



International Visitor Leadership Program

U.S. Department of State

VOLUNTEERISM AND CIVIC ACTION

A Multi-Regional Project

These visitors are invited to the United States under the auspices of the Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program. World Learning arranged their program.

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Accompanied By: Ms. Suzanne Ginsburg and Mr. Landon Lewis, International Visitor Liaisons

January 22 – 28, 2020

PROFESSIONAL OBJECTIVES

The Department of State has outlined the following specific objectives for the project:

- Examine the impact of volunteerism in U.S. communities and how volunteers are inspired to foster a culture of service, civic involvement, and responsibility;
- Demonstrate best practices in volunteer recruitment, retention and management;
- Encourage mutual sharing of information to further voluntary initiatives among international NGOs;
- Demonstrate the effectiveness of social media in volunteer efforts; and
- Provide participants opportunities to experience volunteer opportunities alongside American citizens of all ages and backgrounds.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Bangladesh	Ms. Shararat ISLAM Senior Manager, Communications and Media, Save the Children Bangladesh
Dominica	Mr. Loftus DURAND President, Concerned Citizens Movement
Egypt	Mr. Ahmed YASSIN Chief Strategy Counselor, Make A Contribution Club for Social Development
Latvia	Ms. Agnija JANSONE Chair of the Board, Latvian Scout and Guide Central Organization
Nepal	Ms. Rekha TRIKHATRI Program Associate, Restless Development Nepal
Paraguay	Ms. Monica LEGUIZAMON FARINA Executive Assistant, Monalisa S.R.L.
South Africa	Ms. Cindy MKAZA SIBOTO Founder, Emagqabini Education Academy
Turkey	Mr. Sertac SIPKA Chairman and Project Manager, Volunteer Movement Association

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Bangladesh

Name: **Ms. Shararat ISLAM**

Present Position: Senior Manager, Communications and Media, Save the Children Bangladesh

Previous Positions: Senior Manager, Communication, BRAC, 2012-2017

Education/Training: Bachelor's Degree, English, University of Dhaka, 2007

Publications: "High Emphasis on Health Rights of Transgender (Hijra) Community in Bangladesh to Minimize HIV/AIDS," XVIII International AIDS Conference, Vienna, Austria, 2010

"The #POWERWOMAN," *STAR Weekend Magazine*

Address: Dhaka, Bangladesh
Email: shararat.islam@gmail.com

Languages: Bangla (primary), English

U. S. Travel: No previous U.S. travel

Other Travel: Bhutan, India, Kenya, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Singapore, United Arab Emirates

Professional Background: Ms. Islam leads communications and media relations for Save the Children's Bangladesh programs. One of her most successful campaigns focused on the right of children living in poverty to play. She also managed national media relations for Save the Children's Rohingya Response program, creating a national dialogue and wider advocacy for Rohingya children's rights. In her role, Ms. Islam coordinates with multiple stakeholders including volunteers, children, civil society, and media to advocate for issues including access to health, quality education, and prevention of violence. She looks forward to sharing strategies for successful advocacy campaigns and to discussing advocacy and children's rights.

Dominica

Name: **Mr. Loftus DURAND**

Present Position: President, Concerned Citizens Movement (CCM)

Concurrent Positions: Freelance Electrician and Electronic Technician

Education/Training: Certification, Small Appliance Repair, Technical College, Dominica, 1998

Publication: “Dominica: Report on Voter Education,” *The Sun Newspaper*, 2019

Address: Cochrane Village, Dominica
Email: loftusdurand76@gmail.com

Language: English

U. S. Travel: No previous U.S. travel

Other Travel: British Virgin Islands, Martinique

Professional Background: Mr. Durand leads the Concerned Citizens Movement (CCM), a civil society organization in Dominica. CCM focuses on electoral reforms and integrity in politics. One of the organization’s major initiatives has been to publish and advocate for electoral reform recommendations from the Organization of American States. In addition to his work with CCM, Mr. Durand hosts a weekly radio program, *Patriots’ Voices on Q*, featuring discussion of democratic issues. While in the United States, Mr. Durand looks forward to networking with representatives from nongovernmental organizations and to discussing ways to promote civic engagement.

Egypt

Name: **Mr. Ahmed YASSIN**

Present Position: Chief Strategy Counselor, Make A Contribution Club for Social Development

Education/Training: Bachelor's Degree, Electro-Mechanical Engineering, Alexandria University, 2013

Address: Alexandria, Egypt
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Languages: Arabic (primary), English

U. S. Travel: Tourism

Other Travel: Italy, Jordan, Malta, Turkey, United Kingdom

Professional Background: Mr. Ahmed Yassin is the chief strategy counselor for the Make a Contribution Club (MAC Club), a business leadership and community service organization that has run dozens of large-scale community service projects with more than 1,200 volunteers. Programs have included refugee and women's rights campaigns and half-marathon charity runs. In addition, Mr. Yassin created the MAC Club Leadership Workspace, which trained more than 50 university students in entrepreneurship and business development skills. Mr. Yassin has been invited to speak at events including "Social Entrepreneurship Impact on Dialogue" in Jordan and "Young Mediterranean Voices Leadership Seminar" in Malta. He looks forward to exchanging best practices for engaging youth in civic action.

