

RISING STARS

OF THE RISING ECONOMIES



FELS

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INTRODUCTION

With over 12 years' experience in senior HR management, I consider myself a connoisseur of talent. My passion lies in uncovering the unique abilities and talents of individuals, whether they are readily apparent or hidden beneath the surface. I am fascinated by what drives and motivates people, and I take great pleasure in helping them achieve their full potential.

As an HR leader, my primary goal is to place talented individuals in roles where they can thrive and excel. But I also find joy in guiding people on their personal journeys towards fulfilling their life goals and aspirations. By understanding their passions and motivations, I am able to provide insights and guidance that help them to find their path and achieve their dreams.

In a world where opportunities are not equally distributed, some regions have the privilege of being in the spotlight, while others remain overlooked. Unfortunately, this can mean that talented individuals in these overlooked regions go unnoticed, their achievements unrecognized, and their potential unfulfilled. It is precisely this gap that our book aims to bridge. In these pages, we celebrate the Rising Stars from around the world who are working hard and shine brightly despite the challenging economic and geopolitical climates in which they live.

From the desert landscapes of the Middle East to the lush tropical forests of Southeast Asia, these young men and women come from diverse backgrounds and experiences. Yet, what they share is an unwavering commitment to excellence and a deep desire to make change for future generations to come. In each chapter, we delve into the personal stories of these remarkable individuals, tracing their journeys of triumph over adversity, cultural difficulties, and societal demands. We witness their persistence, resilience, and unwavering determination to achieve their goals and aspirations.

Through these anecdotes, we hope to inspire readers everywhere. Each story is unique and highly personal, offering a glimpse into the mindsets and strategies that these rising talents have used to get where they are going. They are proof that success is not only attainable, but also achievable by anyone with the right mindset, passion, and drive.

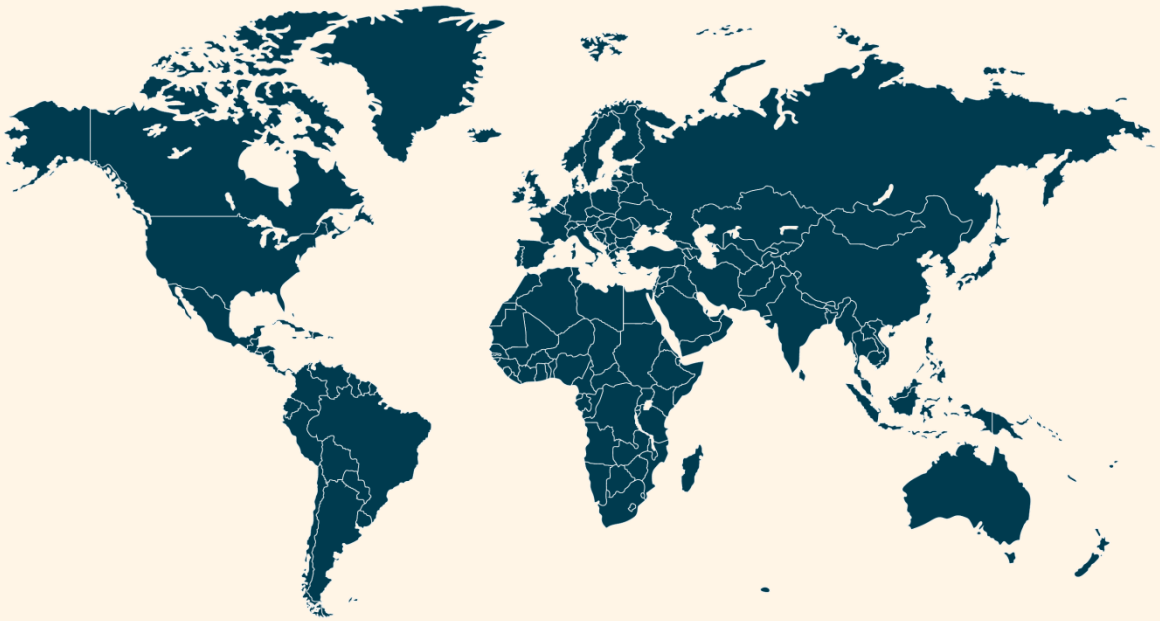
We have collected over 200 stories of Rising Stars from all over the world, and we are proud to share their journeys with you. These young men and women are highly educated, and qualified, and have made the conscious choice to go beyond their comfort zones and strive for greatness. They are shining examples of what can be achieved with dedication, perseverance, and a strong sense of purpose. We hope their stories will inspire and motivate you to pursue your own goals and dreams with greater passion and determination.

Aiman Kabli,

Author



Further insights



**** It is important to note that during the time of collecting these accounts, the world was grappling with the devastating COVID-19 pandemic, which spread rapidly across the globe in 2020. This public health crisis had a profound impact on people's daily lives, causing widespread closures of schools and workplaces while prompting a shift towards remote work and online education.***

In addition, some ensuing geopolitical conflicts had significant regional ramifications, affecting millions of people directly and indirectly. Many economies suffered from inflated prices of food, fuel, and other commodities. These challenges had far-reaching implications for people's daily lives and contributed to a sense of uncertainty and upheaval, and some of this may be reflected in the stories included within.

***** These stories have been collected over the past few years. Their age and current activity may not exactly match their situation at the time of publishing.***

THE DRIVE TO SUCCEED, INCLUDING AMBITIONS

For top HR practitioners, one of the most sought-after qualities in rising talent is a drive to succeed, fueled by unwavering ambition. In this chapter, we explore the hidden characteristics that set young talents apart, often ignited by a personal experience. We've discovered a common thread that underpins their motivation, resilience, and commitment to excellence.

As we touched on in the introduction, the rising talents featured in this eBook are individuals who have taken charge of their futures, refusing to leave their success to chance. From an early age, many of them knew exactly what they wanted to achieve and made it the driving force behind their success. With their diverse backgrounds and perspectives, these rising talents offer valuable insights into the fundamental components of success. By exploring their stories and journeys, we can gain a deeper appreciation for the importance of ambition, drive, and resilience in achieving our own goals and aspirations.



source

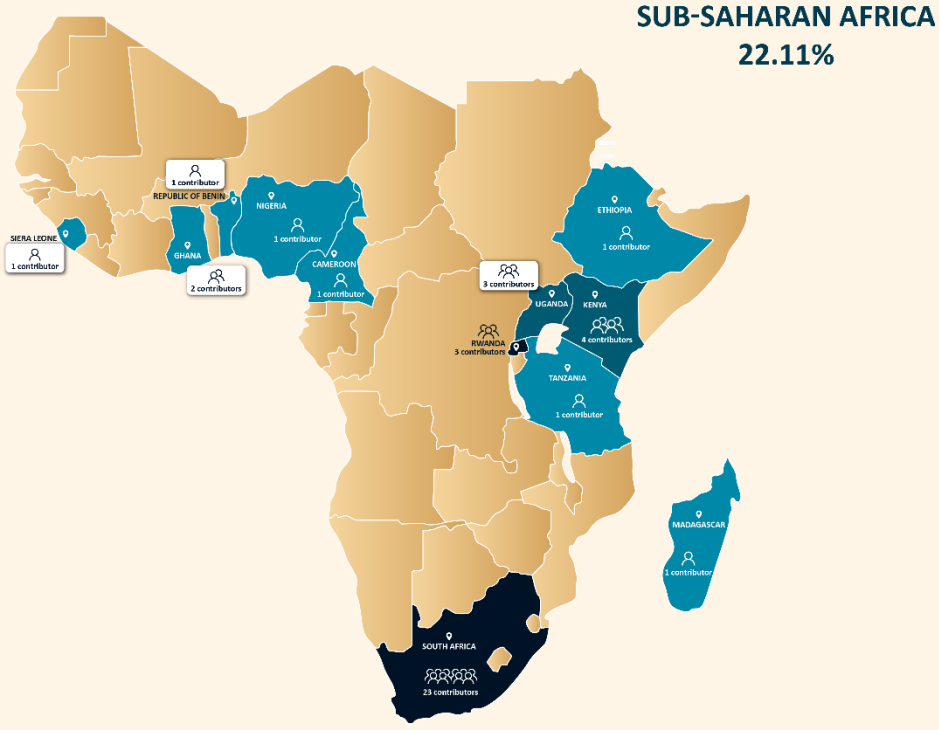


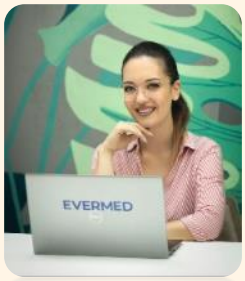
Take Robert Mugabo from Rwanda, for example. His parents were both refugees but later came back to their country after the genocide conflicts of 1994. The life he grew up in, the community he saw versus what he wished for in the future, motivated him to start owning his fate. Robert is a single 22-year-old man who hopes to improve his community's standards of living. From his life choices of volunteering in different public spaces, and in non-government organizations as a youth representative, it's evident he's on the path to completing that goal.

"I want to change the world starting from my community, through empowering my fellow young people to have the possibility to display opinions and share thoughts on participation, accountability, partnerships, and capacity building in the setting of transformative sustainable development agendas that are always in favor of our country's future development, hence having peaceful, and rebounding communities in the future."

He worked with a research center called HighLands that works with local, regional, and global partners to promote sustainable development, with the focus mainly on the areas of Sustainable Agriculture (SA), Sustainable Environment (SE), Economics of Climate Change Adaptation (ECCA), and Rural Development.

Currently, he uses his social media platforms to advocate Youth Engagement in the Peace and Decision-Making process.





Or Marija Stanojević, a 24-year-old woman from Serbia, for instance. Since her childhood she knew she wanted to work with people. She could always find ways to motivate them and figure out what makes them 'go', but also discovered their passions and desires before they even knew it themselves. Numerous friends and people who were just acquaintances told her how her advice and conversations changed their lives.

She had a calling, pursued it, and now works as a talent acquisition partner.

I've remarked on how people driven from a very early age are destined to succeed. They're ready to step up and take on the challenges that life throws at them, determined to break the status quo of their community. They discover the need to make a change in the world which becomes the foundation for their drive. They are, all of them, ambitious.



As Sidharath Joshi tells us: ***success does not come through magic or luck; without a dream, a goal, or an ambition it's impossible. It takes sweat, resolution, and hard work to achieve it.***

Here are extracts from our contributor's stories.



David Jahel Bonilla Sánchez, 26, Ecuador, Male

David is driven by a sense of responsibility to improve the safety of his earthquake-prone country, following the devastating 7.8 magnitude earthquake that struck in April 2016 that revealed the vulnerability of structures to seismic activity. The loss of almost 700 lives, injuries to 17,000 people, and displacement of over 80,000 people deeply affected him. He recognized the crucial role that engineers play in designing and constructing safe structures to protect lives. To realize his goal, David is highly motivated to build on his technical knowledge and practical skills as a structural engineer, to contribute to public and private projects and to mentor future generations of civil engineers as a university professor. He pursued a master's degree in Germany in 2019.

When I was 8 years old, I was very fortunate to see how my house was being built. That was the house where I spent most of my life before coming to Germany. I clearly remember the experience of watching the excavation process, rebar bending, and concrete casting all the way through to the finishing of the construction such as wall paint, floor tiles, and windows. All that early exposure really inspired me and made me want to study Civil Engineering and become a professional in that field. I became truly passionate about construction, and everything related to structures.
In my early years, I did several things related to the structural field. For instance, when I was a kid, I wanted a tree house, so I built one myself using tree trunks as the structure, wood planks for the floor, ropes for the connections, and palm leaves for the roof. Another thing I built was a zip line between trees using a thick rope, a pulley, and a swing seat. I also built a wooden platform so one could get down from the tree. In high school, my graduation project consisted of bridge history and basic technical aspects about it. I had to present my project to a jury, and I also made a scale model of a cable-stayed bridge for a complementary explanation.



Marwan Ebeid, 22, Egypt, Male

Marwan was driven to pursue international relations from his poly-cultural upbringing. The frequent shift of geographical location opened his eyes to different languages, traditions, architectures, education styles, cuisine–everything. He allowed his young self to absorb all of this to help him carve out his own stable future.

I have lived an international life. I was raised by a German-born father and Egyptian mother with my younger brother born in Yemen. As a baby I was in China where I later attended Kindergarten. Some of my primary school years were in British schools in Sanaa and Tehran. I then went to the International School of Choueifat in Dubai where I lived most of my life. Living most of my life and growing up in such a very business-oriented international environment contributed to my passion for studying International Business.



Roberto Díaz-Peregrino, 29, Mexico, Male

Robert is currently studying for his PhD in neuroscience. He describes himself as a hardworking and disciplined person who sticks to plans until he reaches his goals, and his story supports that. Robert knew from a young age he wanted to become a doctor, and that's exactly what he's doing.

Since elementary school, I was convinced that I would become a physician. It was strange because no one in my family worked in healthcare sciences, so I had no direct influence at that time. But during my adolescence, I had contact with healthcare providers, assisting them in vaccination campaigns and other minor duties. During high school, I conducted a technical career as a histology technician; in other words, I prepared slices from human tissue to observe their features under a microscope. All the structures, shapes, forms, and colors one can find in a tiny piece of tissue are spectacular. I was mesmerized by the microscopical world so much that I fell in love with medical sciences.



Kashish Nathani, 18, India, Female

Despite her internal battles, Kashish is a driven young woman who's now studying economics at the University of Delhi, ***"taking yet another step forward, allowing myself to embrace the uncertainty of the future, and having absolute faith in what is and what will be."***

I used to hide beneath my feelings and reaffirm that I wanted something more from the world because life had not been kind to me. I was broken down and shattered, and every single breath of mine was forced to crumble. Every faith I'd ever believed in was a challenge. I had fallen so many times that getting up wasn't a choice—it was a habit. At least that's what I thought until I found myself at the bottom of the pit, trying to get up, but all in vain. How are you supposed to fight when the fight isn't fair?

I was waiting for a single, majestically crafted moment to turn my life around—that if I succeeded there, my whole life would go on like a chain reaction. I wanted to receive the education I had always craved, a system that asked me to think and use my mind, rather than be submissive toward asking questions. And I knew it couldn't be here. I wanted to live the life I had always dreamt of, and it all came down to a single opportunity—our high school leaving examinations, which ultimately never took place and got canceled.

I had worked the hardest I ever have in my entire life, so much so, that my teachers used to tell me, "Kashish, with this amount of work, you're going to top India"; and I kept on hoping that it would pave the way for a greater destiny of mine—great results, best universities abroad, good scholarships, and the ideal education. Only that it didn't. As silly as it may seem, for a 17-year-old who asked for nothing but a good education in her entire life, it meant the world.

The cancellation of the exams shattered everything inside me. I remember crying for days on end, because I had given everything I could, but still I felt broken. My parents and teachers kept telling me that knowledge is what matters, and that is what will take you forward. They asked me to see this as a steppingstone to success, but all I could see was a dead end and the inevitability of it all. I learned the hardest lesson of my life as a 17-year-old back then—sometimes things will not work out the way you want them to, but you should continue working hard anyway. Ultimately, it's not about the path you choose to walk upon, it's about the path you decide to pave for yourself.



Victoria Ortiz, 24, Guatemala, Female

Victoria had always wanted to become a CEO, but ended up working at the financial services industry during her early professional career. However, life still had its way, and she became the founder of her own company.

After leaving Boston back in 2020, she moved to Guatemala where she started her own company. She now manufactures, distributes and will soon export beauty products made with 100% pure honey from her own apiary

Since a very young age, I have always said I wanted to become the CEO of my own company. My determination, creativity and passion led me to create Hive at the end of 2020. Hive is a honey hair care company from Guatemala that promotes the importance of saving bees and the environment through its products. I couldn't excel in my creative skills in the financial services industry, so I decided to start my own company and use all the creativity I have been saving for my own benefit.

My interest and fascination for pure honey and bees started back in 2015 when my father decided to start a small beekeeping project while I was away studying in Boston. His main goal was to produce 100% pure honey for our household consumption. Over the years, we learnt more about the benefits of 100% pure honey. Luckily the bee population grew significantly, and we ended up with more honey than we needed for our household. This is when my father decided to start selling the honey to his friends and acquaintances and teach them about the benefits and quality of the product. It wasn't until 2019, during my last year of college, that I decided to create Hive Honey, a 100% pure honey brand that was sold in Guatemala and Boston. I ended up having clients from Latin America, all the way to Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.



Cailin Perrie, 23, South Africa, Female

For Cailin, an innocent family camping weekend turned into a life-changing experience for her and her future. South Africa has huge disparities among the social classes but rather than turn a blind eye to the struggles of her country-folk she dove headfirst wanting to make a change.

When I was six years old, my father decided to take my brother and I on a camping trip for a long weekend. It was mid-July (so it was freezing in Limpopo, South Africa) but the idea of being out in the wild surrounded by giraffes, bushveld bonfires, and eating toasted marshmallows sounded too good to be deterred simply by the negative one-degree Celsius mornings. So off we went. To get to the camping site, we drove through some small remote towns which were rather decrepit. We stopped in one of the towns to fill up with petrol and, being the inquisitive and overly friendly child that I was, I ran up to a boy playing soccer with his friends in the sandy field nearby. After striking up a conversation, I couldn't help but ask this boy as many questions as I could about his town, his friends, his school and so on. It was at this moment that this 10-year-old boy told me that he didn't go to school, his father worked in the mines and his mum needed help at home looking after his brothers and sisters; so, school was not on the cards for him. Before I could ask him any more questions, my dad bellowed for me to come back to the car so that we could continue our journey.

As I sat staring out the window, I couldn't believe what the boy had told me. I needed answers. Why was this young boy having to look after his brothers and sisters? Why couldn't he go to school? Why were the boys playing with a soccer ball fabricated purely from plastic shopping bags? I went to my father for answers. It was at this point in my life that I truly began to comprehend the reality of systemic poverty and inequality. I became consumed with anger, sadness, helplessness, and despair—emotions which I didn't quite know how to deal with at the ripe old age of six.

I guess those emotions sparked a flame in me, a deep desire to affect positive change in the world. All my father wanted that weekend was the ability to spend some quality time with my brother and me, but my little six-year-old self was too preoccupied with finding ways to potentially make that little boy's life, and the life of his friends and family, a little easier. According to my dad, I scribbled ideas on every piece of paper towel we had brought with us on the trip, so much so that I resorted to using a roll of toilet paper as my new 'solutions notebook'. That weekend, I not only realized the power that preconceived biases can have on one's understanding of the world, but also learned that knowledge can be gained in a myriad of places and not just inside the classroom.



Daniel Archer, 20, South Africa, Male

Daniel has a similar take on the current reality of South Africa, and how the diversity of the country shaped him to be who is today and aims to be tomorrow.

Growing up in South Africa has been a humbling experience and while I can't even begin to try and understand the multitude of challenges the average South African faces on a daily basis, I am constantly reminded of these hardships whenever I set foot out my front door—this is something which I believe has helped shape who I am today and never allowed me to take anything for granted. I love people: meeting them, getting to know them, and above all learning about their perspectives and opinions.

In a world many try to divide with differences they perceive in one another, I feel as though it's that same variety which will ultimately breed cohesion. While this may seem cliché, growing up in a country with 11 national languages and a multiplicity of different racial and ethnic groups has reassured me that this variety is indeed the spice of life. Given our troubled past and tense climate of race relations, I feel as though it is easy for someone to look at a place like South Africa as a prime example of how different people cannot get along. While I cannot pretend that racism doesn't exist or that the lasting legacy of apartheid doesn't rear its ugly head from time to time, I have full confidence in a young vibrant post-apartheid generation of South Africans ready to work together in order to solve some of Africa's most pressing challenges.

