

International ACAC Scholar Program



Eva Ntalami has nearly a decade of experience in community development, education, and access initiatives across sub-Saharan Africa. She currently serves as the program manager of the Zawadi Africa Educational Fund, a non-profit leadership development program that provides access to university guidance,

mentorship, and life skills training to academically gifted girls on the continent. Zawadi has over 350 women on scholarship at universities in the United States, Canada, Kenya, Ghana, Uganda, and South Africa. This organization aims to reach over 1,000 young women in 40 African countries by 2020.

Leila Moud of Zawadi nominated Eva, having witnessed her passion for working with high-achieving, low-income students: "When you talk about passion and potential, you will understand why Eva Ntalami fits the bill. Eva always tells us if you do not wake up in the morning happy to go to work, then you are in the wrong field." Eva is strongly bound by the vision to empower Africa's young women to participate in the development of the continent through education and self-determination, ultimately becoming global leaders who inspire new generations.



Mabadjam Arsène Katawa has been teaching English language in high schools for 10 years in Togo. Currently, he teaches and serves as the university and careers counselor at Lycée Scientifique de Kara, one of the top high schools in Northern Togo. Entrance to Lycée Scientifique de Kara is through a highly selective entrance exam. Despite

many challenges, including limited Internet access and electricity outages, Arsène succeeded in placing his first student abroad at McGill University in 2015. Nominator Basile Koumi of EdUSA in Togo said: "Mr. Katawa has emerged as a bridge. He has worked to bring EducationUSA to students in remote areas and identified the best students for our Opportunity Funds Program."

Arsène seeks to bring greater visibility to his school by taking on initiatives such as writing the first school profile and working to get a school logo and letterhead. As the Coordinator of Togo English Teachers' Organization in Kara, he has organized many workshops and trained teachers in his local area. With the support of EducationUSA, he has also launched a network of high-achieving, low-income students in Northern Togo pursuing international education opportunities. Former International ACAC Scholar Flavia Murengezi met Arsène at the Africa Regional Institute and said: "From the time I met Arsène, I noted passion and commitment to his students as he shared with me how he struggles with limited resources. He has managed to send some students overseas against all odds. I strongly feel that if given the opportunity to attend the International ACAC conference, his work in supporting students will be a lot easier."



Vatosoa Raharinosy is an English teacher at Lycée Andohalo, a top public high school Antananarivo, the capital of Madagascar, where she voluntarily stepped up to be the first-ever school careers counselor. Thanks to her collaboration with the Lafayette College Initiative for Malagasy Education (LIME),

Vatosoa mentors top students from the school to prepare them to apply universities in the United States. Through counseling and organizing extra-curricular activities, she inspires students to take their education to a higher level. She pushes her students to improve their English, prepares them for standardized tests, and mentors them in their personal development. Since 2012, five Malagasy students from Lycée Andohalo have attended Lafayette College as a result of her collaboration with the LIME program.

In 2016, Vatosoa was honored with a grant to participate in the Study of the United States Institute's (SUSI) program for Secondary School Educators at the University of Montana. Upon her return, she and her LIME students collaborated with teachers and students from different countries. Professor David Stifel of Lafayette College and Kaye-Lani Laughna of Davidson College nominated Vatosoa, saying: "We are convinced that Vatosoa will make the most of this opportunity. She is remarkably creative in finding ways for her students of limited means to be successful despite the lack of resources available to her."



William Edward Ssettuba is Dean of students at Mengo Senior School in Uganda, which is considered one of the best schools in the country. For seven years, he has developed programs to raise awareness of higher education opportunities for the 4,000 students from various African

countries at his school. William has devised innovative ways of implementing career counseling in an under-resourced environment including: career talks at assemblies, visits to tertiary institutions and universities, career guidance manuals, motivational talks from professionals, scholarships for students, and job placements.

Nominator Laura Kaub of the Yale Young African Scholars Program said: "William is among the most enthusiastic university counselors I've known on the continent. So much so that he basically invented his role at Mengo Senior School, where he has been a teacher for many years." William supported collaborative efforts for Ugandan students to attend the African Leadership Academy in South Africa as well as the establishment of international links with institutions where teachers and students can go for additional study and training. At Mengo, he launched a program for students seeking international higher education opportunities and has vastly improved his school's career and university guidance department.