Latvia

Name: **Ms. Agnija JANSONE**

Present Position: Chair of the Board, Latvian Scout and Guide Organization

Previous Positions: Project Manager, Transparency International Latvia, 2014-2015
Events Coordinator, World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, 2012-2013
Freelance NGO Project Manager, 2003-2019

Education/Training: Bachelor's Degree, Business Administration and International Economic Relations, University of Latvia, 2016

Memberships: Meierovica Society for Progressive Change
World Organization of the Scout Movement
World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts

Address: Latvia
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Languages: Latvian (primary), English, Russian

U. S. Travel: New York

Other Travel: Azerbaijan, Canada, India, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland

Professional Background: Ms. Jansone leads the Latvian Scout and Guide Organization, a leading informal education organization in Latvia. The organization currently engages more than 800 active scouts and guides, with more than 100 volunteer leaders who run activities around Latvia and represent the organization internationally. The Latvian Scout and Guide Organization advocates for engaging youth in volunteer work and for promoting sustained and active citizenship. Ms. Jansone looks forward to exchanging best practices for volunteer recruitment, retention, and management. She is also interested in social entrepreneurship and the impact of technology on civic participation.

Nepal

Name: **Ms. Rekha TRIKHATRI**

Present Position: Program Associate and Master Trainer, Restless Development Nepal

Previous Positions: Peer Educator, Restless Development Nepal, 2012
Facilitator, Heart Connection Tour, Restless Development Nepal, 2012-2014

Education/Training: Bachelor's Degree, Humanities, Tri-Chandra Multiple Campus, in progress

Address: Lalitpur, Nepal
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Languages: Nepali (primary), English

U. S. Travel: No previous U.S. travel

Other Travel: Belgium, Netherlands

Professional Background: Ms. Trikhatri has held several positions with Restless Development, a youth-led and youth-focused NGO. She currently implements the Dance4Life program, using dance and music to inspire young people to engage on social issues including sexual health and gender-based violence. Ms. Trikhatri also coordinates International Citizen Service, a program aimed at developing civic participation and leadership for youth in Nepal and the United Kingdom. In this program, youth volunteers from the United Kingdom are paired with youth in remote areas of Nepal with an aim to improve livelihood opportunities for young people. Ms. Trikhatri has also delivered trainings on ending gender-based violence to government and NGO stakeholders. She looks forward to discussing ways to engage youth in civic issues and to exploring social media outreach.

Paraguay

Name: **Ms. Monica LEGUIZAMON FARINA**

Present Position: Executive Assistant to the Director, Monalisa S.R.L.

Previous Position: Assistant, SCA Technologies S.A.E.C.A., 2011-2013

Education/Training: Master's Degree, Social Sciences, Escuela de Posgrado, Rectorado Universidad Nacional del Este, 2019
Bachelor's Degree, International Trade, Universidad Americana, 2015

Address: Ciudad Del Este, Paraguay
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Languages: Spanish (primary), English

U. S. Travel: Florida

Other Travel: Brazil

Professional Background: Ms. Leguizamon is the Executive Assistant to the Director of Monalisa S.R.L., a retail store in Ciudad del Este. In addition, Ms. Leguizamon is active in the community. She developed "JaVotá" (Let's Vote), an initiative to motivate youth in Ciudad del Este to participate in local elections. She has also mentored female entrepreneurs and volunteers for an English tutoring program for youth. She is interested in ways to promote youth civic engagement.

South Africa

Name: **Ms. Cindy MKAZA SIBOTO**

Present Position: Founder, Emagqabini Education Academy

Concurrent Positions: Training Coordinator, Every Word Counts Program

Previous Positions: Educare Coordinator, Philani, 2015-2017
Operations Manager, Women in Engineering (WomEng), 2015
Operations Manager, Unione De La Marionettes of South Africa, 2013-2014
Training and Development Manager, Unione De La Marionettes of South Africa, 2009-2012

Education/Training: Bachelor's Degree, African Studies, University of Cape Town, 2013
Bachelor's Degree, Theatre and Performance, University of Cape Town, 2006

Address: Khayelitsha, South Africa
Email: cindy.mkaza@gmail.com

Languages: Xhosa (primary), English

U. S. Travel: No previous U.S. travel

Professional Background: Ms. Mkaza Siboto founded the Emagqabini Education Academy, a volunteer-run tutoring program designed to enable students to complete their high school education despite academic challenges. In addition to the Academy, she has also worked to secure scholarships for students and to support high school dropouts in finding employment opportunities, particularly in the arts. She recently gave a TEDx talk in Cape Town to tell the story of the Academy. Ms. Mkaza Siboto hopes to grow her organization throughout rural regions of South Africa and to build global awareness about the academic challenges facing youth in South Africa.

Turkey

Name: **Mr. Sertac SIPKA**

Present Position: Chairman and Project Manager, Volunteer Movement Association

Concurrent Position: Social Entrepreneur, Social Good Agency

Previous Positions: Community Center Manager, Bursa Office, International Blue Crescent Relief and Development Foundation, 2018-2019
Project Manager, Volunteer Movement Association, 2015-2018
Engineer, Urban Aesthetics Department, Bursa Metropolitan Municipality, 2013- 2014
Project Expert, Bursa City Council, 2012
Senior Event Planner, Merinos Ataturk Congress, Culture of Bursa Metropolitan Municipality, 2010-2012

Education/Training: Bachelor's Degree, Textile Engineering, Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, Uludag University, 2008

Memberships: Turkish Red Crescent
Cultural Innovators Network

Address: Bursa, Turkey
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Languages: Turkish (primary), English, German

U. S. Travel: No previous U.S. travel

Other Travel: Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Serbia, Spain, Tunisia, Ukraine

Professional Background: Mr. Sipka founded the Volunteer Movement Association, an NGO focused on developing Turkey's volunteer corps. The association has implemented a range of projects, including career advice and mentoring for students, workshops for children in underserved areas, a toy library, and audio book recording for the visually impaired. Additionally, Mr. Sipka manages international volunteer projects between Turkey and the European Union. He hopes to expand his organization and promote civic participation throughout Turkey.