



DR. OGARIT YOUNAN & DR. WALID SLAYBI

Recipient of the International Award for Promoting Gandhian Values Outside India - 2022

Born: Dr. Ogarit Younan (February 24, 1956) & Dr. Walid Slaybi (December 25, 1955)

Dr. Ogarit Younan and Dr. Walid Slaybi are pioneers of non-violence in Lebanon and the Arab world.

Dr. Ogarit Younan, devoted early her life to humane commitment. She is a pioneer Arab woman for non-violence who is also the pioneer of Nonviolent Education in Lebanon and the Arab world. Ogarit Younan is known to be the first to have integrated the culture of nonviolence and the conflict resolution in the official curricula in Lebanon. She mainly is a prominent human rights activist on national and regional level.

Studying and specializing in sociology and education sciences, she is a sociologist, writer, university lecturer and author of more than 20 titles and publications. Ogarit Younan is considered as a reference in Social Training, Nonviolent Social Innovations, Alternatives for the Sectarian System and Laws in Lebanon.

Dr. Walid Slaybi devoted early his life to social change. As an Arab thinker of non-violence, he is known to be an innovator of new concepts within the political economy for justice. He is also known as the main strategist of nonviolence, direct actions, and civil campaigns.

Studying and specializing in political economy, sociology, physics, and civil engineering, Walid Slaybi is a writer, researcher, university lecturer, and author of 22 books and research among them is his book *“Yes to Resistance, No to Violence”*. Early in 1983, he took the initiative and launched the first series of “Arab Nonviolent Translations”.

Both Ogarit Younan and Walid Slaybi met in 1982 in the wake of the Lebanese war (1975-1990) and embarked on a joint journey of life and struggle, as partners seeking to build their dream day by day under exceptional circumstances. They chose to give a human existential meaning to their life and career, away from a world of greed and fame. Ogarit Younan and Walid Slaybi both came to be known as the pioneers of re-building the civil society in Lebanon.

Their last big achievement-Academic University College for Non-Violence and Human Rights (AUNOHR), a University for NON-VIOLENCE, is a pilot project that was created in 2009 and was issued an official license in 2014. This is what its Council of Fellows and the President of its International Council, S.E. Federico Mayor, the former Director General of UNESCO, sent to the international community about the University, after the explosions of the port of Beirut in August 4th, 2020, because located near the port, AUNOHR premises (rented) were very badly damaged by the explosions: *“A leading beacon of light for change in Lebanon and the region, is the Academic University for Non-Violence and Human Rights, AUNOHR, first-of-its-kind, a non-profit higher education institution with a training center for grassroots’ programs. Millions in Lebanon and the Arab world were impacted by the work of its founders. The work of the University is more important than ever. It will not only help to diffuse the culture of Peace and nonviolence in Lebanon and the beleaguered Arab Region but build a strong foundation for peaceful and cohesive societies.”*

The best message on AUNOHR, explaining impacts, professional roles, and personal change, could only be that of students. Testimonials from students are uploaded on https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLBHZJH-zJeEm-mPjNWbJ9DiVTRc9Yon_7

For establishing the National Day for Non-Violence in Lebanon on October 2nd, according to the UN Universal Day of Non-Violence, AUNOHR succeeded in 2016, in motivating the Council of Ministers to sign, unanimously, a decree recognizing this National Day. A renowned Lebanese singer inaugurated its first ceremony with the Hindu devotional hymn "*Vaishnav Jan To Tene Kahiye*", usually rendered by Mahatma Gandhi.

During their first nonviolent actions during wartime in Lebanon, they worked against war and towards socio-economic actions for social Justice, against impoverishment and for people's rights. Its impact was as follows:

- "No" to War "Yes to civil peace": They were among the members and initiators of all actions against the civil war in Lebanon: Some of it being "The National Civil March" - a unique courageous initiative traveled across the country and "The National Union Congress" organizing the largest peaceful demonstration reuniting people from all division.
- For the Workers: Who were the poorest...the nonviolent actions benefited tens of thousands of workers in the largest factories in Lebanon, at 100%.
- For the 52 marginalized villages dominated by militia: Successful nonviolent strategy for social justice was carried out, with emphasis on the Right to Bread.
- For the People with Disabilities: It was a first of its kind action leading to establish their rights and to change the title of their actions from "pity" to justice.
- For the Teachers: Thanks to their nonviolent strategy since 1988 for the teacher's rights in all regions, their empowerment, and the reunification of the divided syndicates, "which made it true before and after" teachers repeated.

Yet another major contribution of Ogarit Younan and Walid Slaybi has been their unprecedented work (in a country under war) for youth – the new generations. They are empowering thousands of new human resources as actors for peace, social justice, and non-violence through a setup of Trainers-Activists-Social Organizers. They are:

- The YOUTH in Lebanon
- The first Non-Violent Arab Network

They are transforming schools and curricula into Non-Violence. It is a pioneering program since 1985 crowned in 2018 at the national level with the Ministry of Education. For the first time, the culture of Non-Violence will be officially integrated in school syllabus for all public and private schools, from kindergarten to secondary classes.

Yet another project has been that of a sustainable innovative project titled Non-Violent Houses in Villages. Their permanent goal was to spread Non-Violence among people, in 100 villages, through establishing "Houses" scattered in their daily life as sustainable 'immunity' against violence, sectarianism, gender discrimination, authoritarian education, and impoverishment.

The non-violence and peace work have also been carried out by translating the Non-Violence heritage, and for the first time Mahatma Gandhi's books, into Arabic. The works are spread on national and regional levels, and some of the books have been rewarded as best sellers at many of the book fairs.

Dr. Ogarit Younan and Dr. Walid Slaybi's more pioneer achievements include:

- Initiating modern training, popular and professional since the eighties. Innovating tens of new methods and pioneer manuals
- Creating a new popular current for civil peace: "*Non-Violent Mothers*"
- "*Letters between Neighbors*": as a reconciliation between communities after the civil war
- Innovating the 1st model for socialization on non-sectarianism in a divided country
- Two unique alternatives, adopted by a significant part of civil society, for two crucial problems in the Lebanese system viz. History teaching and compulsory religious education, divided between politico-religious forces
- Contributing to the annulation by the parliament of the law authorizing violence against children
- Creating and publishing a new type of people's rights tools, for each case they fight viz. (Workers' Rights, Teachers' Rights, Youth & Students' Rights, Community' Rights, Women's empowerment, Non-confessionalism, Family law & Civil marriage, Death penalty, etc.)
- Founding the first national campaign to abolish the death penalty since 1997
- Founding the largest national campaign for civil marriage since 1998
- Elaborating and publishing a new economic alternative to the national debt
- Changing the name of the "*negro's head*" popular pastry as symbol of non-racism culture.
- Inaugurating the universal statute of Non-Violence "knotted gun" for the first time in the Arab capital, Beirut, in 2018.

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Founders

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