Fernando Revelo La Rotta is a high school teacher at an institution regarded as the strongest school for refugees and migrants in Cairo, Egypt. This school opened in 1998 to help students access education in their resettlement countries. Starting with 68 students, this school

now enrolls 250 students from Sudan, South Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Burundi, and Uganda. Fernando says, "I understand what it means to not feel welcome and push through that." Born in Colombia, he grew up in the United States as an undocumented student. After receiving his green card, he matriculated at Duke University and graduated with a degree in Middle Eastern Studies.

In 2013, Fernando launched an international university preparation initiative to provide high achieving students the opportunity to prepare for applications to higher ed institutions abroad. His school currently offers the Sudanese curriculum in English. On weekends, Fernando teaches supplementary AP level courses and runs extra-curricular activities. "Fernando reached out to my colleague in advance of our trip to Cairo and we eventually met in September when he brought 20 of his students to our presentation. It is no small feat to coordinate so many students with limited finances in Cairo," said nominator Christina Callahan of Northwestern University. Fernando credits his background for fueling his desire to inspire students to achieve more than they thought possible.



Shabana Basij-Rasikh is the co-founder and president of the School of Leadership, Afghanistan (SOLA), a nonprofit school dedicated to providing Afghan girls a rigorous education that promotes critical thinking, a sense of purpose, and respect for self and others. SOLA is a recognized pioneer in

education that prepares young Afghan women from diverse backgrounds to become compassionate, confident women leading a peaceful, prosperous, and united Afghanistan. SOLA is Afghanistan's first boarding school for girls. Students range from ages 11-19 and represent all major ethnic groups and religious sects. SOLA's graduates have gone on to attend 45 different schools and colleges in six countries.

Shabana is widely recognized as a leading advocate for girls' education. Born and raised in Kabul, Afghanistan, Shabana dressed as a boy to attend a school during the rule of the Taliban. She completed high school in the United States through the State Department's Youth Exchange Studies program and went on to graduate magna cum laude from Middlebury College. She was awarded the Davis Peace Prize to build wells on the outskirts of Kabul, and was selected as one of Glamour Magazine's Top 10 College Women of 2010 for building a school for girls in eastern Afghanistan. Shabana is a global ambassador for Girl Rising, a global campaign for girls' education, and was recently named one of National Geographic's 2014 Emerging Explorers, as well as one of CNN International's Leading Women of 2014.



Azizullah Royesh is one of the leading advocates for equal access to education in Afghanistan. He is the driving force behind the Marefat School, recognized for its focus on liberal arts, human rights, and democracy in one of the most dangerous environments in the world. Royesh was one of 10 teachers short-listed for the Varkey Foundation's Global

Teacher Prize - an award recognized as the Nobel Prize for teachers. Aziz is also a Yale World Fellow and a Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellow. All of this is remarkable in light of the fact that Aziz had to end his own formal education in elementary school, when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, and Aziz fled to Pakistan.

When Aziz was 16, he returned to Afghanistan but when the Taliban took power in the 1990s, he fled back to Pakistan. There, he established a makeshift school for refugees that would eventually become the structure for Marefat School. After the Taliban fell, Aziz built Marefat on the debris of war-torn Kabul with eight teachers, 37 students, and \$560 USD. Today, Marefat serves 3,500 students, nearly half of whom are young women. In the past decade, over 190 students have been awarded scholarships to study at high schools and universities around the world. Nominator Anna Dechert says that NYU Abu Dhabi will welcome its first two female Afghan students from Aziz's school this fall. Marefat High School has gained increasing international recognition through features on National Public Radio and *The Atlantic Monthly*.



After graduating from the College of Wooster as an international student, **Nileema Khan** joined DPS STS School in Dhaka, Bangladesh. She is the school's only Career and College Counsellor, setting up the department by implementing a wide range of student-centered support services.

Currently, she is counseling 90 graduating students with 70% of the 12th grade class applying to universities outside Bangladesh. "She is a bright spark in the Dhaka counseling community. I am impressed with how she supports students and tries to help them find the 'best fit', even when cultural pressures in the community can weigh in on these students' plans for their future," says Sonali Hutchinson, a counselor in Bangladesh. Indeed, Nileema advocates for student well-being and promotes the importance of career counseling, even as the Bangladeshi education system largely lacks these services.

