

TÄLLBERG FOUNDATION



SHARMEEN OBAID-CHINOY

Shorter description of her work:

Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy; A multi award winning Pakistani filmmaker, journalist and activist who uses her world-class story telling skills to focus global audiences on issues that effect marginalized communities with the aim of changing minds and

impacting legislation.

Biography

Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy is a Karachi-based journalist and filmmaker whose reports led to legislative changes in Pakistan. She is the only female director to have been awarded two Academy Awards by the age of 37. Since 2001, she has made over two dozen multi award films in over 16 countries around the world. Her films include *Student Athlete*, *Girl in the river*, *Song of Lahore*, *Saving Face*, *Peace Keepers* and *Transgenders: Pakistan's Open Secret*.

Her documentaries, which have won two Oscars, tackle abuse of women and children. Her “Frontline” documentary, “Children of the Taliban,” told of Pakistani boys who were groomed in Taliban-run schools to carry out attacks against civilians.

“Saving Face” focused on acid attacks on women. The film prompted Pakistan's most populous province to process these cases through anti-terrorism courts to ensure speedier justice.

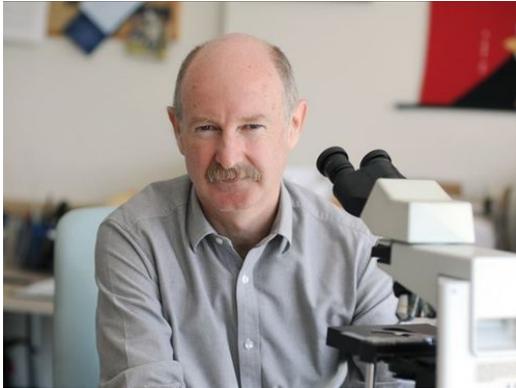
“A Girl in the River” explored an attempted “honor killing” of a young woman who married a man her family had not chosen. The film drew attention to a loophole which

allowed these murders to go unpunished. Pakistan's parliament then passed a law criminalizing honor killings.

In 2015, Sharmeen launched a mobile cinema in Pakistan, which travels across the country, screening films in small towns and villages and engaging the youth in meaningful conversations around women rights, religious diversity and tolerance.

Obaid-Chinoy also helped found the Citizens Archive of Pakistan, a nonprofit, volunteer organization that fosters and promotes community-wide interest in the culture and history of Pakistan. Citizens Archive works with thousands of children, teaching critical thinking skills and instilling a sense of pride about their history and identity.

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PROFESSOR RAFAEL YUSTE

Short description of his work:

Professor of Biological Sciences at Columbia University, neuroscientist, inspirer of the US and International Brain Initiatives (2011 and 2016), and advocate of ethical guidelines for Neurotechnology and AI (2017).

Biography:

Rafael Yuste, a neuroscientist, is Professor of Biological Sciences at Columbia University. He studies the function and pathology of the cerebral cortex, using optical methods to measure and modify the activity of its neural circuits.

Yuste obtained his M.D. at the Universidad Autónoma in Madrid. After working in Sydney Brenner's laboratory at the Medical Research Council in Cambridge, he was a Ph.D. student with Larry Katz in Torsten Wiesel's laboratory at Rockefeller University, and postdoctoral student of David Tank at Bell Laboratories. He joined Columbia in 1996 and is currently director of its Neurotechnology Center and co-director of its Kavli Institute for Brain Circuits.

In 2011 Yuste led a small group of researchers who proposed the Brain Activity Map, precursor to the US BRAIN Initiative, and in 2016 he helped coordinate the launch of an International BRAIN Initiative. He is presently involved in establishing ethical guidelines for Neurotechnology and Artificial Intelligence ("NeuroRights").

Yuste has obtained awards from the Mayor of New York City, the Society for Neuroscience and the Director of the U.S. National Institutes of Health. He is a member of Spain's Royal Academies of Medicine and of Science.