I've had some tough conversations about privilege and whiteness and how my privilege affects others—these moments have been some of the most valuable of my childhood. Dealing with scandals of racism among teachers at my high school has been a challenge I've had to overcome; however, I feel as though these times have really united me and my peers of color and allowed me to take a deep introspective look at myself. As a soon-to-be 21-year-old, I feel blessed to have received an amazing education not only in the classroom but on the streets and in the real world among real people—this would not have been possible had I grown up in any other part of the world.



Carmen Rosa Nepo Gamero, 21, Peru, Female

Inspiration can come from the most unexpected places, as we see in the remarkable story of Carmen. In her journey, we learn that charity is not the sole purview of the upper class or those with great means. Through her passion and dedication, Carmen has demonstrated that giving back is not only a responsibility but also a privilege. Her story challenges us to rethink the traditional view of charity and to recognize that anyone, regardless of social status or economic means, can make a difference in the world.

Ever since I was little, I had to work hard to achieve many things due to the economic condition of my family. Similarly, my path to making small impacts in the world began during school. The professors took us to nursing homes to volunteer to help the elderly who were alone, to feed them and spend some time with them. Not only that, but my mom also taught me what it was like to "share without having much", so, some Christmases, we would go to poor places to distribute panettone and chocolate. She also taught me to "give to receive", with which we always sought to donate the clothes that we no longer used. My family taught me to recycle paper, materials, and furniture with companies that then gave them a second use through donations. All this has happened since I was little. They were small actions, but today I realize they made me different and forged many aspects of who I am now. Moreover, I consider that it is the small actions of each week that form your identity and larger aspirations.



Victoria Li, 19, Australia, Female

Victoria's great influence was the strength of her grandmother, and the subsequent grief she experienced when she passed away. Inspiration can come from anywhere in life, and being driven as she is, Victoria grasped the learnings and memory of her grandmother to make her the strong young woman she is today.

My grandma was a powerful figure in my life. She taught me how to cook and how to speak Chinese fluently, but most importantly, she taught me bravery and courage, persistence, and determination. Those are the things that have stayed with me.

I never wanted to experience the same feeling I felt when I was 8, watching my grandma slip through my fingers, unable to help. That's where I found my passion for medicine and research. I am grateful to be offered a place in the Australian Biology Summer School and became a Scholarship recipient of the International Science School, but I desperately wanted to become involved in research.



Mayyada Abdal Salam, 25, Palestine, Female

Mayyada, known affectionately as May by those close to her, grew up in a challenging environment on the Gaza strip as a refugee. Her journey to success was far from straightforward, but her unwavering self-determination and resilience enabled her to create a brighter future for herself. Despite facing significant obstacles, May refused to be held back by her circumstances. Through hard work and perseverance, she discovered her unique path.

What defines me is a formula of being a "passionate self-learner, disciplined, and patient hard worker". Being an ambitious young female, it was never easy to survive in a patriarchal marginalized community; for that, and for many political and social barriers, I realized at an early age that I had to fight my way out of there. As soon as I graduated from high school, I moved to Egypt to accomplish my bachelor's studies; my solo journey in life began. I had to handle a mini job beside my studies to cover my expenses and half of my tuition fees as I was granted a partial tuition fees waiver for being a refugee. Currently, I work in compliance for financial institutions in Europe and I'm a columnist. With a law degree and a master's degree in business.



Elroy Ankelmbom Kimbi Yonghabichia, 19, Cameroon, Male

Elroy dreams of being president, and even if he regards it as far-fetched, he's certainly led the correct life—being elected delegate of his classes from nursery onwards! It wasn't always easy for him and due to strikes and civil unrest, he had to move high-school three times. But that didn't hinder his curiosity for knowledge.

I built a mini laser out of scrap and tape in secondary school when I was still very much interested in physics, won programming competitions in high school, and am currently the president of the Computer Engineering Department of my school and the founder of an academic solutions group called The Box. The achievement I am most proud of is the people I have been able to mentor and tutor in all my schools. It is mostly said, "Elroy always leaves such a mark and hole that I feel like I owe him so much I cannot even pay".



Mihailo Knežević, 23, Serbia, Male

Mihailo is an active member of the electric and computer engineering community. He wrote his thesis on the topic of the design of a multistage pipelined CPU on the FPGA development board, which brought him to graduate from the university with the highest honors (he was promoted as the Best Graduating Student of the faculty). He is aware that Serbia has a long way to go regarding a high-technology community, but it already has (although relatively young) a network of Science and Technology parks that contribute to the gathering of smart people with good ideas. His path was one of chance, a book and Mihailo finding each other in the right place at the right time. This is what he has to say:

My passion for engineering started somewhere in the final grades of elementary school with one accidental look at an introductory-level programming book and other books regarding the basics of electronics. That moment created inspiration and fueled my desire to enroll in an electrotechnical secondary school (ESTŠ „Nikola Tesla“, Kraljevo) with a focus on computer technology.



Nikola Vukojicic, 22, Serbia, Male

Nikola is another Serbian tech enthusiast who's been disrupting the space since he was 16. He is a perfect example of how doodling and gaming can be indicators for amazing employment opportunities and not just time wasted. He was raised in a one-bedroom flat with his family in an underdeveloped part of the city, yet his admirable drive and work ethic were his foundations for success.

I did an internship at a design agency called Evoke where I had the chance to take some of my first steps designing for some huge projects. I worked with some of the biggest retail brands in Serbia to help design the UI for their product apps and websites. I stayed there for one year and four months in total and was battling with finishing high school with good grades, working and studying 12 hours a day, meeting crazy client deadlines, withstanding the pressure from my parents, professors, and colleagues, having to deal with bad public transportation in Serbia, and to top it off getting compensated with the bare minimum amount.

It all paid off, however, as he's now able to work at his pick of companies while soothing his desire to travel. A true self-made successful digital nomad.



Güliz Nil Varlı, 28, Turkey, Female

Güliz is recognizant to her nation's first president, Atatürk, who took pioneering steps for women's rights not only in Turkey but also around the globe. She knows she wouldn't have been a successful M.Sc. Engineer if it wasn't for her country's beliefs and efforts to treat all young people equally in education.

Atatürk stated: "To live, struggle is a must". Such a statement gives me endless motivation as a woman, believe me, it always works! I need to always stay strong and in any condition to build my existence. This was my first earned awareness that made me an activist. If one needs a change, she should stay strong and make that change. My motto evolved to be "What did you do today to create a difference?"



Enrique Ugalde Campo, Mexico, Male

Enrique's journey was far from traditional; for ten years he played volleyball at a high-performance level. When he was 13 years old, he was recruited into a sports program in Tijuana, a city classified as the most dangerous in the world for several reasons. It was this premature push to independence that sparked his fire for doing something more.

From a very young age I started to live away from my home and my family, a signal that I was willing to do whatever it takes to achieve my goals.

He therefore decided to pursue a master's in business at Yale to eventually give back to his country.

During my stay in Tijuana and other cities that I got to know, I realized that governmental programs were not having the desired effect in impoverished communities. My country, just like many developing countries in the world, has a serious problem with corruption. I think that the private sector should play a more prominent role in Mexico; I hope to apply my business knowledge and experience in favor of Mexico's most disadvantaged people.



Iris Diaconescu, 28, Philippines, Female

Iris lives with a personal culture that she brings into all aspects of her life: transparency, accountability, and relationships. She was raised in a toxic environment which thankfully opened her eyes rather than enveloped her in its toxicity. Her natural defense mechanisms were to avoid the punishment associated with mistakes made as a child.

I overcame this by being exposed to an environment toxic enough for me to take it as a wake-up call that I no longer want this toxicity in my life and the change starts within myself. I ended up carrying these values and have embodied them completely.

A change in mindset to 'How can I have a better impact towards others?' from 'What do I win from this?'. Our actions are a product of nature and nurture—unless we are exposed to other mindsets, other ways of thinking, and diversity—we will always be clouded in taking decisions, our thought process, our ideas, and our mentality.

I look forward to organizational cultures and the evolution of the workforce. I am passionate about the future of work, and I believe that if we act now, we can start helping our skilled forces evolve to the jobs that will need their skills in the future.



Linda Oranya, 26, Nigeria, Female

Linda is a Data Scientist with a background in Systems Engineering. She found her inspiration from a genuine curiosity of the large amount of possible data her country produces in a day, drawn by the many problems that can be solved with the science of data. She's learning how to make use of that data to be able to constantly impact her environment and individuals around her whether through her work, teachings, or contributions.

I've always loved learning and being able to teach. This motivates me to keep learning as you cannot pour from an empty cup. I want to be able to constantly impact my environment and individuals around me, whether through my work, teachings, or contributions. This is what keeps me going and what drives me to keep learning and growing, but of course impacting in the little way I can while growing.

The more I learn, the more I realize that I don't know enough, this is why I keep impacting and giving back in any little way I can while growing. I really hope that Nigeria and Africa at large get to the level where they are very data aware and start using this data to solve problems.



Emran Tahboub, 20, Jordan, Male

Emran is a person who is ambitious, driven, and determined. He has experienced many ups and downs yet continues to strive and keep going.

I am a person who is ambitious by having the courage to dream, while having the drive and determination to keep going no matter what. I'm also a person who is patient, loyal and honest, taking full responsibility for my actions. My ambition is to live a life that I'm proud of by improving my skills and mastering the things I like during my early adulthood, because we all know how time flies; just get the most out of it. That's the main drive that keeps me exploring.

I am most proud of the fact that I'm pursuing multiple International Software Engineering degrees. Growing up, I was surrounded by hard-working family members which gave me all this extra desire to continue to grow and achieve more.



Tornike Pirveli, 22, Georgia, Male

Tornike needs to be surrounded by driven people to succeed himself. This self-awareness is very impressive, especially for a 17-year-old. Tornike believes it's difficult to succeed in Georgia, because who would have the motivation when they're paid 3.3 times less than a developed country?

From my perspective, it is already too difficult to be successful, at least here in Georgia. I think it's because of motivation. It's hard to obtain. There is nothing wrong with wishing for better. That is what keeps me motivated: I want more than I already have. Not just for me, but mostly for the people who helped me along the way. I simply want to return the favor.

Marijan Smetko, 24, Croatia, Male



From a very young age Marijan, surrounded by the books in his local library, discovered his ambition to become a scientist. From an early age he showed particular interests in all thing's science, from applied physics and chemistry, all the way to Queen Math. He also did a lot of physics and chemistry experiments.

I dreamed of becoming a scientist, discovering something new and pushing the boundary of human knowledge. A computer programming competition confirmed something I felt since childhood—I was always interested in computers, but at that moment I had proof I was also very good at it, and it was around that moment I decided to make programming my career.

I was a nerdy, (almost) straight A student in my elementary school and communicative with others, but not especially popular, as kids can be really mean at those ages, which I've learned to ignore. My parents and teachers all saw potential in me, so my high school education was never a question—it was to be continued in the capital city of Croatia, Zagreb, where the best schools in my country are. I wanted to be a pupil of one of the best high schools in Zagreb, but was not admitted, which meant that I was ineligible for most of the other good schools due to the national high school admission procedure at the time. This in turn meant I had to choose from a pool of schools which had free capacity after the first round, so I chose the Electrotechnical School of Končar; but this was only temporary. The plan was to transfer to another great school at the end of the school year. I, personally, went to the principal of that high school and asked if he would accept me, and this bold move of mine charmed him so much he made sure I was transferred there at the end of a semester! So, I started my second semester at the Vth Gymnasium Zagreb, one of the best schools in my country with a natural science and mathematics program. I am thankful to Mr. Petar Mladinić for this unique opportunity to this day.



Wan Nee Chow, 28, Malaysia, Female

Wan Nee is a vibrant spirit that is welcome in any business industry. She cracks jokes, is easy to talk to and is a good listener. She is a forever learner, constantly striving to improve her knowledge and education. When the only capital she had was time, she made the most of it and trained from an intern to a mobile developer in three years.

I would do anything for my family and everything I do is basically look out for their needs. I always strive to become better and that motivates me to succeed and grow in life. I met my first work mentor and life mentor, who let me realize that everything I learned in college was just the tip of the iceberg. When I was in middle school, I accidentally read a book called 'Rich Dad, Poor Dad'. Probably since then, I knew that in the future I must do business to achieve financial freedom and become the glory of the family.

Now I'm involved in projects in different industries, mainly responsible for business development. I still hold my dream, and I still do not give up my dream of starting a business. Opportunities are reserved for those who are prepared.

In the past two years, due to the country's political instability and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the country's economy has declined, which has led to a somewhat quiet market, and the return on investment in all aspects is not as good as expected. Wan Nee's solution to this is to study economics and personal financial management to prepare for a bright future.





Francis Eduardo Domínguez, 24, Ecuador, Male

Francis's story begins in a little country placed in the middle of the world, Ecuador. In the heart of South America, right next to the beautiful Pacific Ocean. He was born in 1997. He grew up without a father but with enough family to cover his absence. He had to immigrate to Spain when he was 3 years old due to the 1999 Ecuadorian crisis. A huge growth in inflation devalued the now-extinct local currency "Sucres'' to an untenable point. The president decided to adopt the USD as their new official currency with an exchange rate that vanished most of the population's savings.

The goal of everyone who was taking care of me was to see me achieve a successful future. Corruption is rooted and normalized in every political position, with private entities becoming an ally in these actions. I want to change that.

Francis is true to his word. He is doing what needs to be done to enter the political scope of Ecuador, and making his plans to study further if he intends to run for president one day. For him, to be a politician is to be educated and willing to make change.

I realized that since systematic corruption is powerful and to rise in politics in Ecuador, you have to compromise morals and values, I should ideate another path to be part of politics. So, I choose to make a career in the private sector, gaining enough money to pay for my political campaign and private security (corruption has taken a lot of lives in Ecuador) and changing the whole system, adopting politics of transparency, penalizing corruption harder, and setting a new cultural standard of what's not acceptable in a society of progress.

This is a future plan that I feel no other person could carry because I have witnessed how easy it is to corrupt humans. Hopefully, I will not need to use it and I will focus mainly on marketing, entrepreneurship, and innovation, which are the topics I feel passionate about concerning my practical life. However, when I have long term economic stability and if the country has not changed, I will focus on studying majors in public administration, social and economic development, so I can make Ecuador a better place.

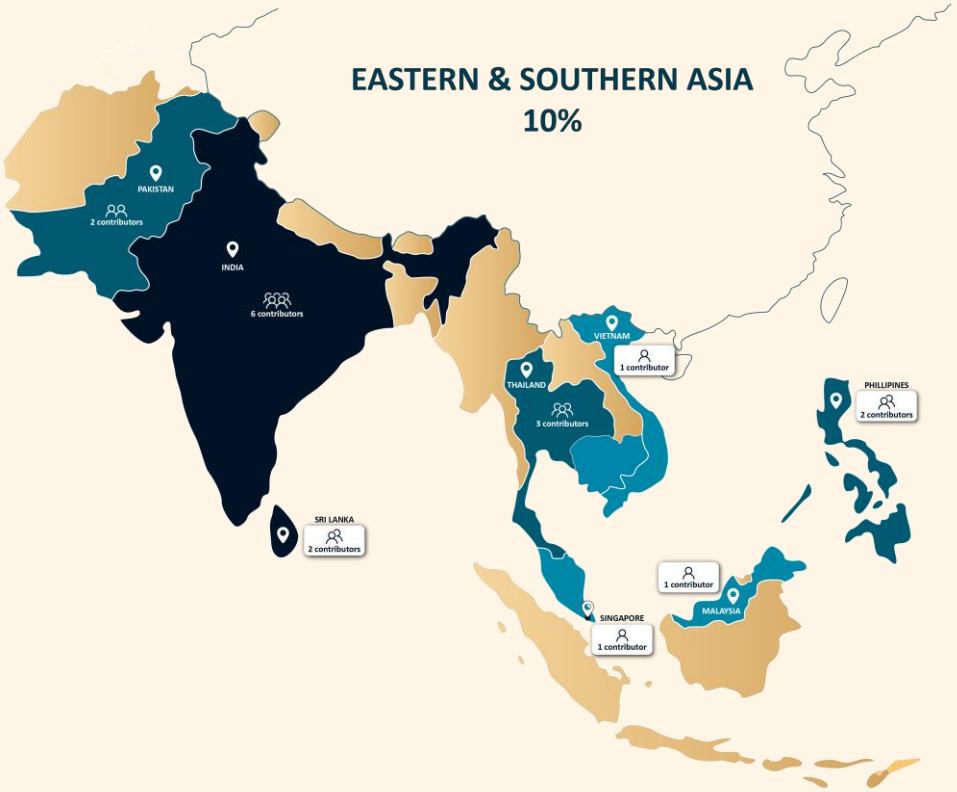


Malaika Tabassum, 21, Pakistan, Female

Malaika is a young, passionate individual from Pakistan who started working quite early on in her life due to a difficult childhood. However, she has made the most of it and is determined to continue learning, growing, and doing all she can to be her best possible version.

I was raised by a single mother in a middle-class household in a South Asian country. Success wasn't much of a choice but a necessity, and that's the belief that I clung to for pretty much all my teenage years.

I'd say that, in a way, growing up in a developing economy both helped and hindered me. It taught me all that I need to know to thrive in the cutthroat capitalist world by never being shy of hard work, but it also put me in survival mode for quite a long time. My aspirations now are defined solely by me. I want to make the very tiny sphere around me a better place by contributing towards meaningful work, not only by learning to be a good manager or leader in the future, but by learning to be a good mentor so that I can make that tiny sphere around me so much better so that they can continue to spread the positivity that I bring to their lives.





Osama Hussein, 24, Jordan, Male

Osama wants to solve real-world problems. He does it by understanding the business need and figuring out where the problem lies, mixing that with project management and software skills. This curiosity developed from gaming as a teenager to studying machine learning as an extra-curricular in university.

When I was 14 years old, I spent a lot of time playing RPG games and making friends and acquaintances. I enjoyed playing and the experience that I was getting, but it was mainly an experience the game developers wanted me to have. I always had those questions 'What if this was that?' or 'What if I could do that?', or I wondered if others were experiencing the same as me, or did they have the same thoughts or tastes as me, how would that be? I started exploring private servers and building my own, putting my imagination and thoughts into shaping a unique experience that would be only found on my server. Having different skins, modifying quests, simply altering the source of the game with my own touch, I grew fond of software and saw it as my way of communicating and letting the world see and experience things the way I did.

I started surfing the pool of courses online and capitalized on my technical skills, exploring what can be done aside from building transactional or management software, or designing websites. That was when machine learning crossed my path for the first time. Imagine how our brain works, all those decisions and preferences that we have uniquely as individuals; now imagine trying to put that into words let alone putting it into a scheme, structure or a model and teaching that to a machine.

Throughout my masters, I had the chance to work on interesting stuff with machines, such as facial and gesture recognition, building deep learning models, classifying images and even building basic 2D and 3D games. As time keeps ticking, I went through different experiences, absorbing more and my vision grows with it. It changes with time, and that's not a bad thing, change is inevitable, it's up to us how we do it. Looking at life from a different perspective, we could see why games are loved, or even football. We like to get a sense of achievements and of legacies, witnessing change and how it's authentically orchestrated. If we look at life from that perspective, I am curious as to how we are orchestrating our legacy?

And a few more worthy of mention…



Dino Kečević, 17, Croatia, Male

At 17 years of age, Dino has already combined the world of education with the world of work. He has clear plans to develop his interest in business and finance further.

I'm a 17-year-old attending secondary school in Zagreb. I go to two secondary schools—a general one and one at which I learn more about the art of music. I'm very interested in economics, finance, business, and investing. I would like to delve into these subjects deeper after I finish school. I am also proficient in English. I work for a company called VeeMee. I work as a social media marketer and do data entry.

By scanning the QR code of the product, every consumer equipped with a smartphone can access profiles on our platform that contain all relevant information about the origin of the product, its manufacturer, certificates, capacities, and distributors.

