/Alternatives and Clown Me In, My Community, among others.
- Co-authored a “Strategy to Prohibit the Participation of Children in Armed Conflicts and Terrorist Activities in the Arab World” for the League of Arab States.
- Translated a book written by Dr. Roula Zoubian and titled “Peace Amidst the War of the Mountain” and a sequel titled "Peace-Building in Mount Lebanon. A Post Mountain War Reconciliation Model" (from Arabic into English).
- Translated a text written about Charles Corm from Arabic into English.
- Conducted an assessment of the “Relationship between the Municipal Police and Local Actors in 4 Towns around Lebanon” followed by follow-up workplans, as part of a project launched by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).
- Acted as the local consultant during the 5-year Review of the Mennonite Central Committee's Programs in the Middle East. My role involved providing local contextualization and offering a parallel agency perspective. Responsibilities included reading assigned documentation as requested by the team leader, actively participating in questioning and analysis on-site, collaborating with other review team members, contributing analysis and writing to the review report as directed by the team leader, conducting translation and interpretation between English and Arabic during field visits, facilitating focus group discussions and interviews with partner organizations, beneficiaries, and local staff members in Beirut, Mount Lebanon, and Beqaa regions. Additionally, I was responsible for analyzing information and drafting sections of the final report.
- Translated a book about a family's history and genealogy from Arabic into English.

Permanent Peace Movement - Beirut, Lebanon

2020- 2022

Consultant (Part-time)

- I served as a consultant, providing support to the Permanent Peace Movement in the implementation of several projects, most notably the following three:

As the **Project Coordinator** for "Enhancing community security and access to justice in the Lebanese host communities," I executed and supervised the implementation of project activities according to the work plan. This involved planning and implementing various activities such as trainings, interviews, conferences, and ceremonies. I ensured alignment of financial documents with project implementation

activities, documented financial disbursements, and assisted the accountant in performing tasks while preparing financial reports in compliance with the project's signed contract. Additionally, I provided support to the Team Leader in all written materials, prepared monthly reports in coordination with the Team Leader, developed monitoring and evaluation tools, and prepared project reports, activity reviews, progress, and evaluation reports. I maintained a continuous flow of information among stakeholders and project personnel, coordinated with the Team Leader to ensure the work plan stayed on track, and represented PPM in relevant meetings, seminars, workshops, and panels. I also liaised with relevant partners and stakeholders, including governmental bodies, NGOs, academia, research centers, trainers, etc., to maximize the effectiveness of expected results. Notably, I wrote the proposal for this project, which was funded by the UNDP.

In the role of **Administrative Officer** for two projects, namely "Empowering Palestinian refugee women in Lebanon to strengthen their role in security, civil peace, and political life" and "Developing and implementing Mechanisms for Stability and Local Development (MSLD) in targeted communities across Mount Lebanon area," I coordinated and organized the logistics of activities, including training workshops, meetings, and seminars. I meticulously documented all data and paperwork related to project activities. Similar to the Project Coordinator role, I ensured the alignment of financial documents with project implementation activities, documented financial disbursements, performed accounting tasks, and prepared financial and narrative reports in compliance with the project's signed contract. Additionally, I monitored and followed up on the financial progress of the projects in relation to the budget and real expenditures. Both of these projects were also funded by the UNDP.

Geneva Call - Beirut, Lebanon

Communication, monitoring and reporting officer (Regional Office)

**2019 –
2020**

- Supported the definition, design, and implementation of Geneva Call's operational communication and development activities for the regional project with the objective of promoting awareness, understanding, and support for Geneva Call's mission and priorities in the field.
- Produced and implemented operational communication activities and assisted in donor relations.
- Supported in gathering data essential to MEAL.
- Ensured Geneva Call's visibility, reputation, and positioning within the framework of the regional project.
- Designed, implemented, and followed up on the program-related communication plan aimed at promoting knowledge and acceptance of Geneva Call in the Middle East.
- Researched, prepared fact-checking, edited, and produced professional media and communication material for various audiences and ensured their timely dissemination via communication channels across the Middle East.
- Drafted talking points and messages for the Head of Mission and/or Programme Coordinator.
- Drafted briefing notes, stories, reports, and other material for dissemination by Geneva Call HQ whether for global communication, fundraising, or global advocacy efforts.
- Provided pictures, reports, and communication material that portrayed Geneva Call's project achievements and progresses.
- Created high-quality media and multimedia content for dissemination in the framework of the project.
- Undertook and organized missions and field trips with media and other official visitors.
- Assisted in drafting mission reports, project documents, proposals, concept notes, and grant reports as required.
- Developed and maintained a regional-specific profile and mapping of donors.
- Attended and represented Geneva Call as required at conferences, seminars, and other fora of interest to the organization.

Geneva Call - Beirut, Lebanon

Program officer (Lebanon Office)

**2018 -
2019**

- Developed, coordinated, and executed relevant Geneva Call activities in alignment with Geneva Call's strategy and operational procedures.
- Oversaw all logistical and practical arrangements, ensuring the prompt delivery of detailed reports on the evolution of the work plan.
- Monitored the implementation of project activities to ensure the achievement of outputs, outcomes, and expected results, adherence to the budget, and fulfillment of donor requirements. Additionally, ensured the timely delivery of accurate financial reporting.
- Contributed to building and sustaining a network of counterparts with key humanitarian players.
- Prepared, coordinated, and participated in field missions and other related activities.
- Provided assistance with translation and interpretation, particularly during Geneva Call staff field visits, and translated documents for operational use.
- Fulfilled administrative, financial, and accounting tasks related to the program and its activities.

