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Meet the Scholars

Click on a Scholar’s name to read their full profile on our website.

Mahmoud Abouelnaga, Egypt
Technical team leader, CareForSEVEN; Intern, BioMerieux
Promoting sustainable energy development in the MENA region to decrease energy-related geopolitical conflicts.

Sassan Akhlaghi, Sweden / Iran
Political Advisor to the Prime Minister, Office of Prime Minister Stefan Löfven
Increasing investments in green energy and jobs in Sweden through policy making.

Marianne Akumu, Uganda
Transitional Justice Coordinator, Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development (ACORD)
Fostering peaceful, just, and inclusive societies through transitional justice and conflict resolution programs for clans, internally displaced people, and refugees in Uganda.

Mateus Donato Amorim de Araujo, Brazil
Coordinator, Ministry of Social Development
Enabling poor families in remote areas of Brazil to safely and effectively receive benefits from a conditional cash transfer program.

Nelly Wakim Awad, Lebanon
Humanitarian, Researcher, Writer
Identifying community needs in Syria through extensive research for a USAID funded project on infrastructure rehabilitation, women’s economic empowerment, and governance building.
Meet the Scholars

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**Ana Cristina Becerra Salas, Peru**
*Forest Engineer*
Empowering vulnerable populations to be changemakers and achieve inclusive sustainable development.

**Miriam Benitez Isidoro, Mexico**
*Advisor, Sectorial Coordination for Academic Development at the Vice-Ministry of Upper Secondary Education, Ministry of Education*
Increasing educational opportunities for young people from marginalized communities and forming a highly-trained teaching workforce.

**Juliana Betancourt, Colombia**
*Former Regional Liaison, Reintegration and Recruitment Prevention Program, USAID / International Organization for Migration (UN - IOM)*
Promoting peacebuilding and ex-combatant reintegration for vulnerable groups in Meta, Colombia.

**Kimberly Brown, United States**
*Spearheading legal and policy reforms related to gender equality, children’s rights, and access to justice to support implementation of regional mechanisms and national constitutional frameworks, predominantly in East Africa.*

**Patricia Alyanna Esquivias (Trixie) Conlu, Philippines**
*Consultant, Atkins Acuity*
Enabling public-private partnerships in infrastructure projects to close the infrastructure gap and spur economic activity in the Philippines and other developing countries.
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Collins Dadzie, Ghana
Transforming Ghana’s power market by developing an Integrated Power Sector Master Plan and training emerging power sector leaders to lead ethically.

Bonaventure Dzekem, Cameroon
Founder, Keafon Health; Chief Medical Officer, HSPC-Cameroon
Improving access to healthcare through community-centric health insurance schemes and online healthcare delivery in Cameroon.

Rahmatullah Hamraz, Afghanistan
Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Officer for the Peace and Reconciliation of Afghanistan (PRA), Ministry of Finance
Combating hostility and armed insurgency in Afghanistan by working with local communities to conduct intergroup dialogues and empowerment projects.

Sri Andini Handayani, Indonesia
Former Associate for Research, Monitoring, and Evaluation, Center on Child Protection & Wellbeing (PUSKAPA)
Enabling data-driven policy formulation through research and policy advocacy in Indonesia.

Sebastian Hernandez, Nicaragua / Colombia
Associated Researcher at Centro de Análisis Socioculturales, Universidad Centroamericana; Adjunct Instructor in the Department of Applied Economics, Universidad Centroamericana
Combating economic inequality in Nicaragua through academic research and collaboration with poor communities on infrastructure, education, and household finance projects.
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John Hiu Fai Mak, Hong Kong / Myanmar
Co-founder, MM Community
Promoting inclusive development by reinventing the planning process with crowdfunding technology, participatory budgeting and reduced-interest government bonds.

Mario Mazic, Croatia
Program Board President, Youth Initiative for Human Rights Croatia; Secretary General, European Grassroots Antiracist Movement
Promoting reconciliation, justice, democracy and human rights in countries of former Yugoslavia.

Juan Carlos Monterrey Gómez, Panama
Working to empower youth, indigenous and rural communities impacted by sea level rise.

Joshua Nassari, Tanzania
Member of Parliament, National Assembly of Tanzania
Championing good governance and ethical leadership as a Member of Parliament in the National Assembly of Tanzania.

Stanley Ndambakuwa, Zimbabwe / South Africa
Founder & CEO, African Community Fund for Education Group; Chairman, African Community Fund for Education Canada
Promoting girls education by funding educational and leadership development programs for the disadvantaged in marginalized communities and launching an international campaign on the importance of girls education.
Lan Nguyen, Vietnam
Independent Consultant
Improving the quality of local economic governance and empowering the voice of the private sector in Vietnam.

Edem Ossai, Nigeria
Founder and Executive Director, Mentoring Assistance for Youths and Entrepreneurs Initiative
Empowering young Nigerians to become civic leaders through a mobile library, community dialogues on girls education, and active citizenship training.

Nazish Tariq Rahmani, Pakistan
Research Officer (BS-17), Leader of the Opposition Office - National Assembly Secretariat
Guiding policy and uplifting women’s voices in the legislative process at the National Assembly of Pakistan.

Pearl Ranna, Botswana
Managing Director, Unitech Farming
Training women in rural and urban area on sustainable farming practices and connecting agricultural youth leaders for training, mentoring, and cooperation.

Fatima Zaman, United Kingdom
Policy Advisor and Private Secretary, Her Majesty’s Government; Countering Violent Extremism Advocate, Kofi Annan Foundation
Empowering a global network of youth activists to fight violent extremism worldwide with positive stories of peace.
Find out more

Learn more about the Obama Foundation Scholars and the Master of Arts degree in International Development and Policy (MAIDP) at our website.