The purpose of the VeeMee platform is to improve the visibility of the producer to the end consumer and to promote the product's origin.





Thiasha Naidoo, 24, South Africa, Female

Thiasha has overcome many obstacles in her life; instead of giving up, she has used them as challenges to be overcome, developing a sense of passion and power, motivating herself to achieve her dreams.

My name is Thiasha Naidoo, a proud South African of Indian descent. I am currently a business specialist intern at Old Mutual Ltd as well as a Master of Commerce student, specializing in finance at the University of KwaZulu—Natal. I am an intellectually driven, hardworking and goal-oriented individual who is passionate about making a change in the corporate environment. I define myself as a person who always gives my best in every situation I face and who is always willing to assist other people before myself.

A key factor that motivates me in life is passion. When an individual is passionate about something or a certain aspect, they automatically acquire the drive and perseverance to achieve their dreams. I have a passion for the corporate world and the financial environment therefore my ambition for the foreseeable future is to become a successful CEO in a major corporate firm. My ultimate dream is to work on Wall Street in the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE).

Over the years, I faced many hurdles but what I found to be truly empowering was the mindset I had to overcome these challenges. Whereas others may see hurdles as impenetrable barriers, I see these challenges as obstacles to overcome on my path to success. An individual is only limited by their fear which is fueled by a lack of confidence. A powerful mindset is the key to success. I grew up in a financially constrained home, where the constant turbulent economic conditions in South Africa placed a great strain on our household financially. My parents strived every day to provide the best education for me so that I could expand my horizons and achieve my dreams. My passion for the financial environment grew exponentially every day and this is the key factor that enabled me to pursue my studies in finance.





Abd Elmoumen Drici, 22, Algeria, Male

Abd's passions are IT and Computer Science, but he also has a great sense of philanthropy, and wants to use his success to serve his community and help others.

I am currently a fourth-year Computer Science student at Djilali Lyabes University, which is a well-known university located in the state of Sidi-Bel-Abbes in Algeria. I'm passionate about IT and Computer Science, networking, operating systems, and other IT topics and technologies.

As a student I organized events on our campus with my colleagues, teaching new technologies, doing workshops in our scientific clubs and I gained a lot of experience in the field. That gave me the push to move forward in the field and love it more. My passion for the IT field came from when I was young, messing with my father's computer, creating bugs to try and fix them.

I love the compilation of creative and problem-solving skills, and how there's always more to learn. The next few years will be very interesting and exciting. I am very excited to graduate from my university and move forward in my professional and personal career. One of my most important goals of success is serving my community and helping people who need it, giving them hope, spreading positivity and knowledge.

MENA REGION
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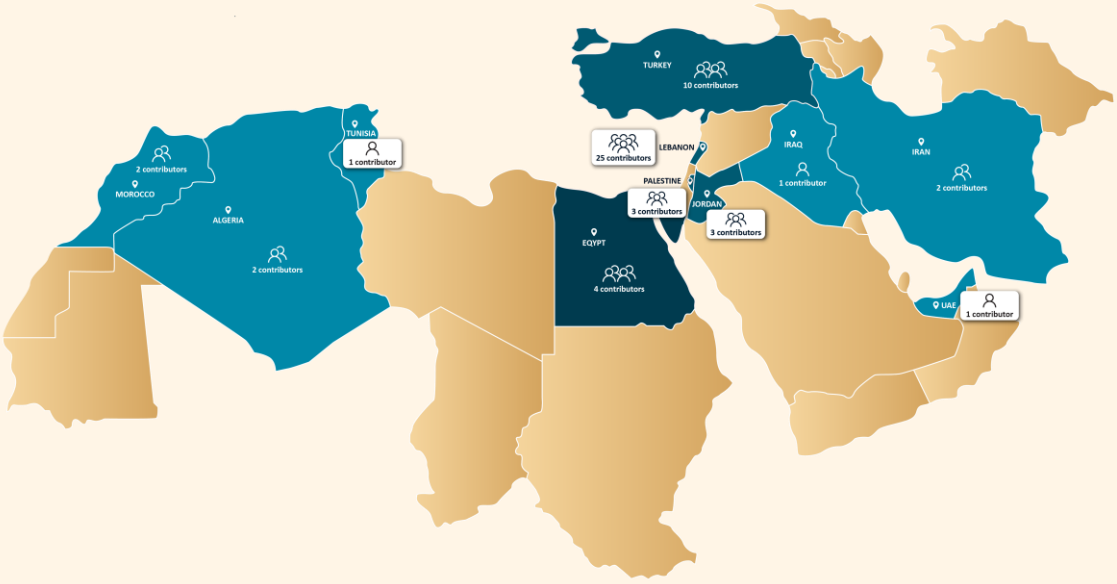




Shenisé Pillay, 25, South Africa, Female

Shenise's parents worked hard to provide for her and her brother, encouraging her to work and study hard in order to reach her goals. She wants to continue the cycle they began and create opportunities for both her children, and her community, to reach their full potentials, breaking the barriers of social injustice and encouraging them to develop their true vocations.

I come from a middle-income earning family and have always lived in Chatsworth, Kwa Zulu Natal, South Africa. The area I live in consists of middle to lower income earners and is ridden with crime and drugs. Both my parents worked very hard to ensure that my younger brother and I were not short of anything. They believe in the cycle of progress and ensure that they provide a better life for us than they had, giving us the tools to be able to create a better life for the future generations so the cycle of progress can continue.

I was accepted into a semi-private school, The Sathya Sai School, the last two years of my primary school education and stayed on for my secondary years. The experience I had at the school was priceless; it helped ground me spiritually, mentally, and physically. Much of who I am today is because of the teachings and practices I learnt at the school. I headed numerous outreach programs, feeding schemes, and provided personal hygiene-care hampers to the less fortunate learners. This taught me to always give with an open heart with no expectation of anything in return.

With South Africa recovering from the wounds of Apartheid, the growth prospects for an individual like me, an Indian female from a middle class home, are limited. During my days at university, I was never stagnant. I made sure I worked on a part-time basis to always provide for myself and purchase whatever luxuries that my heart desired. Completing this degree opened doors for me to become a Chartered Accountant and Audit Trainee, which I am currently completing.

Being an aspiring business consultant, my aim is to make an impact on businesses who play a role in the growing economies of the world. By enhancing and streamlining the way these businesses operate, I know that my actions will cause ripples from the micro-economy to the macro-economy. My goal is to help businesses enhance themselves so that more job opportunities are created, thereby improving the standard of living for many of those who did not have the opportunity to do so before as well as breaking the barriers of social injustice. My aim is to help as many people as I can to reach and see the true potential that exists within them by breaking mental barriers that have hindered their potential in life and helping them gain confidence in themselves.

My goal is to create a nurturing environment for my kids where fulfilling their vocation is at the top of their priority list, over working towards materialistic gain. This is what drives me and motivates me every day. We find ourselves inundated with old ways of life, kind of like a vicious cycle—get an education, get a job, start a family and work towards our retirement. No focus or emphasis is given on the individual, what the individual really wants to achieve for himself or herself, but rather the so called "duties" that we are forced to fulfill. This is the cycle I want to break and create my own school of thought to impart on those around me.



Rachael Refiloe Lamola, 26, South Africa, Female

Rachael wants to live her life to the max, reaching her goals by using the lessons that life growing up in South Africa has taught her, without dwelling on the past.

I define myself as a driven and ambitious individual who gives her best and tries her hardest. Being a student means having the desire to achieve something great, but for me it it's to do something better and in a different manner. My strongest ambition is not dwelling much on my hardships but more on how resilient and strong I am by overcoming hardships and still managing to reach the goals I set for myself.

Living life on purpose is what motivates me every day, the desire to win in every aspect of my life: making something new, coming up with creative ideas, acquiring new skills. I have positive dreams and aspirations for myself; I have a desire to improve the lives of people around me. I retain a positive sense of the future for myself as an individual and citizen of South Africa.

Life is an uncertain rollercoaster: with no funding to take me to school, I had to depend on my dad's salary to attend college. Two of my siblings were also dependent on dad's salary for tuition. There was not enough money for all of us, so we had to share. My friends completed their degrees in record time and left me behind because my tuition fees were in arrears, and I couldn't graduate. I kept on pushing till I graduated and made myself proud for pushing against all odds. Like they say, "a setback is a setup for a comeback". I passed with flying distinctions. All the suffering was worth it in the end.

The socioeconomic challenges, higher rates of poverty, and long days studying hard don't save one from poverty here in South Africa. You can only be fortunate enough to obtain employment if assisted by personal contracts or social networks. Us students from disadvantaged institutions or homes are less likely to attain employment than our wealthier peers. This has left thousands of youth feeling hopeless. I'm very grateful for the graduate youth program offered by the government as it has helped me kick start my career path.

My hopes and dreams for the future are to be a successful businesswoman who is hands on. I want to see my fashion business doing well, and I'm also looking for franchises, with a law degree on my wall. I desire everything to be perfect, especially on the business side. I want to create jobs for the unemployment rate of my country to drop. I want to be the reason why someone slept with a big smile, shelter over their heads and a lot of food to munch on.



Natasha Singh, 38, South Africa, Female

Natasha has worked hard to be where she is today, meeting challenges head on, and uses her story to help other women find their own true paths.

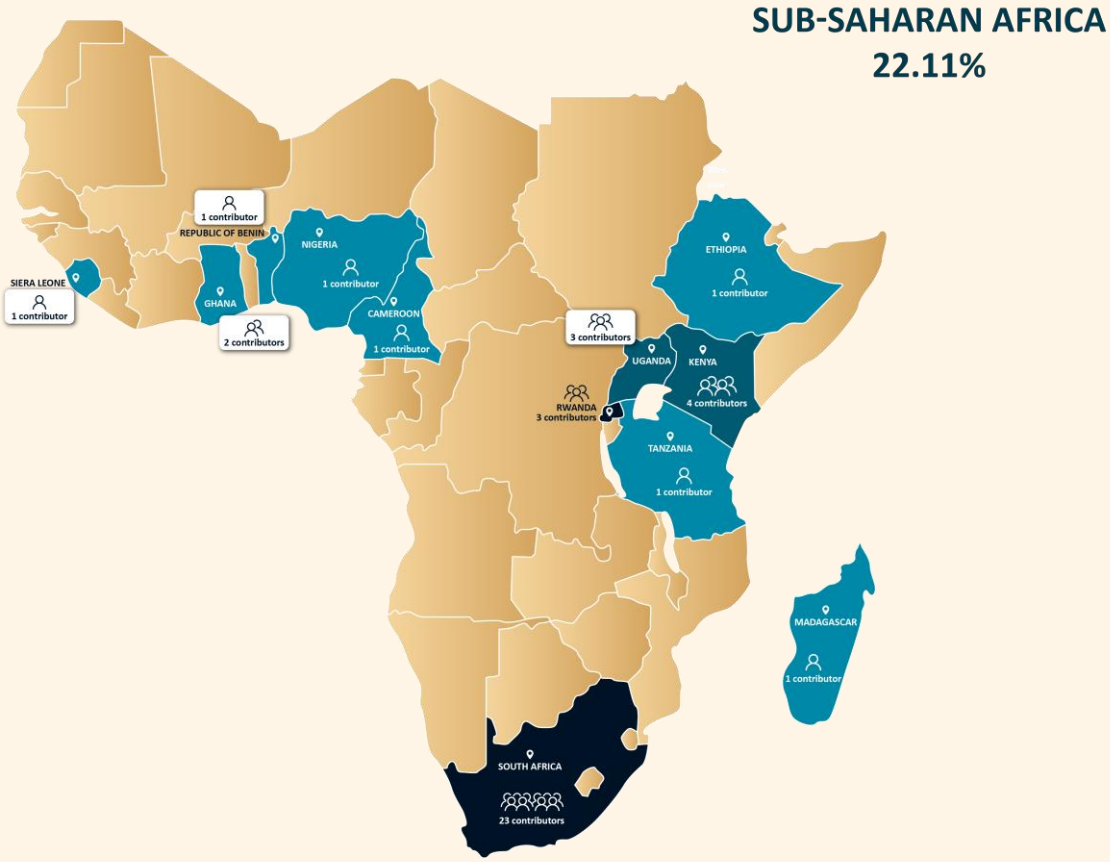
I am currently employed as a private banker of high-net-worth clients in one of the big five banks in South Africa. I joined the brand 15 years ago and walked through the door as a switchboard operator. When I arrived as a 24-year-old I had given myself two years to learn all I could then be off. Admittingly loyalty is not something our generation does very well. When I looked back and realized that I was approaching my 10-year anniversary, I realized I had fallen in love with the culture and the values of the brand that I represented. We don't always get it right and I'm certain this is true of every large organization as new leaders join the business and as the external environments evolve and modernize. 15 years later this is still a brand I admire and hold dear.

Being the eldest of three kids to a middle-income set of parents that would later divorce, I had the responsibility of living so that my younger brothers would have something to look up to. Very early in my adult journey I realized I was capable of so much more than the circumstances that faced me. I refused to lay down and be battered by life, that all the challenges in front of me were opportunities for me to grow in my thinking. My goals and ambitions were and are always bigger than my situation allows at first sight. I had seen a quote a while ago "If your goals don't scare you, they are not big enough". I went on to make a few bad decisions of my own along the way with two failed relationships and two kids I raised on my own for the majority of their lives. Being a single parent and sole provider to my two blessings, whilst trying to become the best version of myself and claiming my place in the workplace, has been no easy feat… nothing worthwhile is easy, right! My ultimate end game is to write which I hope to achieve in the coming years.

In the corporate environment that exists in South Africa there isn't always empathy or opportunity for young, aspirational females on the wrong side of the color spectrum, regardless of qualification or expertise. I am reminded of the quote "a goal is just a dream without action". To get to where I am currently in my life stage has taken motivation, grit, with the occasional sweat and tears, but in retrospect I am all the better for it. I make it an annual ritual to look back at my successes and not so successful endeavors, a personal SWOT analysis of sorts and this year I was filled with an almost peacock sense of pride.

I have a visual map of what I intend to achieve in my career for the next 12 months, how I intend to spend my spare moments, the kind of parent I wish to be to my kids, the love and care I know I must extend to myself especially during these days where we are all tested to the nth. I have reignited my love for writing and have found power in the simple art of journaling. Throughout my life writing poetry and random scribblings has served as a form of therapy, escapism if you will. It would be bombastic to imagine that I will live out these intentions as I see them in my mind's eye when staying alive and healthy through this pandemic is not guaranteed. It is yet exceedingly important to have intention and purpose with a good dose of flexibility. I have never been a believer in coloring in the lines, but I do see the need to have a basic outline of what I want my picture to look like.

I hope to use my experience and personal journey to help other women in my reach to find the courage to liberate themselves into the lives that they were meant to live, to not live by the shackles of societal judgements and stigma. We are the product of our thoughts, not our current situations. If I can be an example of how positive affirmations, intentional visualizations for a better life, purposeful actions and utmost gratitude for whatever we have even future gratitude for what is yet to come, then I have accomplished a part of what I suspect I was put on earth to do.





José Luis Madrigal Sánchez, 19, Mexico, Male

Jose wants to contribute to the development of ethical technologies that people can trust. He realizes he may not have the opportunity to do so in his home country, and so has plans to travel and work in Germany and the United States of America.

First, I want to start with a phrase that's in my daily life, which is "Passion and perseverance is the perfect combination for success". Throughout my entire life I've known the importance of hard work and taking care of my responsibilities, thanks to the education my parents gave me. Although I don't know what it's like to be desperate about financial problems like many people in my country, I understand things aren't usually given on a silver platter; you must get them by yourself. I consider myself a person who likes to help others, who gives his best in every activity, who feels motivated for his achievements and who tries to make a positive impact on his community. Taking up the initial phrase, passion and perseverance are the concepts that are kind of a base for my life, because I do the things that I really like. At the same time, I push myself to be constant because wanting isn't enough, as I said before, each one must achieve their own goals, but of course, it's not bad to have support from others. Therefore, there have things that pushed me to achieve my purposes, one of them is my family, because they're the ones that gave me the example of being a good person; my friends motivate me too, because I had similar dreams to some of them and we share great experiences, but I want to say that the perspective of myself in the future drives me too, because I define what I really want. Right now, my great ambition is to finish my degree in computer science in Tec de Monterrey and to get a job in some important technological company. I have to say that living in Mexico hasn't influenced my achievements, but I know that opportunities here aren't readily available for everyone. In some years, I'll be looking for a job and, compared to other Latin American countries, it seems there are more companies here focused on my career. That's why living in the city helps me, but the fact that Mexico has no influence in technology could affect my goals, so I have considered moving to the USA, because even if it doesn't have the perfect politics, it has better services, security and salaries; but maybe I'll stay in my country, it will totally depend on the job that I get because, as I mentioned, I have the opportunities and I just need to use them, but I don't forget that others are competitive like me. Accordingly, I want to go to an exchange in Germany and be able to work for a summer in Silicon Valley. These experiences can help me to have a better resume.

I have to say that the situation in Mexico is complicated. Corruption has affected us a lot, but right now politics is just getting worse, and we have more social problems. I really have that dream where we all have justice and peace, it won't be easy, but I think that the Mexicans are very united: we really help each other, and we don't give up easily. I think Mexico has a lot of potential to be one of the greatest countries in the world, maybe not because of its technology, but in terms of science and ecology. I think in the future we will be among the best countries on the usage of renewable energies, we really have many resources. I can help make the world a better place, of course I'm very interested in doing it in my area. I think computers can help us a lot but for companies, ethics isn't as important as making money, for example. Social networks have a lot of problems with data and privacy, so I want to influence that. I would like to create great apps and develop processes that can help people, but at the same time I want to give more moral bases to technology. It's just about teaching values and changing business models. I just want to push tech-advances but without hurting people or taking advantage of their data without their consent, so we can be in an environment of trust, even virtually.





Marija Zimina, 29, Latvia, Female

A desire to help people led Marija to start a career as a police officer, however after some time she found that her job wasn't giving her the satisfaction she wanted. She changed careers and is now a life and business coach, fulfilling her own dream and helping others to achieve theirs.

I was born and lived all my life in Latvia. I have always been brave and love adrenaline. As a child, I really liked TV series about the police and I dreamed to grow up and become a police officer, so after I graduated school, I entered the State Police College. A year later, I went to work in the mounted police, because I always loved horses.

Later, I changed duty stations, but continued to work in the police, because I liked my job, I liked helping people and realizing that I was doing something meaningful. At the same time as this job, I continued to learn and try new things—for example, I received a certificate in accounting, and later a certificate in massage. It is important for me to constantly grow and learn something new.

In the summer of 2020, I realized that something was going wrong. I was not feeling joy and satisfaction from work anymore and did not see the point of doing it. I am a sincere and honest person, and it is important for me to do everything with all my heart, or not to do it at all. I began to study more and think about what I want to do. I have always enjoyed studying human thinking, inspiring people, and helping them. In one forum I read about coaching. I started looking for information about this and realized—this is it! I immediately enrolled in a training center that provided the most complete course—life coaching, business coaching, group coaching, metaprograms. It was a great pleasure to go to classes where I was surrounded by motivated and inspired people.

I completed the MetaCoach Coaching & Training Center "System Coach APC" program and started coaching sessions. I must say that at first it is not so easy to find clients, because coaching is not very popular in Latvia and a lot of people do not know what it is. Building a customer base takes time and patience. Most of my clients are women, probably because it is easier for a woman to understand another woman. I love working with people who want to change something in their lives, but do not dare—this is my favorite topic, I love to inspire and support. I love working with serious topics related to beliefs about a person and others. It is an incredible feeling to see that a person has realized something about themself. I am proud that I have made many clients happier and improved their lives.