In addition to her involvement in her school community, Nileema has contributed to empowering young women from low income areas by collaborating with the Kennedy Lugar Youth Exchange Study Alumni in Bangladesh. She has led leadership training sessions for female students from rural public schools who don't have access to career and college counseling resources. Nileema was nominated by Sonali Hutchinson at International School Dhaka and Reon Sines-Sheaff at College of Wooster.

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Manuel Ogalde has taught English as a Second Language in Chile for the past 14 years. In 2007, the Chilean Ministry of Education recognized him with the "Academic Excellence Award," for his exceptional work in the teaching of English. Since 2008, he has worked at Instituto Nacional, a public high

school enrolling 4,000 of the nation's top students. It is widely considered the oldest and most prestigious all boys educational institution in Chile. EducationUSA notes that in the past three years, students from Instituto Nacional have been admitted with full financial aid to Harvard, MIT, Yale, and Stanford.

It is unusual for Chilean schools to work this closely with EducationUSA, and Manuel is the key liaison in this collaboration. Country coordinator Brenda Paz Soldan says, "The support from counselors and teachers has been crucial. Manuel selects students with a high level of English for our program." Manuel now wants to give his students the opportunity to apply to American universities, and pioneer new challenges for the new generation of students from Chilean public schools. As the careers counselor at Instituto Nacional, he holds a role that is unheard of, yet critical for students who aspire to go overseas.



Sally Sánchez Jiménez has been an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher in Costa Rica for twenty years. When her school, Liceo de Puriscal, was authorized with the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program in 2013, she became the IB coordinator and voluntarily added university and career related counseling to her role.

"Sally spearheads trips to college fairs, information sessions and other activities for her students. She is a wonderful student advocate," says nominator Tracey Grimm from the Lincoln School in Costa Rica. To support students who wish to pursue international post-secondary education, Sally organizes an annual information session with EducationUSA. A team of teachers also supports these counseling related projects, leading to great academic and university placement success. Since 2014, the number of students receiving the IB Diploma at Liceo de Puriscal has increased, positively impacting the number of graduates attending university.

Until 2008, students in Costa Rica could only pursue the IB Diploma at private schools. Liceo de Puriscal is one of only 15 public high schools offering the IB Diploma to low-income students, who otherwise could not afford this education. Given the school's remote and rural location, access to this rigorous curriculum opens new doors for an agricultural community with indigenous populations.



Arturo Omar Hermosillo has served as both a teacher and administrator during his 13 years at Instituto La Salle in Chihuahua, Mexico, where he works to educate students and faculty about the opportunities available to students to study abroad, and supports them through this process. Part of Instituto

La Salle's mission is to prepare students to effectively contribute to and participate in an increasingly globalized economy. Arturo has supported these efforts by starting the High Performance Student Program (PAAR) ten years ago. PAAR integrates the school curriculum with Advanced Placement (AP), honors, and standardized test preparation so that students may apply for universities in Mexico, the United States, and Canada.

Arturo is also coordinator of the College Board Examination Center and facilitates an annual college fair that attracts participants from over 70 national and international universities. "I was amazed at the number of talented students I met while recruiting," shared nominator Munir Sayegh from Purdue University. Higher education consultant Juan Camlio Tamayo adds that, "As a graduate from a La Salle school (Medellin, Colombia), I am thrilled to see a La Salle counselor attending the conference. Unlike international schools, access to counselors is limited to non-existent in Latin America. I can only imagine the impact that Arturo Omar would have on students by attending."



Francine Mohammed has worked at St. Joseph's Convent, a Roman Catholic Secondary school in Port of Spain, Trinidad, for almost three decades. Appointed as the Sixth Form Dean in 2007, Francine teaches Sixth Form Biology and Environmental Science, but also holds responsibility for pastoral care of all students. St. Joseph's is one

of the highest achieving secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago with students who want to study abroad. Francine says, "I felt obligated to assist the students who wanted to know what was out there for them. I learnt how to access the information, got in touch with universities, allowed them to visit the school, went to the college fairs locally, liaised with EdUSA and the various embassies, and researched the institutions and their requirements." She works with the universities in the Caribbean, as well as with universities in the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Europe, India, Korea and Brazil to better advise her talented students.

St. Joseph's Convent is currently the only public school in the country offering university counseling services. On several occasions, Francine has provided information and presented at local schools in Trinidad regarding the university application process, opening many doors for students in the community. Francine is only person from Trinidad and Tobago to be a member of the International Association for College Admission Counseling. She was nominated by Jodi Robinson at University of Pennsylvania.