Geneva Call - Beirut, Lebanon

**June 2017-
April 2018**

Program assistant (Lebanon Office)

- Coordinated the day-to-day preparations and implementation (logistical and practical arrangements) of Geneva Call activities in Lebanon, including in the Palestinian refugee camps.
- Assisted with the preparation of and during Geneva Call's staff's field missions to Lebanon.
- Translated documents from/to Arabic for operational use.
- Reviewed financial and narrative reports.
- Reported and maintained records.
- Provided other project-related assistance as required by the Programme Coordinator.

UNICEF - Beirut, Lebanon

2017

Knowledge and information management intern

- Coordinated and managed knowledge resources to facilitate effective information sharing within the organization.
- Assisted in the development and implementation of information management systems.
- Organized and categorized data and information to ensure accessibility and usability.
- Supported the creation and maintenance of databases and repositories for efficient storage and retrieval of critical information.
- Collaborated with team members to identify and address knowledge gaps and information needs.
- Conducted research and analysis to contribute insights that enhanced decision-making processes.
- Assisted in the preparation and presentation of reports and documentation related to knowledge and information management.
- Participated in training sessions and workshops to enhance skills in information management.
- Collaborated with cross-functional teams to streamline knowledge flow and communication processes.
- Contributed to the overall improvement of information management practices within the UNICEF office.

American University of Beirut - Beirut, Lebanon

2016

Research Assistant

- Conducted literature reviews and gathered relevant research materials.
- Assisted in the design and implementation of research projects and experiments.
- Collected and analyzed data using appropriate research methodologies and tools.
- Collaborated with the research team to contribute insights and observations.
- Prepared and maintained research documentation, including data files and records.
- Participated in the development of research proposals and project reports.
- Conducted interviews, surveys, or experiments as required for the research projects.

- Assisted in the preparation of manuscripts, presentations, and research publications.
- Provided administrative support for research-related activities, including organizing meetings and coordinating logistics.
- Stayed updated on relevant literature and advancements in the field to contribute to the research's contextual understanding.
- Collaborated with faculty and other researchers to ensure the successful execution of research objectives.

American University of Beirut - Beirut, Lebanon

**2014 -
2016**

Graduate Assistant

- Assisted professors with course-related responsibilities, such as preparing materials, grading assignments, proctoring, and facilitating discussions.
- Conducted research in support of faculty projects, including literature reviews, data collection, and analysis.
- Collaborated with faculty on research initiatives and contributed to the preparation of research papers and publications.
- Participated in departmental meetings and contributed to discussions on program development and improvement.
- Collaborated with fellow graduate assistants to enhance the efficiency of departmental operations.
- Adhered to university policies and protocols while maintaining confidentiality and professionalism in all tasks.

Investment Development Authority of Lebanon (IDAL) - Beirut, Lebanon

**2014 -
2015**

Data and program coordinator

- Incorporated new data concerning exporters and inspection bodies.
- Revised and updated exporters' applications.
- Conducted testing on the recently installed module associated with inspection bodies.
- Monitored and addressed any errors or bugs encountered during testing by liaising with the software developer and inspection bodies.
- Organized and filed all relevant documents.

PUBLICATIONS

Haddad, T., & Zalzal, Y. (2018). Chapter 3: Civil society and non-profit governance in the Arab world. In Haddad, T., Al Hindy, E., Religion and Civil Society in the Arab World - In the Vortex of Globalization and Tradition. *Routledge India*.

Link: <https://www.routledge.com/Religion-and-Civil-Society-in-the-Arab-World-In-the-Vortex-of-Globalization/Haddad-Hindy/p/book/9780367734237>

EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

Olympia Summer Academy- Nafplio, Greece

July 2015

Obtained 2 certificates of attendance in "Religion and International politics" and "Nationalism and Ethnic Politics."

University of Cambridge Pembroke King's summer program - Cambridge, UK

**June to
August,
2012**

Enrolled in three undergrad courses counted as part of my undergraduate degree: Varieties of English, Travel writing and Shakespearean Drama.

Salzburg Global Seminar on Media and Global Change- Salzburg, Austria

June 2011

Enrolled in 2 courses counted as part of my Diploma in Media and Communication

AWARDS

"Hussein Oueini Annual Award" for the Best Written Master Dissertation at the American University of Beirut (Public Administration and Political Science Department - PSPA)

2017

“ Dr. Randa Antoun Annual Award ” for Public Service and Civic Engagement, awarded to an outstanding master student in PSPA	2016
Dean’s honor list , Faculty of Arts and Sciences at the American University of Beirut	2010 - 2013
“ Ecrivain en Herbe ” (French writing contest “Raconte moi la Paix” Organized by all the Besançon Schools) – Won First Place	2006

CERTIFICATES AND COURSES

Design Thinking – UNICEF	2017
International Humanitarian Law - Geneva Call	2017
Training Methodologies - Geneva Call	2018
International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law - Amel Association	2019
Animal Behavior and Welfare -The University of Edinburgh	2023
Chimpanzee Behavior and Conservation - Duke University	2023
Introduction to Animal Advocacy Careers - Animal Advocacy Careers	2023
Introduction to Plant-Based Campaigns - Anima International	2023
The Science of Effective Vegan Advocacy - Center for Effective Vegan Advocacy	2023
Climate Solutions - The University of Edinburgh	2023
Learning for a Sustainable Future - The University of Edinburgh	2023
Animal Justice Academy - Animal Justice Canada (currently enrolled)	2023

LANGUAGES AND COMPUTER SKILLS

Languages: English (Fluent), French (Fluent), Arabic (Native)

Computer Skills: Microsoft Office, Canva, Photoshop

REFERENCES

Available upon request.