My second theme is business coaching. I like to work with motivated people who are united by common goals. I like to see how team relationships improve after group coaching, and how people learn to get over stress. In 2022, I met Alens Martīnī, who created an incredible project to help young entrepreneurs learn everything they need to know about business. He offered me the opportunity to teach courses in his company SIA "Penge'' and I gladly agreed. I had been thinking about teaching for some time because I wanted to pass my knowledge on to others. I started teaching courses about stress management and effective business communication. These topics are important, because for a successful business you should first deal with yourself and solve your problems, and then learn how to negotiate with others.

It is important for me to see the result of my work, not just the process. Every year I become more experienced and skilled, and I want to pass this knowledge on. We all must overcome obstacles in order to achieve something. My country has very high taxes and little support for small businesses. But we are not giving up.

I want to make this world a better place with my presence. I want to see more happy positive people around me, filled with love, not with envy or regrets about the past. I want as many people as possible to decide to live the life they dream about, and I am working for it. To live, not solely to exist, but to live your best life. I believe that each of us can change the world if we start with ourselves and make ourselves happy and support the people around us. Everyone is unique—you just have to understand what makes you unique.





Evelina Vilcina, 27, Latvia, Female

Evelina feels she is still working to find her place in the world and is excited to see where life will lead her. Her ultimate goal is to become a leader and hopes to help to make the world a better, more environmentally friendly place.

There are days when I do not know who I am and who I want to be as there is so much to explore in this world. I feel like an explorer, like a little fish in this big ocean of information and opportunities. I am curious about where I will end up. Now I am an intern working as a software developer, and I have a hobby creating family trees. My ambition is to be a leader, a good leader. To become a person that is knowledgeable enough to advise others.

I think one of the turning points in life was in 8th grade when we got a new arts teacher. I was inspired to get more into the arts, to be an architect. After 9th grade I decided to go to Riga School of Arts and Crafts (now Riga Art and Media Technical School) to start my journey as an interior designer, but I didn't get into that course. Instead, they offered me Textile design and I accepted the offer. So, one of my qualifications is Textile Design Specialist (someone who knows what to do with 150-year-old looms). I had the opportunity to help restore a furniture set for the Latvian National Art Museum. That makes me feel like I have already left something for future generations. After that I had a few years of searching for what to do next and decided to learn Business Psychology at RISEBA university and got a Bachelor's degree in Social Sciences in Business Administration.

I have had different jobs since I was sixteen, but if you are young or change industries and start from the bottom it really does take time until you are taken seriously. I am changing industries and almost a year ago I sent my CV to twenty companies, five responded and I got to three interviews. So, another thing that has hindered me is HR response time. When is the time you stop waiting for a 'yes' or for anything? I feel like everyone teaches what to do with potential candidates for a position, but no one teaches that there is someone somewhere hoping for an interview and still waiting for a response.

I think and hope that everyone finds what works for them to make the world a better place. For us most of the things are close, so we do not use a car anymore. And I am trying to recycle and give things away that I do not need anymore. I have been to zero waste shops and tried to buy fresh vegetables at an online market. But it has not worked for me—it still ends up being packaged or, in my opinion, sometimes overpriced.

I hope we all will eventually find a place where we belong and feel free.



Anesa Omanovic, 33, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Female

Anesa's upbringing during conflict has molded her identity today, and it has shaped the path she has taken in life. She is passionate about peace, fighting for the rights of women, and wants to live in a world that is free from discrimination of all kinds.

The story of who I am cannot be told without putting it in the context of my country, Bosnia and Herzegovina. I was born and raised in Sarajevo during the 90s, and there is no way to talk about myself without mentioning that identity. The events in my country during the war years of the 90s certainly shaped me into the person I am today, and I think I only became aware of it in my early 30s. Today, as I write these lines, I am as old as my father was when he was killed defending Bosnia and Herzegovina. Growing up in that context and living in a post-conflict state was certainly one of the main triggers for directing my life's path. Growing up with a mother who took on the role of both parents, I learned that women can do and achieve whatever they make up their mind to, and that will become the identity with which I most often and dearly identify with today—as a feminist. It is extremely important for me to make at least a small contribution in the fight for women's rights and in the fight for gender equality.

Throughout my schooling and growing up in Sarajevo, I was extremely ambitious, hardworking, persistent, and oriented towards the world. Volunteering during the 20s in the largest students' international organization in the world would direct me, without question, towards viewing the world as a global village where I can be a citizen of its every corner. Broadening my horizons through studying and volunteering abroad, numerous study trips and exchanges, helped me understand how much I have in common with young people from all over the world and how much beauty there is in our diversity.

The decision to return to BiH and build my life path in my homeland was not an easy one. Although I am aware of the many possibilities offered by more developed countries, I wanted to help mine to become one. That is why today I work in an organization that tries to improve democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and I am especially active in the field of work with young people and women. Whenever I hear some of them tell me that I helped them realize their potential or learn something new, it fuels me to move forward. I love learning and improving and that is something I will never give up. After completing two master's studies (Business and Political Science), obtaining numerous certificates, and going through different education programs, I know for sure I will be a lifelong "student" and always look for new knowledge.

When I think about what I would like the world to look like tomorrow, I would like for my 5 year-old self to have the opportunities I did not have—to be born and raised in peace, to live in a loving family, to experience and travel to new countries not like a child without a father through a humanitarian program but like a citizen of the world. I want a world where we are kind to each other and willing to get to know each other. Because the only way to live in peace is to have no fear, and fear comes when we don't know each other and when we do not understand each other. I would like to live in a world where girls have the same right to education as boys, where they can express their opinions loud and clear, where women are not discriminated against and do not fear for their existence, where every voice counts and everyone regardless of political, ethnic, economic, gender, or sexual identity has equal rights.



Safura Aliyeva, 24, Azerbaijan, Female

Safura is full of drive and ambition, always pushing herself to be the best she can be, but she hasn't lost her sense of fairness and selflessness.

It is our creativeness and productivity that make us exist. One of the places where I get chances to create, learn, and be productive is my workplace. One undeniable thing I learnt throughout my work experience is that a competitive environment is crucial for self-improvement. And to survive in this kind of environment, you should not try to be relatively better than others, but you should try to be actually the best, even though you cannot be. Not always, but usually, I have tried to be the best and at least good at whatever I like to do.

Till now, for whatever seems like my success—my education, work, and any achievements, I am thankful to my character. I can look at myself from the side and see a girl with determination. Here, not everyone gets an opportunity and investment for education. Especially for girls' parents, it seems meaningless to invest in their education, and it seems dangerous to allow girls to study abroad. Therefore, for the opportunities I had, I am thankful to my parents' open-minds and trust in me too. When others try to involve themselves in my life, and want to avert me from my decisions, I remind myself that no one else lives my life, knows everything in detail, or feels like me. Hence, me, and only me, in this world can decide the best on behalf of me.

Life is paradoxical. It sometimes requires being selfless for yourself. You should sacrifice one thing to get another thing in your life. It matters to have punctual scales to choose better things for yourself. These scales should work for your justice too. You should treat others fairly, even though you never get fair treatment. Because maybe being fair doesn't give you anything, but it makes you not lose your conscience at least. I believe true people can never lose since they already have a conscience which cannot be substituted with the biggest material gain. Therefore, usually I try to not expect anything from anyone when I do goodness for others. If you continue to try to be good to others without getting anything in return it leads to self-sacrifice. Being selfless hurts when it is not for yourself. James Keller's words console me: "A candle loses nothing by lighting another candle".



Nuray Kenzhebekova, 22, Kazakhstan, Female

Nuray is a strong, independent woman, intent on making her way in life on her own terms. She wants to contribute to the development of her country and be a part of making it a better place to live for all: humans and animals alike.

When I was into math and reading from early childhood, my parents were surprised but, luckily, in a good way. My mom bought a book "How to raise a genius", yet I am not sure if she used anything from it. My father had serious conversations with me about my interests, future profession and what I should do to achieve the goals I set since I was in 6th grade. Sometimes, in fact, I forget how significant my parents' impact was on my journey, especially the "passion for knowledge" gene I got.

The priority I have today is to move abroad by myself with no financial support from my family. That is one step towards the bigger goal I have, which I cannot share for personal reasons. Kazakhstan is great, do not get me wrong. I just need to live somewhere else, see how democratic countries can be, how supportive governments may act and how high living standards in developing places are. In our country, knowing English is rare. In our country, corruption is everywhere. In our country, no merit-based things exist, only relatives-based or money-based. I am an economics student and know the statistics, you may trust me.

Anyways, despite not having perfect conditions, I want everything to be achieved all by myself. That is why I studied hard in high school, so that I would be able to enter Nazarbayev University. I knew back then that graduating from this university would create so many opportunities for me if I worked fearlessly during my studies, of course. Sometimes, I used to have nights thinking that it would be better if I were not into learning from childhood. I would worry about my looks and popularity, about dating a guy from a rich family. I used to think and sigh loudly because it seemed so much easier. This is kind of what motivated me. Being raised in a country where women can face discrimination, made me feel angry. I wanted independence, freedom. Also, my parents were not rich, and it is pretty difficult to get rich in Kazakhstan without "dirty" actions, so I wanted the opportunity to get wealthy honestly. I wanted to be in a place where my hard work paid off and I feel appreciated. So, that is why I studied so hard for so many years.

Right now, for example, I finished applying to another university in Germany because I won a DAAD scholarship which is my dream ticket to the country where I believe the qualities I have are valued. So, I may call myself a capable person. Why? Well, I am capable of achieving the results I want because I am capable of pushing myself beyond what I want or even what I think I can do. I am capable of working both smart and hard. I am capable of choosing not to have fun when others do. I am capable of self-educating.

In the future, I want to make Kazakhstan a better place in multiple ways: fund students' studying abroad, build more animal shelters and raise visibility for more donations and help, start an academy for women in business for girls who want to become an entrepreneur in Kazakhstan, become a top-notch data scientist and found own consulting company to help small businesses go digital. As for my personal goal, I want to create a strong healthy family with a house full of love.



Meerim Akimova, 22, Kyrgyzstan, Female

Meerim began her career working in an office which afforded her the opportunity to improve her English and to work with people of different nationalities. However, she found that office work was not for her and that her talents lay in an industry where she had the freedom to be her creative self.

My independence and understanding of my way in life began when I was 20. Until this moment, I did not know what to devote myself to, and asked myself "What am I interested in?", "What should I do with my life?". At that moment, I got a job in the Ministry of Transport. For the young me, it was a huge success and surprise, as I began to work not with local people, but with foreigners. My whole family was proud of me, and I had to improve my English and try my best at this job. Honestly, it was difficult. I knew English, but I immediately had to speak it without oral practice. There were many stressful situations when I didn't understand what I was being told and couldn't speak fluently myself. But this job helped me a lot, because if it wasn't for this chance, I still wouldn't understand English. Now I can read whole books and understand everything, and I speak better now. I gained experience working with foreigners, and at the same time began to study freelance work, so that I could work remotely. This job helped me a lot in correspondence and improved my English so that I was able to move on a foreign exchange. For a poor country like mine, this is a great opportunity, and I am happy that I was able to find my vocation in this.

I left the Ministry because it was difficult for me to work in the office every day, I just felt that the office was not my path. Realizing I was good at freelancing, I began to develop my graphic design and SMM skills. In the end, I realized: I love to create and be creative, and this is where I found my meditation: making posts, graphics, design—it's all very attractive to me, I just love this craft and continue to develop this skill.

Then, I got a job working in several foreign projects, combining them. One of the first stable projects is FELS, this project is about an entrepreneurial lifestyle. Over the years of working on this project, I have already begun to have a love for working on it. I like the message of FELS, I can be called a true fan of this movement! It's a great feeling when your work is your favorite thing.

Speaking about my life now, I can say that I feel better times, as if every day is better than the previous one. I'm working on four projects, as well as studying at an online university, going to courses and trying to keep up with everything. This year, the fruits of my work manifested, and I took my first trip abroad. It was a vacation in Dubai—a wonderful city. I was inspired by it after arriving as if I was on another planet. This city has become close to me in spirit, so I plan to visit it again in the future. This trip has awakened the spirit of a traveler in me and now I plan to go to Germany in the summer. I want to see a lot of countries and my dream now is to visit the Maldives and Singapore.

Thinking about my life, I come to the conclusion that my work is my passion; it is an energy that does not let me give up and every time I am inspired again and again by my mini victories in work. After FELS, the second project is the Facebook page of Coach Farida Ryan. She is a student of Bob Proctor, the founder of the theory and the book "The Secret". And I love this project. It teaches people to use the power of thought for a positive attitude in life. I think it's an interesting experience for me.

The third project is a page about sports news. I was hired to manage such a direction as sports. I had to delve into football, basketball, UFC, hockey, cybersport and so on. Now I know all about sports! And it's cool. The subject of sports is very extensive and there is a lot of content here. I think it's a kind of pleasure for the SMM to work with sports-related topics.

My fourth project is a local project for the sale of electric scooters, which is also a flight of fancy for various posts in my native language and cooperation with local bloggers.

And now, I can say that I try to be responsible and constantly improve my skills. I am studying SMD at a serious level. SMD is Social Media Design, so I'm going to be making animated posts soon and I'm so excited! I think it's going to be super cool!



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Hanna Salazkina, 22, Ukraine, Female

Dreams don't frighten Hanna, in fact they drive both her professional and personal lives. She isn't scared to dream big and this has helped her to achieve her ambitions to date and plan for the future.

I am a dreamer. I think this is the best word to define me. I'm not scared to dream big and set big goals while listening to people saying it's impossible. Nothing is impossible; the problem is limited perception, especially in countries like mine, where the economic situation and everyday hard work to satisfy basic needs doesn't leave space for dreams.

I work as a project manager in pharmaceutical manufacturing. After graduation as a biotechnologist, I gained experience in the field of pharmaceuticals from R&D and drug production technologies to the management of pharmaceutical enterprises. I was lucky to have exceptional opportunities to grow and move step by step towards my dreams, and I worked hard for them. Not every person my age gets those chances and I always try to use every chance I get, because life doesn't give it twice. I was lucky to meet people who saw some kind of potential and ambitions in me and they helped me on my way.

I think that language skills gave me a good start and opportunities. When I got my current job I became part of the international project with Austria thanks to them, which one more time proved to me that language skills are vital for interaction no matter the subject. Also, such skills open a door to the world's greatest practices and scientific cognition. I speak four languages: Ukrainian, Russian, English, and German. I think the bilingual environment of Ukraine makes it easier to learn new languages.

I've been working for the company for almost two years and there are several conclusions I've come to. In Ukrainian companies, especially state owned, no matter how hard you try it is difficult to thrive. Some young people lose their spark and the fire in their eyes, some move to a more developed country to get opportunities, some stay and fight the system. Unfortunately, I face this not only at work, but it's also a problem for the whole boomer generation. People are tired of all the economic issues they face.

I want to become a professional, build a successful career and grow in this sphere in my country. I realized that it's time to take the next step in my ambitions and learn about a new side of pharmaceutical development: clinical research. I became interested in this sphere because it provides patients with the best modern therapies and creates the path between R&D and its true mission: to treat and give the people struggling with a disease a chance to have a normal life.

Despite professional goals I also have ambitions in sport. My hobby is horse riding, show jumping to be more precise. In the future I want to do it on a professional level because, for me, this sport is a big love and passion.



Adelina Fughina, 22, Romania, Female

Adelina has had the drive to succeed from a young age and is achieving her life goals step by step. She wants to make her parents proud by emulating their success, showing them her gratitude for their support through her own hard work.

Back in high school, when I was 16, I realized I wanted to complete my university studies in the United Kingdom. I always performed well at school, and I always enjoyed challenging myself. My parents were both successful entrepreneurs who launched their business as Romania emerged out of communism in the 1990s. Through their own hard work and determination, they had managed to turn a small family-run business into one that had stores across the country. Growing up in this environment, surrounded by evidence of their hard work, is perhaps what has motivated me to study so hard in school so that I, too, can achieve big things.

I was only 4 years old when I started to learn English. The intensity continued in primary school as due to my mathematical ability, I was enrolled in many math competitions, where I achieved outstanding results. As such, from a young age, I was forced to push myself academically, and this stayed with me in high school. It was here, when I was 16 that I realized I wanted to study at a university in the UK.

My scores in the Romanian Baccalaureate were excellent, and they gave me the opportunity to apply to any UK university I wanted. I eventually selected the University of Manchester, which for me, had a perfect mix of student life and academic excellence. Initially, life at university in the UK was a definite challenge for me. Studying economics and finance there were lots of technical terms thrown around in lectures, and with English being my second language, it did take some time to get used to this and to catch up. However, I was able to build a strong support group around me, both with other Romanian students as well as students from other countries, including the UK.

To enhance my business credentials, I took part in many extracurricular activities, including the Manchester Entrepreneurs group. Finding like-minded people here who are also excited by the world of business has been amazing. We worked on some incredible projects together, such as the first start-up weekend ever organized in Manchester.

Like my parents, it is my dream to become an entrepreneur, to one day run and own my own business. But first, I am looking to get more experience. I am in the process of applying to lots of business graduate schemes, as well as actuarial schemes, to make the most of my mathematical ability. The process is definitely challenging, but I know that if I keep working hard, I can get to where I want to be. It is important for me to make my parents feel proud, they worked so hard for me, and now I want to show them through my own hard work how grateful I am.



Tihana Petricevic, 39, Croatia, Female

Tihana's ambitious nature has been nurtured since childhood, and this has enabled her to overcome many obstacles to achieve her position today. Her drive to succeed doesn't end there, however, and her determination to create life changing products is to be greatly admired.

I was born into an upper-middle-class family with a strong tradition of practicing medicine. My family very much values education. From an early age, my parents encouraged me to seek knowledge in various fields. Besides having various interests, one characteristic became distinctive, I was very ambitious. With age, this ambition became bigger and bigger. I always wanted to be, and needed to be, amongst the best. This was displayed in my academic results and then later in my career.

My entrepreneurial journey didn't start conventionally. I didn't finish an MBA, worked as an intern in some companies and later opened my business. I received a job invitation from the history department at the faculty. I started my Ph.D. studies and things were looking good, but little did I know what the future held for me. There were much higher forces at work at that time. Markets worldwide crashed and the recession started. A lot of people lost their jobs, and the Croatian economy was on its knees. In the end, I didn't get the job at the faculty, and I had to seek a job elsewhere. It was one defeat after another, one rejection after another. Long story short, I was unemployed and hitting rock bottom. For someone who spent a large amount of time and energy focusing on a career, this was a terrible blow. But somehow in my lowest of the lows, I managed to get back on my feet and made some crucial decisions. I was in desperate need of change. So I said to myself— "You're more than the content of your wallet and more than it says on a piece of paper or diploma. If no one wants to employ you, then you will build your own business."

And this is how I got involved with technology startups. But this meant more learning. I've joined one of the first accelerator programs in Croatia—Founder Institute. I've opened up my first company, earned my first paycheck, and started working on my new innovative high- tech project. Eventually, hard work paid off. I've received multiple national awards and recognitions for my project, but still it was very hard for me to find partners. It was especially difficult to find engineers. Then I became aware of all the aspects of building a high-tech startup in Croatia. The ecosystem was not very developed, with little or no funding available for early-stage startups, especially those based on hardware and led by women. No VC funds and no adequate legal and government support. The competition was huge: big IT companies from all over the world were looking for engineers in Croatia and paying them top dollars. It was very hard for me to find adequate partners, and it took me years to find the right people. My first wearable-tech healthcare project didn't pass the MVP stage, but I've learned a lot. Also, I've built a very strong network. I was known now. I built my brand. It wasn't all for nothing.