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PLATEFORME DES CONFESSIONS RELIGIEUSES DE CENTRAFRIQUE

Shorter description of their work:

Cardinal Dieudonné Nzapalainga, Pastor Nicolas Guérékoyame-Gbangou & Imam Omar Kobine Layama. Three clerics whose work aims at containing and then reconciling the deeply divisive forces

tearing at their country, the Central African Republic and elsewhere.

Short introduction

Three religious leaders—a Christian pastor, a Catholic bishop and a Muslim imam—created the Plateforme des Confessions Religieuses de Centrafrique in an effort to contain and then reconcile the deeply divisive religious and civil forces tearing at their country, the Central African Republic.

These three extraordinary leaders were simply unwilling to let their country and communities be consumed by what they knew to be irrational and fundamentally misguided religious fervor. Together they stand against the forces of evil who continue to try to turn the Central African Republic into another casualty of the 21st century religious wars.

The jury celebrates their leadership that is collective, that is courageous and unyielding, and that is based on the simple idea that what we have in common is far greater than what separates us.

PCRC's Background

The Interfaith Peace Platform

The Rev. Nicolas Guérékoyame-Gbangou

Archbishop Dieudonne Nzapalainga

Imam Omar Kabine Layama

If one belief unites the three clerics behind the Interfaith Peace Platform, it is that religion is not the cause of the violence that has convulsed the Central African Republic over the past five years.

Archbishop Dieudonne Nzapalainga, who became the youngest cardinal ever when he was elevated by Pope Francis in 2016, is leader of the country's Catholics. His bond with Imam Omar Kabine Layama, president of the Islamic community, was forged after the capital, Bangui, first descended into chaos in 2013, and the Imam, under threat from anti-Muslim forces, sought refuge in the Cardinal's home.

The two men began travelling together, working to restore peace, and were soon joined in their effort—forming the Interfaith Peace Platform—by the leader of the CAR's Evangelicals, the Rev. Nicolas Guérékoyame-Gbangou. Dubbed “the three saints of Bangui,” they have pushed for U.N. peacekeeping troops, and for grassroots dialogue among the citizens of the CAR. Instead of religion being manipulated as a source of strife, the Interfaith Peace Platform is making it a tool for peace: a way to identify mutual values that warring parties can live by.

Despite a recent resurgent of violence earlier this year, which they blame on foreign mercenaries, the clerics are pushing to try to rebuild the C.A.R.'s institutions and its infrastructure. “Our country is full of wealth in the basement,” says the Imam. “And there are among the armed groups a lot of highwaymen, many mercenaries who have infiltrated just to illegally pass these riches.” Communications is a major priority, he says, but they are still looking for funding for a radio station: “The Platform wants to have a voice, a radio, which can be heard all over the territory.”

When the trio launched their initiative, they created a chart with all the rules of how they would function. Responsibilities are shared—the permanent secretariat is handled by the Catholics, coordination of the programs by the Evangelicals, and finance by the Islamic community—and they strive for the kind of transparency that is essential to trust.

“When we started the Platform, we were three: Pastor, Imam, and me, and we met without much organization,” the Cardinal says. “Now we have disciples joining us, but it’s not guaranteed they’re all going in the right direction. We must constantly remind them that we are together to move towards a common vision.” They need to be in communication with each other, too. “If there is somebody from the Muslim community coming up to me, I would inform the Imam to make sure it doesn’t look like a conspiracy,” Pastor Nicolas says.

They treat each other with the equality and respect they seek to establish among citizens of the C.A.R. In a recent interview with the Tallberg Foundation, the Imam and the Cardinal expressed concern that the foundation also hear from their Evangelical partner, who was out of the country at the time. Similarly, when support is offered from one faith, it is used to benefit all. When a church in Switzerland asked Pastor Nicolas what they could do for the Christian community in Bangui, he told them, “It’s not just about the Christians, there are other people who are suffering in Central Africa. If you have the finances, let’s go and build houses. There are people who lost their houses.” About 50 houses were ultimately built, half of them for Muslims.

Like many great leaders before them, they realize that they won’t see the end of the mission. As Pastor Nicolas says, “I will continue as much as I can and then I will leave it to others to continue... It’s not the work of one generation. It will take several, maybe.”