After many years of hard work on an on-and-off basis with engineers, I finally managed to find a technical co-founder. We started work on a new project called The Silver Monitor. Now with decent support, I can finally start to build properly. We've opened a new startup company, also based on hardware and software. We've received multiple national and international awards. We've been featured in most Croatian newspapers and TV programs. We've received our first investments. I sat at the table with high officials and representatives from Ericsson, General Electrics Healthcare, Medtronic, Allianz, Axa Insurance, Signal Iduna, Infobip, etc. But things didn't go as smoothly as anticipated. We didn't receive any VC funding or closed deals with big corporations. I've decided to ignore this and continue to work with my team. Results were there, we received one award after another, one recognition after another. In total we received nine startup awards and 25000$.

I've decided that I will not stop, I will not quit, and I will not take no for an answer. My voice will be heard, and I will not quit until I'm taken seriously. I truly believe in what we are doing. Our products and services are creating value for many by improving the health and safety of senior citizens and their families. What we're building makes sense from the perspective of technology, healthcare, and business. The application of this technology can do a lot of good in the world.

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Tanja Milojević, Serbia, Female

Tanja has overcome the challenges of an unbalanced education system and nepotism, achieved her goals and is successful in a job that she finds fulfilling.

I graduated from the Faculty of Political Sciences and finished my Master academic communication studies at the same faculty. After graduating from high school, I thought about what I would like to do in life, and the support of my family directed me to enroll in what I love and what I want to do. However, as I come from an average family, I knew that I had to fight for a scholarship and a place in the state budget.

I had to be honest and say that there were almost countless challenges during my studies—a school system that conditions and forces students beyond any limits to pass the year, unclear conditions for scholarships, poor opportunities for additional work, bad materials, and if you wanted to gain professional experience during studies, the only option is volunteering.

Also, one of the biggest problems in Serbia is nepotism. Because of nepotism, many of my colleagues work in fields that are unrelated to their profession, give up on what they love and want to do, or move to more developed countries. Privileged ones do not need to worry about jobs and a paycheck. As I belong to the majority, I had to gradually build a road to where I am now. My path meant that during my studies I worked, volunteered, and went to lectures. I managed to graduate on time and finished my master studies. However, after graduation, my pride was shaken by the questions—what and how next?

I felt like I was at the beginning, but I still believed that hard work could achieve the goals. Once again, I started from scratch in the position of an intern, every day learning new things, and trying to overcome old goals. I think that my superiors noticed that, because I passed the path from Account Management Intern to Digital Account Manager.

Today, I work with the biggest global companies on their marketing campaigns. I love my work and my surroundings because they fulfill me. I hope that one day, our environment becomes supportive for all of those who are now where I was. I know that it is not easy to face a devalued education system, a system that is not stimulating and supportive of young people who are eager to learn and work. Our country has top young experts that go abroad wanting a better life, and I would like for their choice to be to stay, not to be afraid of fighting for their place under the sun.



Nicole Merlo, 21, Ecuador, Female

Nicole demonstrates that her mantra of never giving up and following your life's passions really can make your dreams come true.

Since I was little, I've always liked the business world. However, I grew up with the idea that in order to be successful and be in a top position of a big company, you have to get out of the country because there is no future here for a girl who wants to make the most of all her skills. I graduated from high school, and I am about to graduate from the best university in my country with honors due to my effort, responsibility and trying to give my best in everything that I do.

My persistence has brought me awards, congratulations, diplomas and most importantly, the chance to live new experiences both academically and professionally. I am currently working in a marketing agency based in London and I have returned from an exchange program with my university after studying a semester abroad in the US. Even though I had high expectations of different aspects of the trip, I didn't think that everything that I experienced during that time was going to surpass them. I met some of the greatest professionals and made some of the best friendships I could ever ask for. That made me realize that the world is so much bigger than the 283,560 km² that my country has. I can just say that I came back with more desire to fight for my goals.

My short-term goal is to do my MBA abroad and hopefully acquire more professional experience there. I love my country, but as my mom says, sometimes you just feel the need to open your wings and fly wherever life takes you. The main takeaway I would like to give is that you should do what you are truly passionate about and go where you feel most alive. In the end, I think that it is not everything about success or recognition, but it is about being happy and having meaningful connections. Never give up on the things that you really want and act with your heart, the world will take care of the rest.



Rayane El Medawar, 26, Lebanon, Female

Rayane's ambitions drove her to her current position in HR, but they also inspired her to develop her career further and to change recruitment from within.

I graduated with a degree in Business Management from the Lebanese American University (LAU). My experience of over four years presents knowledge in all functions of Human Resources. My organization, time management and fast-learning skills exposed me to the laws and practices in Middle Eastern and African countries.

My awareness of the stagnation in my comfort zone at a certain point in my career path, and the opportunities I may have missed, are for now the ones that push me forward. I always look for a better version of myself, and hope I can make my father, who has paid a good amount of money to enroll me in one of the most reputable universities in Lebanon, proud of me. I am, happily, a self-taught Human Resource professional.

I was a fresh graduate, armed with a strong personality and interest in human resources, hired as an HR Officer for my company's branch in Lebanon. Two months later, I oversaw the entire HR department and eighty employees, all alone. A year later, I was introduced to Gulf operations with supervision of the Group Admin/HR Manager. With time, the HR Department in Lebanon became central and a reference for other subsidiaries. My ambition definitely does not stop at this point. My next target? European exposure!

Not only do I aspire to assume a position as an HR Manager and HR Director in the future, but I also hope to help those unemployed. I currently do this on a small scale, as much as my time allows, and I aim to increase the number of helped job seekers with time.

I am, since the beginning of my employment, on a mission to alter the unpleasant idea about recruiters. As change starts from within, I always make sure to respect applicants' time, effort, and intelligence by avoiding shallow questions such as "what are your strengths and weaknesses" and not rescheduling an interview at the last minute.



Yara Ghamlouche, 22, Lebanon, Female

Yara overcame the challenge of being a woman in the male dominated field of mechanical engineering and found her true passion in the field of biomedical engineering, sharing her knowledge and passion with others through teaching.

My family means so much to me. I think about my family everywhere I go. I believe they played a huge part in making me the person that I am today. I love my country. Even when I plan to travel for studies or work, I know I never want to live away. This love is what pushes me to grow. And the more I grow, the more I am filled with love.

I am a Biomedical Engineering MSc student at the American University of Beirut. Originally, I did my bachelor's in mechanical engineering. And although I loved engineering in general, I knew since the first day in college that my studies would not end there. And that I wanted to pursue my PhD. The reason behind that was very simple for me; I would like to teach. Not because being a lecturer provides a good life, and most certainly not because society looks up to those who have continued their studies, but in order to have an influence on the largest number of individuals, to be able to make a change. My effort, added to that of the many figures that have chosen a similar path, should be the change that will redirect our society's views on many levels.

In my first year of university, I endured many challenges. Being one of very few girls in mechanical engineering, there were classes that I took as the only girl. Making friends from the same major was not easy. At some point in my semester, one of my colleagues expressed his amazement at my grading record. 'I did not know that veiled women can be so smart', he said. But why not? I did not get mad. 'I need to change his mind, not validate his prejudgment.' I reminded myself. There were many moments like this one during my first year. With time, however, I was able to prove myself.

Working in this very friendly and international environment introduced me to the CEO of a biomedical engineering company. After a few days, I was interning with the company. I found a huge passion in the work I had started. When I went back to AUB, I worked on a blood pressure monitor for my final year project. And that is when I decided to change course and apply for an MSc in Biomedical Engineering.

After graduating with a distinction and a minor in Mathematics at AUB, I entered the Biomedical Engineering program at the same university. That is the position I currently hold. I now work as a teaching assistant for Electrical Engineering courses. I also work as a research assistant to both mechanical and biomedical engineering professors. I co-authored three papers in my first year of my MSc. One of them is published and two are on the way. I took so many different courses and fell in love when I studied Computational Neuroscience. Deciding to finally settle there was a huge decision; from mechanical engineering to neuroscience. But I did. And I am very happy about it. The transition is not supposed to make sense. But believe me, it does. There are more similarities in everything we study than we can ever tell. The deeper we delve into different fields, the more we understand the law that governs everything around us.

I like to think about life like that; a unity that covers everything. I like to travel for that reason. It makes me unsee any differences between people. And I also like to teach for that. Because I want to be able to help people grow, to spread knowledge, but most importantly, to spread love.



Abir EL BALI, 24, Morocco, Female

Abir recognizes that challenges make life interesting, and failure does not always result in a negative impact on your life.

I disagree with those who believe our culture, nationality, or social status defines us. We are each distinct with varying thoughts and desires. I strive to improve myself by embracing challenges and stepping out of my comfort zone. Currently, I work as a pilot project engineer for a multinational corporation, and it is making me feel intellectually challenged and useful! I'm grateful for everything in my life and happy with who I've turned out to be. Speaking of life, mine hasn't always been joyous, but that's okay since if everything were flawless, we would ultimately become depressed. Life gets boring when there aren't any obstacles! Failure has the greatest impact on one's life and can bring about the biggest improvements. Have you ever experienced the outstanding delight that comes from having your biggest issues resolved? I've been there, too. Never giving up is the most crucial life lesson! Residing in a developing nation should not stop us from moving forward. We must stop complaining and take action instead! I believe that we can change the world if we begin by altering our perspectives. I am fully aware that there is a purpose behind our existence, and I want to devote mine to inspiring others to give their all!



Matea Vučetić, 24, Croatia, Female

Matea met the challenge of matriculating at the University of Zagreb to study environmental engineering, followed by chemical engineering, all the while managing to engage in extracurricular activities. Graduating with a master's thesis in pharmaceutical development, she has decided to go against the norm and remain in Croatia to try to build a life and career there.

I always knew what I wanted to be—everything. I grew up on an island in the Adriatic Sea with the closest city with hospital and everything else you take for granted about 4 hours away and dependent on the ferry schedule, for the first 18 years of my life. It is well-known that no social arrangement of space doesn't determine the identity of a man as the island does.

When the time came to choose the subjects for the State Exam and a field of study, I had chaos in my head. Was there a job to be everything? I didn't even have a perception of what jobs exist in the big world, so I packed my bags and went to the University of Zagreb with an open mind. My brother listed all the programs part of the University and read their names and I was saying yes or no to each one of them. When we summarized it was clear that I was interested in all kinds of engineering—something I did not know until then.

After a couple of weeks of research, I liked the way that environmental engineering sounds. It was a relatively new field of study, interesting and a bit futuristic for a little country like Croatia. I decided to take a challenge and applied for the required subjects with physics and math of the highest importance. Everybody around me was surprised with my choice (my chemistry teacher the most), especially because there's no way to come back on the island and work with that type of degree—so I basically bought my one-way ticket with that decision.

I got more than 80 % in the physics exam and was 3rd of all the applied students (about 300 of them) for environmental engineering. I was so proud but not just of myself, but all the colleagues from class who mostly got onto their first choice programs. Island high schools are always underestimated, and we showed everybody that quality of education does not care about the geographical location.

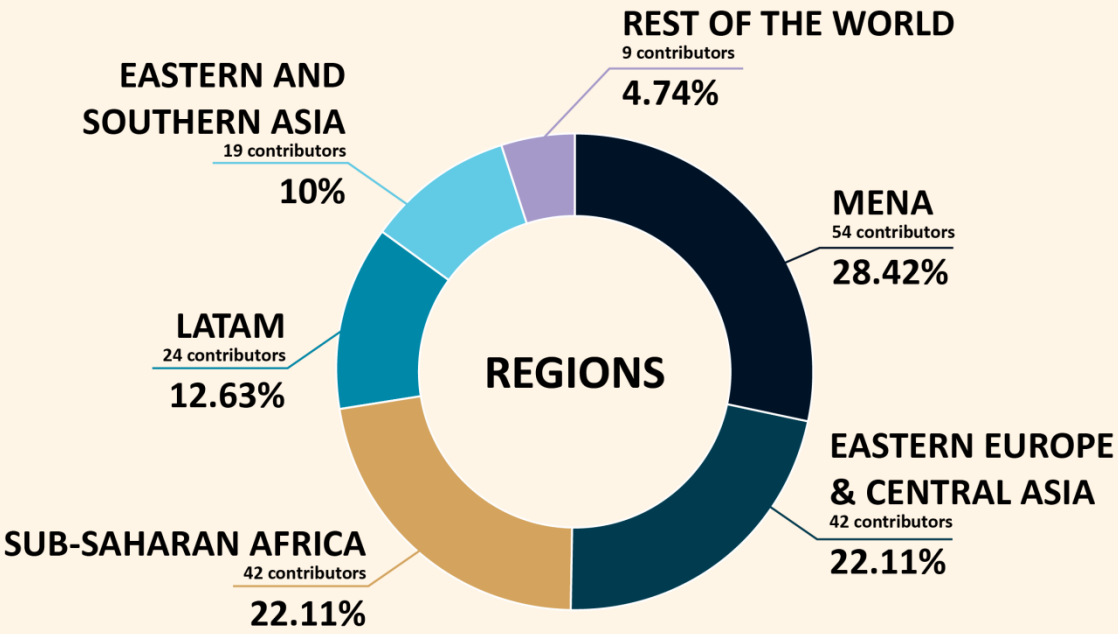
Years in the Faculty of Chemical Engineering and Technology were challenging but beautiful. There were lots of sleepless days and nights trying to combine all the lectures, seminars, laboratory, and computer exercises. I also played for the faculty's handball team, volunteered in the Student Council, and participated in several scientific congresses with my research. I was also a Student Assistant for three years and shared all my passion with others.

All the hard work paid off and I was one of three people (of 55) that got bachelor's degree in Environmental Engineering during the 3 years and without any delays and earned the Cum Laude title. But that wasn't enough for me. I decided to expand my knowledge and took chemical engineering for graduate study. I didn't have a vision of what my ideal job would be, and I was driven by the fact that I will have more options in the future with having two different diplomas. More options were always my thing anyway.

When the future came, and I graduated with the master thesis in the field of pharmaceutical development I somehow accepted the fact that I should have no ambitions about my first job if I wanted to stay in Croatia—and I did. It somehow became normal that young people in Croatia, after they gain a university degree, don't have the safety that they will even have a job. The educational system is not coordinated with the market and lots of young geniuses are stuck in-between.

I knew my worth and started sending my CVs around a couple of months before I even graduated. I applied for dozens of jobs and received many rejections, mostly because I had no work experience, and nobody wanted to pay for someone who needs some time to learn. After I graduated some doors started to open, and I had about five interviews and tests, but I wasn't really sure if I even wanted those jobs. In the end it was a job and I was told how I was lucky to even have any options. In the meanwhile, I started cleaning people's houses to have some money so I could stay in the city.

I always knew that nothing good comes easy and that we must be patient and believe in ourselves, even if no one else does. I really want to believe that in the future both the educational system and job search process will be more settled and organized—starting from compatibility with the market to low salaries. But the most important thing for each one of you is not to underestimate your worth. In the end, we are all islands—inside of us there are many worlds, invisible and not understandable to people from the mainland. Unsinkable in the sea, we turn to the sun and shine.





Malsha Samarasiri, 27, Sri Lanka, Female

Malsha has achieved her dreams through hard work and credits her parents with her desire to become a lecturer: she wants to follow in their exemplary footsteps.

I like to believe in myself and to commit to a better world. Since I was young, with the teachings of my parents, my religion, and my teachers, I have started to think that everyone has a responsibility to serve in this world and a great value within them. Every human being has capabilities that can be explored and utilized during a lifetime. There are three main qualities I often strive to improve in myself: altruistic behavior, generosity, and kindness. I always try to be open about myself and to identify my weaknesses for making myself better.

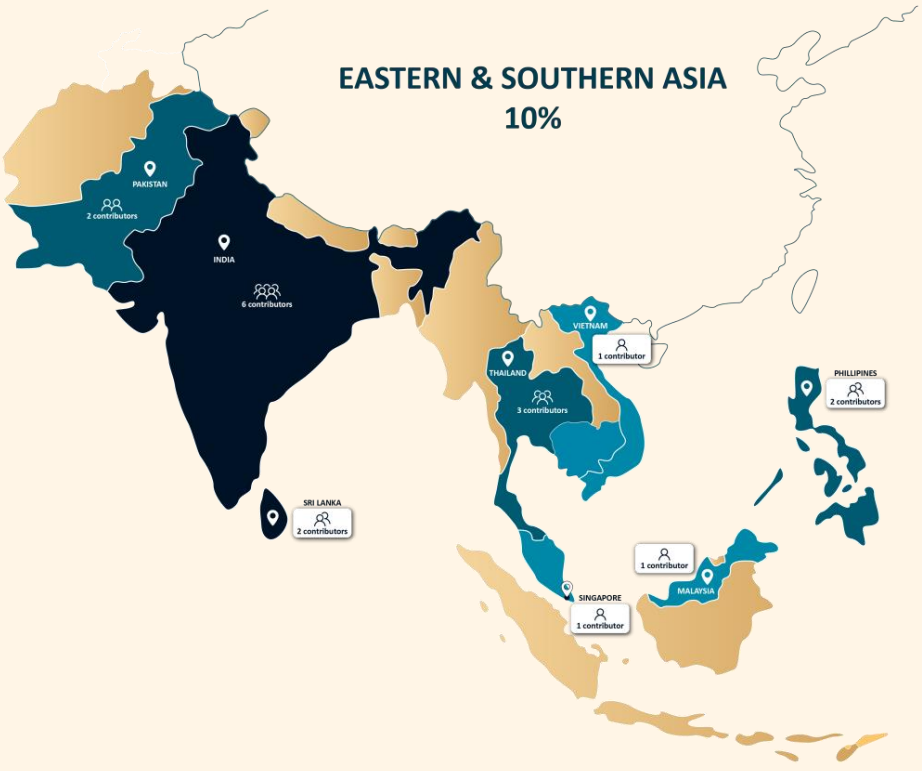
Generally, I am a self-motivated and hardworking person who always desires to improve strengths and reduce weaknesses. My future goal is to become a competent lecturer in Sri Lanka with research expertise in food processing. My current objective is to complete my PhD at my university where I can leverage my analytical skills and laboratory experiences as a contributor to the development in the food processing and biochemical engineering field.

In fact, my passion for the food processing field has started to occur and enlighten me due to a tragic situation in my country. I experienced it a few days before my university entrance, and it has become the turning point of my professional life.

I heard my father talking with a neighbor regarding an unfortunate incident in Sri Lanka. It was about the identification of toxic heavy metals in Sri Lankan rice. In that year, 2014, this exploration of arsenic and cadmium in rice was heavily discussed. In fact, rice is the staple diet of Sri Lankans, and it is obvious that more toxic heavy metals are getting into our bodies. As a result, the number of patients suffering from chronic kidney diseases has started to increase. With that, I felt pathetic and heart-broken toward our people. I started to question myself. I know that we are living in a still developing country, but why could we not meet this basic need for food in a safe manner. In ancient times, Sri Lanka was renowned as the granary of the east. I asked myself why we could not reestablish such a strong agricultural system. Gradually, I started to feel that I could also contribute to the health and wellbeing of our people as a privileged person of free education.

With these thoughts and attitudes, I have been naturally triggered to read more on food products, their nutritional values, food safety, and food processing methods. My ultimate expectation is to become a lecturer with expertise in food processing and to contribute to improving food safety in Sri Lanka. Therefore, in January 2021, I started my PhD in the School of Chemical and Biomedical Engineering at Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore with a focus on food processing research under the NTU Research Scholarship. To achieve my dream, I should improve both my research skills as well as other skills like public speaking, leadership and team working.

My passion for my major area and research area has always driven me towards achieving my future goals and dream job. Dreams and goals will always lead to your destination if you follow the correct steps without hesitating. Sometimes, my life was not going as planned, but I always thought that my hard work would pay off. My dream has always kept me alive when I was passing through some difficult times. When I was younger, my dream was to become a teacher. It was because I used to teach a few friends at my home. I used the backside of the door in my bedroom as the blackboard and got a few complaints from my father. Since those days, I felt so much happiness and satisfaction when I helped my friends with their studies. My mother was a teacher, and my father was a lecturer in my university. Their actions have always been good guidance and an example that leads me to my dream job. When I teach or support the studies of someone, I can feel so much satisfaction and self-confidence. Thus, I strongly believe that my parents are the main pillars for the cause of my enthusiasm for being a lecturer.





Tasneem Fatima Nawab, 29, India, Female

Tasneem rejected a traditional 9-5 desk job to pursue her dreams. Despite challenges and the lack of a support network she has achieved her dreams and more, and her plans show she has no thoughts of stopping.

Growing up, I had love for way too many differing fields. The concept of being an entrepreneur has caught on only recently and so as a child, I always struggled with exactly which box I should place myself into. In trying to do so, I started off with doing my BBA in Dubai to moving on to doing my master's in law in the UK. Once I graduated and got back to Dubai, which I so fondly call home, I developed an interest in nutrition. An unsolicited demand for my fitness advice drove me further into developing my passion for healthy living into a business. I still had love for so much more and realized that I am too fluid to stick with just nutrition. This drove me to pursue more of the things I loved and that is how my fashion brand Zaish came into existence.

A large part of my drive comes from the fear of being enslaved to a desk from 9am to 5pm. After trying my hand at a corporate internship, I realized all I wanted to do was run away from that lifestyle. I craved to go back into the sun glowing outside and not be stuck in traffic every single morning. Freedom has always meant everything to me. Social freedom, financial freedom, freedom of time and freedom to travel. None of these would ever have been fulfilled if I were to stick to the safety of a 9 to 5. Also, every time I traveled back to India, as used to it as I may be, the poverty and misery of people would always, ALWAYS, affect me. I felt liable to their wellness and disbalance of equality, may it be in terms of finances, lifestyle, and again, freedom. Every single morning, I wake up to know the better I do for myself, the better I can help those in need and the quicker I can push the world towards a balance and an eradication of poverty. And my fashion brand, Zaish, aims to do exactly that.

I was constantly told that I would end up not being able to achieve anything at this rate. I must give up on everything and focus on only one thing for the rest of my life to become 'successful'. Every day I feel successful having guided my clients closer to their health and having paid a fair share to those under the poverty line that have worked with Zaish. The meal plans I supplied to clients brought them closer to their goals and fitness. The artists I paid a fair share to for their art and skill brought me satisfaction that I was able to bring about more creative and financial freedom to a group of people. After realizing that these little achievements brought me so much joy, I realized that the definition of 'successful' for the world massively differed from my own definition of it.

The challenge I would say I faced most and that affected me most would be the lack of belief that people around me had. Including my own family. There were multiple hurdles I faced due to the outside world, which I believe everyone does. I, however, faced additional hurdles within my own house: those of doubt and also cultural shackles. I also faced certain commercial hurdles. On the top of my list were the licensing and entrepreneurial opportunities given to expats in the UAE. Having studied in the UK with friends that run businesses, I could see a stark difference in the ease with which they, as small businesses and entrepreneurs, were able to achieve and grow. Platforms and incubators were far more available, and larger businesses willingly invested in these smaller companies until they were self-sufficient and became the very companies that supported them in the first place.

The UAE, specifically Dubai, has never failed to impress anyone, regardless of where they come from. The glamor and sheer wealth in the city has not only motivated me, but also made me used to the luxury's life has to offer. This means, I do not see a Lamborghini driving past me as an unachievable dream, but as something that is so near, so achievable, so possible. It is only a matter of me putting in the hard and smart work.

I cherish all my achievements for one reason or another. Each one, including the 'failures' taught me lessons that have got me closer to my goals. I am currently most excited about Zaish. Our launch pop-up store has received much love and appreciation and the concept is being massively adored. I am looking forward to seeing Zaish placed on multiple platforms in the near future. The eventual goal is to have our own stores globally and we are taking every tiny step today to reach that goal tomorrow. I also see Elixir becoming an international chain of wellness centers that will serve people with that which is most important, health. And these are future sights for only my current ventures. I look forward to stepping into multiple areas in life and business in the coming future. I'm a serial entrepreneur in the making!

I have always had a fascination for the property market thanks to my dad's love, interest, and achievement in it. I look forward to entering it very soon. The world will be a better place if all of us come together and do our bit with each other in mind. Poverty is one of the biggest factors holding humans back from their true potential, individually and as a race. I look forward to doing everything in my power to eradicate poverty.



Angel Therese Esteban, 29, Philippines, Female

Angel has turned her personal struggles into positive action, and there is no doubt that she is going to achieve her dream of becoming a fashion designer.

Growing up, I struggled with low self-esteem and with little to no confidence because of my body type. My vision is to be able to help women and young women all over the world to be more comfortable wearing clothes that make them feel sexy but classy at the same time. What motivated me to achieve my goal was trying to turn my pain into power by creating clothes that I think I would have liked to wear growing up but never had anyone to encourage me to do so. Looking back at my childhood, I wish that there could have been more people around me who could have uplifted me in the way I am trying to do now through my pieces. One of the main reasons I want to focus on promoting self-confidence to women and young women is because I have a 16-year-old sister, Ana. I want my sister to grow up not having to feel like she cannot wear certain clothes because of what society thinks or what others might say.

I am driven not just by financial success, but also by the hopes of becoming an icon one day. An icon that promotes self-confidence through fashion. In college, I did not pursue fashion right away. I graduated with a bachelor's degree in Hotel, Restaurant and Institution Management, majoring in travel and tourism at the De La Salle-College of St. Benilde. I was encouraged by my dad to take up a course that is more practical instead of fashion design because my family did not have connections in the fashion industry in the Philippines. It was quite hard to accept at first, but I followed his advice anyway and I have no regrets in delaying my dreams of taking up fashion.

In 2018, I decided to pursue my lifelong dream of becoming a fashion designer. I took up short courses for fashion at the Fashion Institute of the Philippines in Makati. What pushed me over the edge to pursue this dream was when my Aunt Leni passed away. She was in her final days when she told me that she knew that one day I would become a known fashion designer. After grieving the loss of my aunt, I introduced the idea to my mom and brother, Joker, and they both agreed to support my decision in following my dreams. It was quite a roller coaster ride having to start over on a different path. This did not hold me back though. I knew what I wanted, and I made a decision for myself that this new journey and career path I had embarked upon would have to work.



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Thank you for reading these stories from our contributors. Clicking on their name will bring you to their profile to learn more about them and eventually get in contact with them.

Keep reading for more inspiring stories from more rising talents.

THE JOURNEY

As a senior HR professional with extensive experience in recruitment and talent management, I have had the opportunity to witness the traditional journey to success, which typically includes a supportive family, a safe upbringing, and a third-level education. However, the stories of the 200+ rising talents featured in this book break away from this norm and offer unique perspectives on what it takes to achieve success in today's world.

These individuals come from a variety of backgrounds and have had to work harder to overcome the societal norms imposed upon them. They have had to find ways to finance their education, whether through part-time jobs or by earning top grades to secure scholarships. Through the power of the internet, they have been able to discover a plethora of global opportunities that have helped them succeed in their chosen fields.

What impresses me most about these individuals is their commitment to making a difference in their communities. They don't want future generations to face the same struggles they've endured, and they are determined to make it easier for others to achieve success. Their unique perspectives and experiences make them valuable additions to any company, and I do not doubt that they will excel in any task or project given to them.

In this chapter, you will find stories from rising talents all over the world, each one highlighting the challenges they have faced and the strategies they have employed to overcome them. These stories are not only inspiring but offer invaluable insights into the qualities that make a successful and resilient individual in today's global economy.



Ajla Karajko, 31 from Bosnia and Herzegovina, perfectly sums up the journey in an optimistic tone: ***I am proud of everything I achieved, and maybe even a bit prouder of my failures.***

Here are extracts from our contributor's stories.



Fariah Nazir, 19, UK, Female

Fariah encountered significant obstacles as a minority in her home country while striving to establish herself in an industry that lacked diversity. It's remarkable that even in the UK, which is considered one of the world's leading developed countries, such challenges still exist.

Success for me is being independent, happy with who I am and being able to share my experience with people who are like me and help them in their career progression.

Being from an ethnic minority is something I am extremely proud of, and this has helped me my motivation to succeed. When I decided I wanted to pursue a career in law, I found that there were not many ethnic minority candidates. Whilst this did feel very unwelcoming and daunting, was determined to be different and help break the cycle.

Diversity and inclusion have become such an important matter and I am proud to be part of this. Being in an Asian community can be difficult, especially dealing with stereotypes and double standards and I witnessed a lot of this when I visited Pakistan. This made me extremely grateful for where I am and that I can become who I want to be and have a support network around me. I want to help inspire young girls to become the best version of themselves, constantly pushing them to reach their true potential. Whilst there are many challenges, these are part of the process to help achieve something way bigger.

My journey has not been easy. I've had many challenges which I have had to overcome. However, I look back and I am grateful for this, and it taught me valuable life lessons. Being rejected from my university choice was something which shocked me and took me a while to process. However, after completing a year at the university I am at, I can safely say this was one of the best choices I made. I have been given opportunities which I never thought were possible for me. I decided to make the best of what was given to me, which helped me become who I am today.



Muthanna Nayyef Alfaris, 27, Iraq, Male

Muthanna was fiercely determined to surpass society's expectations of him and refused to let anything or anyone stand in his way. Despite the added challenge of navigating through a war-torn environment, he remained resolute in his goal of completing his studies, no matter the cost. In the end, his determination paid off and he succeeded in achieving his objectives.

After receiving a job offer from Meta, I moved from Iraq to Ireland to start working as a Marketing Specialist in the Iraqi market and the Arab region. But before this there was a lot of effort I put in, and a lot of support from my father and my family in supporting me and equipping me with all the necessary stuff.

I can't pinpoint when my quest to make a remarkable change in this world and the passion to leave the world a better place than I found began, but I can say that these dreams began in childhood from the traditional question of what you want to be when you grow up. It was the hardest question that made me think: Why should I become a doctor, engineer, pilot, or military officer, is there nothing else? I was looking for the answers in people's talks and in stories and cartoons, which in turn developed this sense of becoming the hero, savior, leader, lover, and defender of people.

At a time when employment in the public sector, even at low wages, was the goal, it became as if it was part of customs and traditions and embodied in it as a safe job. My question has evolved into why should I be part of the public sector, is there no other solution? How do the rest of the people live on this planet?

I graduated from high school with a GPA of 93.3%, which was the highest in my district. My final grade qualified me to choose any college, and of course, I was expected to choose one of the medical colleges—because it is the highest socially and financially—but I decided to go a different way. I decided to try out these habits and see what would happen despite the opposition of my family and the people close to me. Nothing happened, and I started my studies in college with a pledge I made to myself not to enter the public sector but to find myself in the private sector, to build my own company and put my fingerprint on a part of this world.

I fled alone from my small city that was occupied at that time at the end of 2014, and I had to complete my university studies and deal with the little money that I had to be able to afford the costs of living and deal with the society's view of me as an internally displaced person, in addition to my constant concern about the situation of my family under the bombing and military operations. Before graduation, the money started running out and I had to get a job that would guarantee me a place to sleep and some money to live.

I started working in a hypermarket for $8 per 12-hour workday—which is much less than the minimum wage. Then I worked in a bakery for $20 starting from 4am to 9pm. I used my break to read news and books related to self-development. That is how I developed my personal and technical skills, and I read a lot on the Internet and books to be able to keep pace with the developments taking place in the world and to make my skills and qualifications valuable in the eyes of recruiters.



Edem Godwin Kumahor, 23, Ghana, Male

Edem comes from a large low-income family who depends on the internet for learning. However, he defines himself as tenacious, patient, empathic and with a love for justice. His ambitions are to do something good and useful with his life to live with the absolute freedom he's always desired. His motivation comes from his innate desire to succeed and lead a path of his own.

Coming from a poor nuclear family, I've always struggled with my finances. Growing up in a family of six with three siblings, the journey was really hard considering the fact that my parents never had a stable job with a stable income enough to support us. Living in Ghana hinders a lot of one's personal growth. It takes a lot of effort to break through. I love technology and I love being online. Learning new things, and meeting people around the world all at the click of a button is something I find fascinating. Internet services that make this possible are very expensive in my country. This hinders my growth and consistency in doing what I love to do.



Jiraput Thamsongkrah, 22, Thailand, Male

Jirput's resourcefulness in finding courses to enhance his skills alongside his formal education has enabled him to overcome the significant hurdle of high education costs. His relentless drive to succeed is a testament to the remarkable qualities often displayed by young people striving to achieve their goals.

The cost of completing my bachelor's degree is around 18,000 USD, which is not cheap if compared with Thailand's minimum wage. This situation would not happen if I were in a developed country where the government focuses on the quality of people's lives. Many talented people in my country lose the opportunity to study at university. Moreover, the perspective of employers here still gives too much value to degrees. For example, even though I have the knowledge to perform a job nicely, a company will not accept me until I get a degree.

Now I have passed some certification exams in cybersecurity. I can say that I am proud of the eLearnSecurity Junior Penetration Tester (eJPT) certification. It is a significant foothold if I want to become a cybersecurity expert. Moreover, my next goal is to obtain the Offensive Security Certified Professional (OSCP) certification. OSCP is the baseline qualification, and most penetration testers must pass this certification exam.



Andrea Marcela Ruano, 21, El Salvador, Female

Andrea is a truly self-made young woman who refused to let her family's financial struggles prevent her from pursuing her education. Her inspiring story is a reminder that we should never leave our fate in the hands of others and must take charge of our own destinies.

My family does not have much money; we have the necessary things to live, but I always had higher expectations for my life. I started working at 17 years old, helping in Laboratorios Suizos in El Salvador. It was very hard work, sorting all the products into boxes all day. Then I graduated from my school, and the University gave me half of a scholarship in Nicaragua. I started working in call centers to pay the other half of my scholarship. Now that I do not have work, it's a problematic situation, but I'm learning about it. I'm proud of myself because everything I have, I worked for. I consider myself a hardworking person able to achieve what I propose.



Civan Tas, 30, Turkey, Female

Civan struggled with identity—being a woman in a patriarchal society. She overcame it by understanding she needed to first and foremost love herself. We are our own worst critics.

My family was always trying to distance me from being me, and the devil, which is called the social norm, always had judgments and concrete expectations. For this reason, I moved away from myself and this. I could not respond to their expectations. I was a rebellious, unruly, and dreamy person according to them. I had to do more, whatever I was doing. From time to time, I walked away from myself, from my goal, from my path, but when I took refuge in my heart again, I was still being guided. My success story started with loving myself, accepting myself as I am and starting to understand myself, taking responsibility for my life and deciding that I should live like my heart. Turkey is experiencing east-west confusion globally and socially, and we are always so pricked that we cannot be ourselves and many of us have lost character because of not being ourselves.

Civan is currently working as a Human Resource Manager.

Abdurahman Mohammed, 24, Ethiopia, Male

Abdurahman is a young man wide awake. He looks around him, observes, and takes everything in. He is durable and determined and doesn't let anything get in the way between him and his future.

During my time at university, I got to know a lot of people, ranging from drug addicts to people who live for a goal they put in life. I believe that if you're not lost in other people's lives, it is good to get closer and see the world from their perspectives. That way I met life-long friends who have priceless places in my heart. One might ask "How is it to study for a bachelor's degree in a sub-Saharan country?" and I would certainly respond "Difficult!". I had to go through each problem one can think of during my time on campus. Problems start from the shortage of water and lack of internet access to security issues that were caused by political demonstrations. However, the problems that we face are what make us stronger in our lives. For someone like me who saw the extreme, nothing would ever be a hurdle between him and success.

Gabrielle Ayoub, 24, Lebanon, Female

Gabrielle wanted to study criminal psychology but events in her home city had her quickly pursuing another area of psychology, and the gumption with which she rolled up her sleeves and volunteered for her country people is quite admirable.

My goal of becoming a criminal psychologist shifted after a tragic event that had occurred on August 4th, 2020, in my hometown Beirut: a chemical explosion resulting in hundreds of deaths, thousands of injured, and some people missing till this day. My country needed immediate psychological interventions, so I decided to train in Psychological First Aid to be as efficient as possible during this time of crisis. I've also completed training in Narrative Exposure Therapy to treat complex trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder, which I am now practicing as a volunteer. This is when I decided to become a trauma-focused therapist for the long haul.



Joewey Ann Semaan, 26, Lebanon, Female

Another inspiring Lebanese woman who jumped in to help psychologically in response to the Beirut explosion.

I stumbled into NGOs during my BA years, where I moved from being a volunteer to becoming the head psychologist and national coordinator at Nusroto, Prison Fellowship Lebanon, where we coordinate programs and interventions for Prison Fellowship International in all prisons all over Lebanon. Eventually I was designing and implementing programs for prisoners, drug rehabilitation centers, mental health groups, and many more.

A couple of years back, I co-founded Walk to Success which is a mental-health based platform designed for specialized therapy interventions, and a consultancy firm aimed at all types of businesses where we advise and support all types of businesses on all levels, including design, staff training, marketing strategies, business strategies…etc. Both co-founders are body language experts, solution-focused therapists, and have an emphasis on evidence-based interventions, especially neuroscience.

Currently, I am also the project manager at an INGO, managing an Emergency Response Project to the Beirut Blast, and a clinical psychologist focusing on Trauma resolution using a variety of neuroscientific techniques.

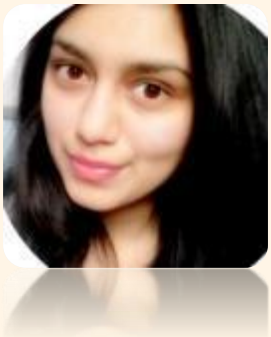


Ahmed Mohamed Mohamed Ismail, 26, Egypt, Male

Ahmed is a young man with a strong determination and belief for perfection. However, this worked against him, bringing him bouts of depression and feelings of failure. On top of that, people around him tried to discourage him. He went to one of the best schools in Alexandria, but it was his own pressure that challenged him. Overcoming his mental blocks and ignoring the begrudgers, he achieved his goals. Very admirable. We are all presented with self-doubt and lack of courage, however, it's what we do after that counts. Ahmed has proved to us that if you do rise above your self-inflicted barriers and discouraging whispers in your ears, you can achieve your dreams. He earned his MBA in Finance with a distinctive grade being the highest grade in UK (GPA 3.88) and is on his way to becoming a leading player in global finance.

I hope I can join and work in the highest financial institutions in the world and succeed in my doctoral degree. Until now there are many people that try to stop me moving forward to my dream, but my response is the negligence of them. When I believe myself, no one can change this. My journey till now is not easy, I sacrifice a lot and ignore plenty of badly depressed words directed to me. As, I pursue to get a step forward to my dream, there are many obstacles I face and many people trying to depress me and put obstacles in my route to make me stop but I will overcome and succeed as usual. I will continue my 5-year plan with self-confident that I can finish it and I will make another plan with other goals. After each achievement, I imagine myself as I want and imagine my desired future and I hope to reach it. I will not stop until I reach my ultimate goals and be able to add value in my country, Egypt and the Arab world and I believe that I will do that one a day.

For You, I will give you an advice: "Believe in yourself and don't listen to the people that wants you to stop achieving your dream. Be the hero of your story."



Anastasia Kisten, 26, South Africa, Female

Anastasia is a forgotten minority in the very complex system that post-apartheid South Africa is today. She still fought the battles and won to ensure she got her fair share of educational opportunities.

There exists a quota system that limits the number of students admitted to university programs based on race. Being South African of Indian descent, I have been heavily setback by this restriction of access. The purpose of the quota system had been to rectify the injustices of the past, namely the consequences of Apartheid South Africa. However, the quota does not consider South Africans of Indian descent as previously disadvantaged even though the law was not in our favor during the era of Apartheid. Bearing this in mind, I have had to make certain that I met the quota, and this has contributed to my determination to succeed.



Angela Omaro Ochieng, 31, Kenya, Female

Angela is a true self-made go-getter who rose from abandoned villages to the big city, determined to make a better life for herself and her family. Despite the added responsibility of raising a baby, she never lost sight of her goals and achieved success through sheer hard work and determination. Her inspiring story is a testament to the human spirit and the power of perseverance.

Getting a job, especially in my country, is truly tough and I remained jobless for four years. I had to drop my passion and love for broadcast media and look for any job that I qualified for, for my own sanity and happiness. Being unemployed is among the leading causes of depression and I can attest to this study as I was headed in that direction. I will, without fear, say that by the time I was getting into my current job, I was the most displaced person living.

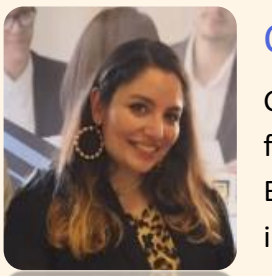
I had lost my self-confidence and esteem long ago, lost friends and disconnected completely from social life as I felt like I never fit in anywhere. Getting into a classy, fast-paced, and modern organization in the capital city took a toll on me, (I had to move to the city with my baby). Adjusting to the busy crowded streets and heavy traffic in the morning and evening drained me mentally. I lost so much weight at some point I doubted my decision of getting a job in the city. Three years down the line and I have adjusted well and, ironically, I can't imagine myself not living in the city.



Beka Barsonidze, Georgia, Male

Beka has known since a young age that his country was disadvantaged. But this constant observation planted seeds of determination to succeed in him. He certainly made use of the fruit borne.

I am from Georgia, a small post-soviet country located in the Caucasus. The GDP per capita (nominal) is $4289. It may seem to you that Georgia is an underdeveloped poor country, but your point of view will change when I tell you that 20 years ago GDP was $802. These 20 years were the time when my consciousness was being formed and I was seeing progress with my own eyes. It was this tendency that was the source of my motivation to stay in this country and contribute to its development through my work. I graduated from public school and was an average Georgian teenager with above-average ambitions. The price of the best university in my country (the free university of Georgia) when I had to pass was higher than GDP per capita. So, the only way I could get there was through various grants. I received a 100% state grant as well as an in-house university grant. This little success doubled my motivation and gave me more self-confidence.



Carine Jamous, 23, Lebanon, Female

Grief knocked at Carine's door as a young girl with the death of her father—but she turned her grief into determination. Even though her city Beirut is rife with war and corruption, she remains the positive, highly intelligent young woman she is today.

I am Lebanese, from Beirut, the city where the 3rd most powerful explosion in the history of explosions happened, where corruption reached its peak in a matter of a few years, and where the government's mismanagement ruined the lives of so many families by lowering their purchasing power and their ability to leave the country. All of this hindered me and affected my progress in life in general but gave me so much energy and capacity to be able to continue further, even with difficult situations. I am proud of receiving a scholarship because of my outstanding academic performance. I want to work as an HR professional in a company whose values align with mine in a culture that promotes inclusion and diversity as well as gender equality.



Jelena Arsic, Serbia, Female

Jelena's story illustrates that it is possible to become cosmopolitan, even if you hail from a developing country. Her success is a testament to the fact that a true calling, combined with the right education, can be the highly sought ingredient for achieving one's goals.

During my primary education, I discovered a keen wish, deep in myself, to become cosmopolitan and travel the world. I wanted to commit to work that feels like a calling—something that is sacred to me and something I was born to do. While on one hand, it was a bit challenging to find a meaningful career that's also financially rewarding, on the other hand I knew that something would seem amiss if my work didn't align with my values. After graduating from secondary school, as expected, I decided to study tourism and hospitality. I found hospitality a perfect career choice because for me my motivation means being of service to others and making a genuine difference. Hospitality allows me to tap into my sense of empathy and kindness and lets me open the hearts of others.

I was born in Belgrade, Serbia—a Balkan country in Eastern Europe and studying abroad was a dream for most of my fellow students. I knew that studying abroad would be much more beneficial than staying in a country with an unstable economic and political situation. At that time, joining European universities for non-EU citizens was hardly accessible as the application process could be long and involved getting a studying visa and resident permit. I was sort of lucky as I managed to get a scholarship to continue my studies in Austria and this meant a new challenge in my educational and personal improvement. The completely new environment at the internationally renowned Austrian Tourism College helped me a lot to mature as a person and to improve my personality. Apart from making wonderful friendships, international education helped me to upgrade my German, English and Spanish language skills, as well as technical knowledge about the tourism and hospitality branch, and most importantly gave me the knowledge to put it into practice.



Kush Bhardwaj, 22, India, Male

Kush is a highly intelligent young man. With many paths opened to him through education, he decided on business as it excites him the most. I'm keen to see where this brings him.

To briefly describe, my formula is to always put in more work than required. This has placed me well in terms of delivering on my goals and expectations. I find the game of chess to have many similarities to real life as it gives me a different perspective on patience and planning. Learning as a passion has always opened a lot of new avenues for me. I have always aspired to choose a career in a field that motivates me and holds a natural appeal to me. I feel the need to constantly streamline and upgrade the tools and resources to make our life worth living. Today, I stand on the pathway of learning and have, without hesitation, opted to further study the field of business as it excites me the most. Under the guidance of my professors, I was able to perform well and was awarded the Rector's Scholarship for the Best Student, 2019-20, 2020-21, for securing the first position in academic performance in the BBA study program.



Erva Yaman, 24, Turkey, Female

Erva learned early that the first obstacle one must overcome is oneself. She has turned it from a handicap into a solid steppingstone to achieving her goals and dreams.

Since my childhood, I have encountered many challenges. Sometimes it was about private life, family, economic issues etc. However, mostly it was just me. If I have learnt one thing from my life till this time, the biggest challenge of our lives is us. Also, I am grateful that I could realize this at a young age. People can easily sabotage themselves, and it turns out we see the most dangerous challenge but do not notice that it is our behavior. When I realized this, I learnt that I should be aware of myself, and the boundaries that I built for no reason. I need to see my own potential and spread my positivity and energy to my zone so that we can all grow and be better together.



Sheu Ng, 20, New Zealand, Female

Sheu has also struggled with her identity. After what seems like a lifetime of feeling lost and alone, she's determined to find herself among like-minded people through education and a big move to New Zealand.

My father is Malaysian, and my mother is Cambodian. Legally, I should identify as Malaysian, but I was born and raised in Cambodia for around 20 years, so I personally feel that I connect more with Cambodian culture. My maternal family also has Chinese origins, which is still deeply integrated into my family, so I could also consider it a big part of who I am as a person. In addition to that, I grew up studying in an international school, so I'm admittedly a little bit "white-washed". All these factors would probably play a big part in shaping who I am today. But having recently moved to New Zealand and stepping out of my previously sheltered life, I think I am again at the cusp of changing who I am as a person. I admit that change is scary, especially if you're moving to a completely different country all by yourself. This was a huge step outside my comfort zone, but I believe this will be a necessary change for me to grow as a person.



Bonolo Molato, 24, South Africa, Female

Bonolo faced significant challenges with both her education and society. Given the circumstances, it was easy to lose hope for her future and that of her peers. Despite frequent disruptions to her daily schooling due to load-shedding, she refused to let these obstacles hold her back from achieving her goals. Her unwavering determination is a testament to the power of perseverance and resilience.

My journey has been interesting. I remember where I come from and look forward to where I want to head to. The South African education system ranked 84th in 2020, and the youth unemployment rate for young people between the ages of 15-24 is the most vulnerable within the South African labor market, with the unemployment rate climbing to 59%. With inequality being at an all-time high, achieving your dreams for many South Africans is a far-fetched reality. Life did not always present favorable outcomes but many hustled, trying to make their daily bread despite the situation. Education was the only possibility of having limitless dreams and I was not willing to compromise on that.

Having been in a previously disadvantaged school, I skipped school due to load-shedding and having classes as big as 40 students per class was a reality. Although we know this fact, it never robbed us of fostering good relationships and most importantly it definitely did not stop me from dreaming. My circumstances inspire and motivate me to be more than what my present seems to be. If anything, I am truly grateful for those experiences.

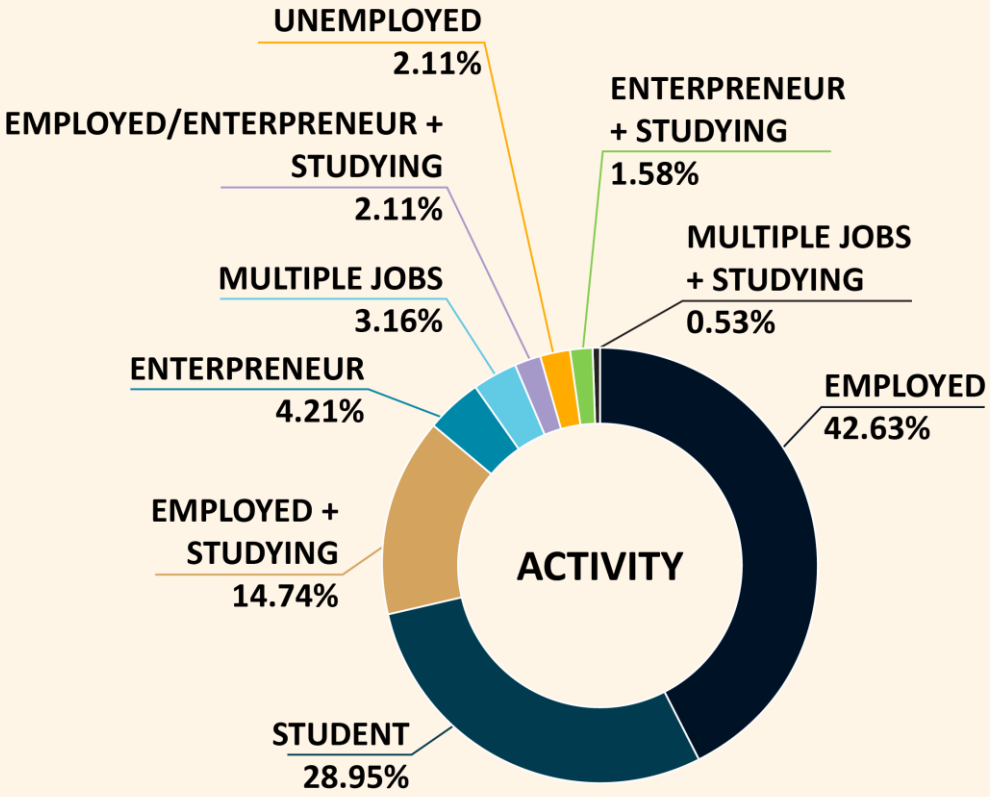


Haya Shmaitilly, 22, Lebanon, Female

Haya is driven by hope. She's extremely attached to the medical field and the secrets it harbors, along with the relationships developed daily. She recognizes how technology is everywhere and should be employed to work alongside modern processes—out with the old, in with the shining new technology. She strives for a decentralized healthcare system that's free and accessible to everyone.

You're probably questioning yourself on why I chose to hold hope and not a Nutella jar, and that's because I believe that hope is what makes us survive the adventures and challenge ourselves. I live in a country that is growing upside down, moving back in time instead of moving forward. This is not only my situation, but the situation of almost all the youth of Lebanon who are dreamers and have brains. I'm staying in Lebanon because it's bleeding. It needs to be saved first, and I think that us, the youth, with the knowledge and skills we're backed up with, are the ones who can get the country out of this mess.

I'm still in the beginning of my journey, and I'm proud of the baby steps I took to this day. I'm grateful for the support I get from my family, the nice people surrounding me, and the respect they have for me. I'm also thankful for my bigger family at the school of pharmacy, led by Dean Prof. Lakany who believes in my potential and never deprives me of his advice and wisdom.





Maya Sabbah, 26, Lebanon, Female

Maya is a Media Planner at one of the biggest advertising companies in the world, but she didn't find this position fresh out of college. After achieving her degree in mass communication, she went from job to job, and even found herself unemployed for a year. She's proof of determination—a spirit that won't give up and sees opportunity in every opportunity. Evidently, the choices she made were the perfect components to build a strong young professional woman.

Although very far from marketing, it was a life-changing decision. By waking up early every day, exercising, and showing discipline to a job that pays my bills, I broke my ego and became more determined than ever to work on myself and learn as much as I can to land my dream job.

Today, my country Lebanon is facing many challenges, but with every challenging situation is an opportunity for growth. Some multinational companies still invest in offices in Beirut and if you ask me why they want to operate in an uncertain area, I will say that it's not the area that they are investing in, but it's people.

I am proud to be part of the Lebanese community that is determined to rise despite all the struggles and difficulties. I met a lot of people that are always eager to help and show great passion in what they do; these are the people that inspire me to do the same.



Denis Duilio Trevisan, 23, Italy, Male

Denis made a huge life choice at a young age, and it paid off. Not every 16-year-old would be brave enough to move to another continent with a completely different culture to go to school. It is no wonder that he's pursuing a career in travel and hospitality. Sometimes we don't choose what we wish to become in life—life chooses for us. He has already lived in Bangkok, London, and Madrid, currently lives in Dubai, and is still eager to discover more.

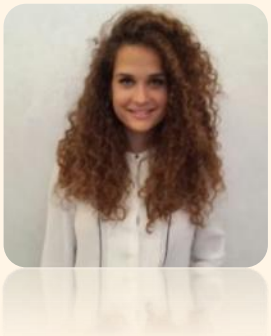
In my 11th grade of high school, I won an AFS scholarship to go to study one year in high school in Thailand. This changed my life completely. My hometown in Italy is kinda small and there are not many activities to do as a teenager so my year abroad in one of the biggest cities in Thailand gave me so many new inputs and ideas. I really enjoyed that year abroad and it changed my future to an extent that I decided to move to Thailand and start my undergraduate university journey in a business school in Bangkok.

My future goal is either to become a General Manager of an ultra-luxury hotel in one of the big cities in Asia, or to undertake a career in Thai TV as a comedy actor. I believe I could be a good leader in a few years. I am learning and practicing the right skills to lead teams effectively. My first choice of career is more stable and solid. The second is more creative and riskier but I think it could give me back more happiness than the first. I might find something in between the two.

Mehr Un Nisa MirzaMehr Un Nisa Mirza, Pakistan, Female

Mehr is a strong independent woman who was encouraged and supported by her mother, another strong independent woman. She is a creative strategist and wishes to travel and live in other countries—not because hers isn't good enough, but because she wants to continue learning and growing.

I learned how to step up for myself, how to be seen, how to stand out, and how to find success and happiness in little things. I was 22 when people started asking why I wasn't getting married—I wanted to grow to become someone, achieve my goals, and then marry my companion.



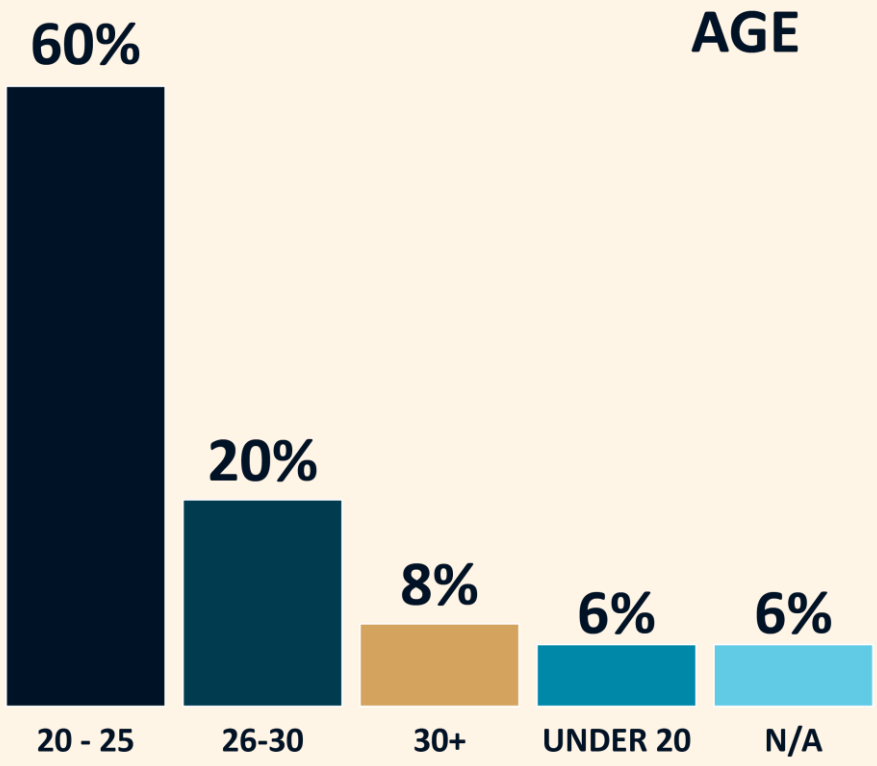
Jovana Jakovljević, 30, Serbia, Female

Jovana decided to take an educational path less frequented and study mathematics, rather than economics or law (the two go-to studies). Her stubbornness assured that she succeeded in math, taking many hours of practicing in order to learn something. She dreamed big to be a specialist in a bank—and that's just what happened.

I was giving private classes in math. It was very hard to handle two jobs, but I knew I must do that. It's about being a good psychologist for that child and making a good influence on the child, not just teaching them how to solve problems. In Serbia, almost every job is designed so that one person does a lot of things while in the West the same job is done by several people.

Sometimes it seems to me that I have gone down the hard path in life while a lot of my friends took the easier one. My subject was very difficult to study. Also, my first job was very difficult for me. While working as an intern in audit, I worked long, long hours for very little wages, in a job suitable for an economist, not a mathematician.

But I found every step was worth that chosen difficult path in life. I knew I must do that in order to become successful, accomplish my dreams, and help my parents. It was very difficult for them to provide for me and my brother. Everything that one child had at that time (to go on every excursion in high school, to go to the seaside every year, and to study and eat every day), we had to share.





Joel Naluwairo, 24, Uganda, Male

Joel Naluwairo is a self-driven individual who has had a remarkable journey. Born and raised in Uganda by two peasant parents, he had to work hard to achieve his goals. Joel's journey has taught him the value of hard work and thrift, and he has become a self-starter, team builder, and motivator with advanced legal research skills. He holds a Bachelor of Law Degree from Uganda Christian University. Joel is optimistic about the future, and his journey serves as an inspiration to others to believe in themselves, to do everything they set their mind to.

Growing up in a very poor family taught me that hard work and thrift are sometimes the only things a person can afford. I was sent to my grandmothers who fed, dressed, and saw me off to school each morning. I asked myself why other children were more privileged to have very rich parents unlike me. My grandmother's death was the most painful moment in my life, but as a man, I had to pick myself up because no amount of tears could bring her back to life. I went through some of the best schools in my country and all the credit goes to my dear beloved auntie, Proscovia Emily Kwagala Naluwairo.

Some of Joel's areas of expertise:

- Asylum and refugee law, forced migration, immigration law, constitutional law, diplomacy and international relations, human rights law, international humanitarian law, and employment law.
- And he has taken training in the following:
  Professionalism and ethics, communication and interpersonal skills, security, terrorism and counterterrorism, entrepreneurship, business processes, forensics, and psychological first aid, among others.
- He tells me he's a meticulous, compassionate, ambitious, and self-driven individual and this is what drives him every single day of his life. He's also a self-starter, team builder, and motivator with advanced and superb legal research skills.



Marina Pavlović, 33, Serbia, Female

Marina Pavlović is a senior UI/UX designer from Belgrade, Serbia, with over 10 years of experience in the field. Her passion for art and drawing at a young age has driven her to where she is today. From dabbling in CorelDraw when in high school, she pursued a career in design, obtaining a bachelor's degree in graphic design at the College of Fine and Applied Arts. She has worked on a wide range of projects with different types of clients. Marina considers herself lucky to be doing what she loves and making a living from it. She is proud of her hard work paying off and hopes to continue making good-looking and usable websites for everyone.

My journey as a designer started when I was very young and was drawn to art and sketching. At the time I could never have imagined where that passion would take me. After all, the role of UI/UX designer barely existed back then. I think the most challenging part was learning to listen. Learning from feedback is a big part of being a good UI/UX designer. Putting the user's needs before personal preferences and finding the right balance between usability and good design. The downside is that most foreign companies look at Serbia as a third-world country, which often results in low payment.

Her journey is an inspiration to anyone pursuing their passion, reminding them that dedication, hard work, and perseverance will lead to success.



Victoria Nikolaeva, 27, Russia, Female

Victoria prides herself on her ability to balance creativity with realistic strategic goals. She is into both gaming and marketing, and strived to find a job that married the two. To succeed in a male-dominated industry she acquired multiple certifications.

In my pursuit of expanding my marketing horizons, I acquired multiple certifications. Some certifications were earned out of my curiosity, while others were due to evolving company needs. Finding work as an immigrant was difficult, but finding work as an immigrant female looking to get into an intensely competitive male-dominated industry was even more difficult.

She has very practical advice for anyone looking to break into a particularly competitive field:

- Create an online portfolio.
- Do not make your portfolio a glorified resume. This is your space to show off your skills with samples of graphic design, writing, past projects, previous work, collateral materials…etc.
- Jazz up your LinkedIn profile. Your online presence matters.
- If you REALLY want to stand out, don't be afraid to create personalized sample booklets of your work and/or video applications.
- And the final piece of advice: Never Stop Trying.

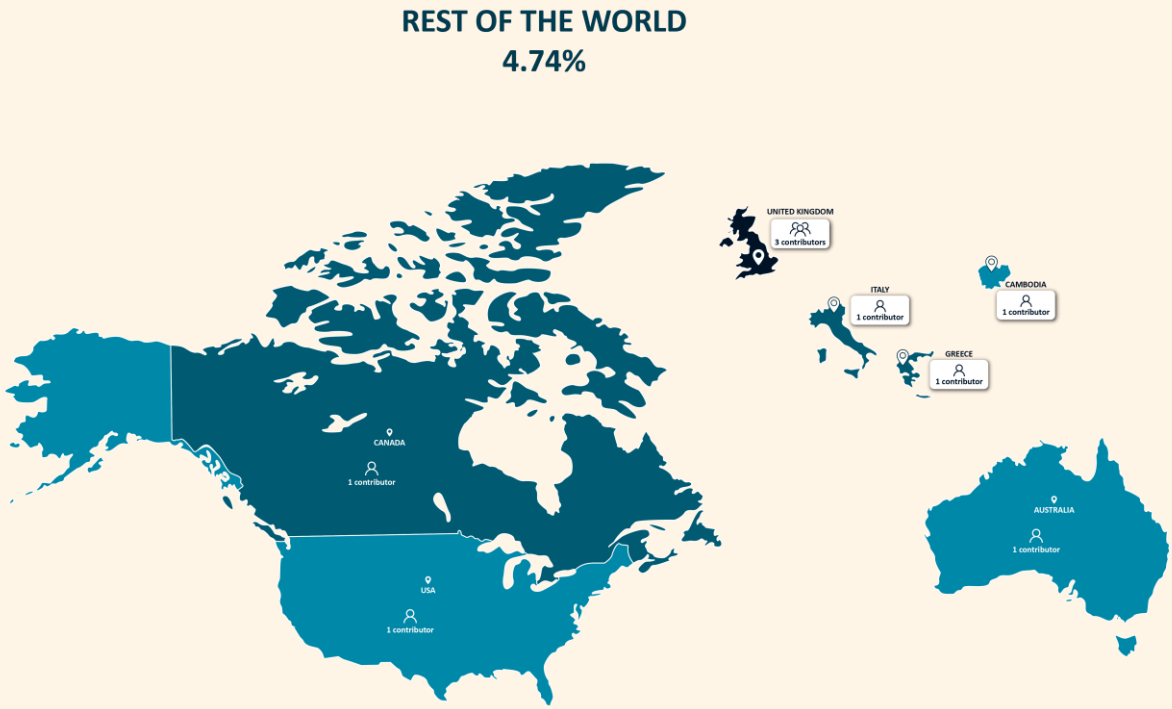
Worst case scenario you will have to keep trying–best? You get your dream job. Good luck!



Eleni Avgenaki, 20, Greece, Female

Eleni describes herself as optimistic and determined while being disciplined and organized. She loves helping others and finding solutions to their problems. Her passion for human biology and fascination with the human body's capabilities led her to pursue a career in the field. Although she faced disappointment when she didn't get into her university of choice, Eleni persevered and found an alternative pathway to achieve her dreams. Her positive attitude and unwavering determination are sure to take her far in life.

In high school, I was even one of the three students who got shortlisted to display a presentation with the title "Gene mutations & Evolution" at the 2nd Student Conference for Research and Science at the Institute of Nuclear and Particle Physics "Democritus", in Athens. Having failed to get into the university of my choice in Greece, I got an offer letter from the University of Sunderland for the Biomedical Sciences course and, as it included exactly what I was interested in, I went for it. I was in a completely different country, with a different culture, speaking a non-mother language, but somehow, it felt like home.





Emma Colosia, 27, Mexico, Female

Emma is a talented writer and passionate about literature. Growing up in an international environment, she learned how to read at the age of three and wrote her first story at four. After struggling to find a job that would let her write, Emma worked for free for some publications in Mexico and worked as an English-Spanish interpreter. Finally, almost a year after graduating, she landed a job as a Community Manager and Content Writer at Cosmopolitan magazine, where she worked long hours and wrote for other magazines under the same company.

I've met fantastic people along the way, working women who have trusted me and men that have empowered me. Work colleagues that would make me learn every day and that would make me want to grow as a professional. I'm proud to have so much professional experience, all based on my talent, considering that the editorial industry is full of influence peddling. I'm also proud to have made Cosmopolitan Mexico one of the most inclusive publications in the country, with women of all shapes and sizes, LGBT+ friendly, creative, and fun to read. Finally, I am most proud of being 100% independent by doing what I love the most: writing and telling stories.

I plan to grow my own website in the future. A website directed specifically at young, modern women that also believe they can change the world. However, I want my articles to be friendly and interesting for everyone: LGBTQ-friendly and a platform for talented writers, artists, etc. My dream is to create jobs in my country that will be valued with sexism left behind.



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And a few more worthy of mention…



Nikola Vukojicic, 22, Serbia, Male

Nikola is making it big through his work supporting small start-ups. He is using his skills to lead and develop a North American member-only community.

I instantly realized that I was more interested in U/UX (User Interface / User Experience) design and how with it I'm able to control how people interact with their everyday technology. I was contacted by a small startup to join their team! Vlogr was a startup that helped small businesses grow through a platform where they could easily make Android and iOS apps according to their needs.

I got an Associate Degree in Computer Multimedia. After I finished my first semester with perfect grades, I received an email that came out of nowhere. I was invited to come in for an interview as a U/UX Designer at Realday and help them build a new top-selling workforce system. We were at Zepter for one year building a product that would educate their salesmen about Zepter products, and that streams webinars for the entire firm. I moved on to a new opportunity at Kroon Studio where I'm currently leading and designing SoleSavy, a member-only community with more than 1,500 people across North America.



Mitchel Jemima, Kenya, Female

Mitchel has faced challenges with courage and believes that Luck has supported her journey due to this attribute. Her aim is to work in the humanitarian sector, helping vulnerable communities.

I am the first born in a family of six. Being an assistant to my mother in raising my siblings has brought out the best in me to be prayerful, hardworking, humble, obedient, and a self-disciplined young star.

Looking back at my journey in life, it has been difficult, especially being in a developing country, but everything has always worked out in my favor despite the challenges. At my lower-class education everything worked quite well till the reality of life hit me hard when I was a candidate with lack of fees and I had to be sent home once to clear the arrears, and that's the point on from which I started counting my luck. When I got home, I couldn't get my mum and that's when I met my Guardian Angel, who has been a blessing to me throughout my education until I did my Undergraduate Degree in Disaster Risk Management and Sustainable Development. I managed to graduate in December 2020 with second class honors upper division. Call it luck? I believe in the saying that luck finds the courageous. Back in college, during the long holidays I got a chance to work in a business shop in KCB Bank and at a district hospital to get some upkeep money to use after schools could open. It's an exposure that built me up and has given me the courage to walk into the unknown. It has built my communication, interpersonal and time management skills. Back in 2019, I got a wonderful exposure to be a World Vision Kenya attaché. It was a prestigious opportunity that I am so grateful to the World Vision community for, especially how they trained me up to cope in the humanitarian sector, and it has always made me have a desire to work with vulnerable communities to help them in crisis of hunger, drought, gender-based violence and refugees too. After graduation I am still looking for a job in this jobless country. I believe Luck will have its way as it always has.



Nagham Bou Daher, 21, Lebanon, Female

Nagham has overcome the COVID pandemic and the disaster at Beirut port to gain employment with a leading global consulting company, giving her a sense of stability in her life which and the emotional resources to develop further her contribution volunteering with a non-profit initiative encouraging women to pursue careers in STEM fields.

I was born and raised in Lebanon, with a sense of resilience and strength only the Lebanese inherit. In school, I was actively participating in a diverse portfolio of activities, such as the Model United Nations workshops, communication and leadership training, Fabriano art competitions, national piano competitions, and math and science fairs. I loved almost every school subject and was interested in any topic I learned about. That's when I realized what I loved to do: I loved to learn. Aside from the arts and sciences, I found within me the love of volunteering and social impact. In my senior high school year, at only 17 years old, I started volunteering with All Girls Code, an award-winning non-profit initiative that aims to encourage women to pursue careers and studies in STEM fields.

In 2017, I joined the American University of Beirut as an industrial engineering student, where this major choice perfectly fit my love to study diverse topics under the umbrella of optimization and efficiency. In parallel, I was promoted to a full-time team member at All Girls Code, later to become the Executive Team Leader and the Development Advisor at the organization. I did not limit myself to my position's title; if any help was needed, I was always eager to provide it. Majoring in STEM as a woman in the Middle East required more than just the merit, as I was faced by societal dissent whenever the topic was brought up. For that very reason, I strongly supported All Girls Code and whole-heartedly worked for the de-stigmatization of women in STEM. Thanks to the support of this network, I was able to expand their existing community of members by over 200%.

When the global pandemic hit in 2020, Lebanon had already been suffering a myriad of disasters, such as the wildfires that have erupted over Mount Lebanon, increased taxes, inflation, and the local currency devaluation. The country was hit by an economic and health crisis like no other. The national protests had already disrupted our normal everyday lives. My daily life was far from that of the average college student. Almost every morning, at 7 AM, I was volunteering at the protest site in Downtown, where I helped clean the site and organize the garbage into recyclable categories with Live Love Recycle. I then went back home, attended classes, studied, and did everything that had to be done. In the afternoons, I protested on the streets with the people demanding a fair and just life in Lebanon.

During that summer, I was set to complete an internship at Kearney, a leading global consulting company with its Middle East headquarters in Dubai. Due to travel restrictions, I had to complete this internship virtually from home. The unstable internet connection was not the only unstable matter in Lebanon. I was staffed on a project with the majority of the team being located in Dubai and had to work from home. I worked hard to do exactly what I love: to learn. I proved to be a valuable asset to the team and learned and learned and learned. During the final week, I was set to prepare and present about the experience I've gained there twice, once as a requirement for my undergraduate degree, and once to a panel of the company's partners, where I would be told if I were to receive a full-time return offer.

It was during this week of August when the dreadful Beirut blast occurred, claiming the lives of over 200 victims, and leaving thousands homeless. My family packed our bags within minutes and left Beirut in a hurry, to temporarily move into our village home until further notice. At the time, I was home, in Beirut, only a few kilometers away from the blast site. Had it not been a holiday, I would have been in the office, which is only a few meters away from Beirut port. For days after the blast, I was in shock, repeatedly suffering from asthma attacks from whatever it is that I inhaled. The company extended tremendous support during this time, and I spent the next few days processing the disaster that I witnessed. Those few days, while I was trying to fathom what had happened, were clouded by rumors of a war approaching, nightmares, the sound of local news stations blasting, and a dreadful feeling of survivor's guilt. While the pandemic did hit the entire world harshly, 2020 had other plans for Lebanon. Thankfully, my family survived the blast, with only psychological scars to show. In that moment, survivor's guilt has amplified my love for volunteering.

I successfully concluded the internship with a full time offer in my hands, which represented more than just a job offer. To me, this provided me with a sense of stability amidst the chaos. I amplified my efforts when volunteering at All Girls Code, where I organized online workshops to benefit the community about various topics, such as scholarships, financial aid, job hunting, internships, college majors, and more. We aimed to teach women in our broken community that the possibilities were endless, as they always were, and as they always will be.



Léa Haddad, 20, Lebanon, Female

Living in Lebanon has been a challenge for Lea, but she wishes to remain in her home country and plans to earn her bachelor's degree followed by a Master's Degree in Digital Marketing and Communication, with an ambition to enter the world of marketing and advertising.

To start, I am a person who loves life and enjoys the little things. I am friendly and optimistic, and I always see life from a positive angle. I graduated from school with a French Baccalaureate in Economics and Social Science, and I decided right after to discover the field of marketing and advertising which is something I am passionate about. I am looking forward to deepening my knowledge in this field and especially on the digital side.

I'm still in the beginning of my journey; I did two internships in my life where I was able to familiarize myself with the professional work environment. I experienced good but challenging times where I learned to be independent and get out of my comfort zone. I projected myself into things I didn't know how to manage or even apply in real time, and I was given responsibilities that pushed me to take risks. Staying in our comfort zone means not evolving and never experiencing new things. I also faced some situations I couldn't control. For instance, controlling and trying to calm angry customers, which is not easy. Therefore, I decided to learn about emotional intelligence which is something important to understand customer's behavior and that is helpful in our everyday life too. Today when I project myself back to these times, I realize that I could have behaved differently with the clients, with more confidence.

Knowing that I am living in Lebanon, every day is a challenge. The country is witnessing one of its worst times in history. We are in the middle of an economic crisis with more than 50% of the population below the poverty line, unemployment is increasing every day and we have the third biggest inflation rate in the world. Adding to that, the Beirut port explosion that happened on the 4th of August 2020 made everything worse. Today, finding an internship or a job position is really hard because a lot of businesses are closing. So basically, staying in my country, gaining experience, and working here during the next few years will be challenging. But I believe in my country, and I believe in change for the better. Lebanon will rise again.

I have achieved things in my life I'm really proud of. Whether it is in my personal or professional life. First, one of my hobbies is volunteering. I love helping people and bringing them joy into their life. I was also able to earn certificates from some NGOs. Doing this type of activity makes me feel I have achieved something. I am satisfied. Moreover, I earned an online certificate from Coursera about creative thinking. I believe that creativity is the solution for a lot of problems in the world. I also have my internship certificates and my baccalaureate certificate. My next goal is to graduate and earn my bachelor's degree. Then, I look forward to working on my Masters Degree in Digital Marketing and Communication.



Elissa Sannan, 20, Lebanon, Female

Elissa balanced developing a career alongside her education, using the experience to learn and grow as an individual and developing and benefiting from the lessons learned. She has redefined her place in society.

My name is Elissa Sannan and I am twenty years old. Born and raised in Lebanon and currently living in Beirut, I am a full-time student worker which is something very common especially here. However, what differs me from the others is that I did not feel the financial need to find employment at first, so here's what happened.

I was 17 years old, just graduated senior high from a prestigious French school located at the heart of the capital, when I was offered a position as a telecom agent in a hotel by a family member, and the coming decision was a turning point in my life. Back then, I was a teenager defined by her country and by her family and was always taught to be grateful for everything. At the time, Lebanon was one the most indebted countries in the world with a very high unemployment rate, but don't get me wrong, now the situation is way worse which made me proud of myself for starting a career at a young age in the first place.

So here I was, offered a job at age seventeen from one of the best hotels in the country with a good salary and I thought to myself "Who am I to turn down an opportunity given to me so easily while others are struggling to reach it?" and I felt ungrateful just by thinking of not taking it. So, I held onto this job and I'm glad I did. However, it was not the easiest thing to balance a career and college since I was imposed an inflexible schedule conflicting with work and could not physically attend all the classes resulting me into getting delayed a year, dropping out of this particular university and signing up to a more compromising one, then shifted from Hospitality Management to International Business Management. But to me both my degree and my job were of the same importance, and I did not start something just to end it without trying harder. After that I planned out my whole educational path.

Other than having a personal income, I am grateful for this step I took because I unlocked a new level back then when I learned things you don't acquire anywhere else. I gained experience with people, I became a stronger person, I turned into someone with high self-esteem and confidence, and I love it. Even with the bad traits about myself, I learned how to put them to good use and benefit from them.

One year on I was promoted to receptionist but quit a year later after the country kept going downhill. Except that, despite the numerous drastic events this year has taken me through, it was a game changer for me personally.

How I managed to go through every bad occurrence this year goes down to one sentence I repeat each time I feel like I'm in a dark place: "Everything is only a phase, and each one ends sooner or later. So, I either let it get the best of me or I can choose to make the best out of it". And I started to believe that good can come in many shapes even in the bad ones. I learned to take the good aspect from any bad situation and invest in it, because it is not only about what life has given me but how I received it, how I decided to interpret it and how I chose to share it. I'm nowhere near optimism. I consider myself to be realistic while hoping for the best and it is working for me.

For example, I took the pandemic and turned it into a break from worrying about managing two schedules since everything is online. I found a way to study and work at the same time while also being able to take care of myself.

I took the Beirut blast on the 4th of August 2020 and made myself a survivor who was granted a second chance, changing my thinking towards my choices, wanting to give as much as I get and more and trying to give back to the people who lost so much that day. Since then, I have been feeling the need to give support to anyone who needs it, contributing to a better society because even by one gesture as simple as it is you can make someone feel better about everything around him.

Three years ago I was a teenager working for fun and who was defined by her society, by her family and by the country's circumstances, now I am a young lady who's still studying while on the way to finishing an internship with the United Nations to gain experience, expanding my limits in order to keep growing, because these now define me: my willingness to keep developing and my own choices for a better future.





Khanya Mamba, 22, South Africa, Female

Khayna understands that the social and technological issues present in South Africa are not confined to that geographical area but are indeed present worldwide, and she wants to use her skills and knowledge to contribute move towards a positive outcome.

I am a South African millennial, a shameless lover of film and iced coffee, and determined to make a meaningful difference in the world someday.

I am currently completing my final year of Bachelor of Business Science in Finance and Accounting at the University of Cape Town. I am also the president of the UCT Investment Society and looking to commence operations for the company I have registered, GradAccess (Pty) Ltd–an enterprise that will license technology which facilitates large-scale university application assistance to NPOs. As an Allan Gray Orbis Foundation candidate fellow and Klaus-Jurgen Bathe scholarship recipient, I spend much of my time refining my ability to lead, conceptualize, and execute solutions to problems for the betterment of this continent.

At present, I really enjoy strategic management consulting and asset management, but I also enjoy student-focused community development work. There are so many people who have made valuable contributions towards the success I have enjoyed thus far as a student, and I am eager to pay that forward. This country's significant diversity of thought and culture, as well as the ample opportunities for personal development and skills acquisition I have found, have taught me how to think critically about how to address the social and technological issues that are not only prevalent in South Africa, but globally too. I recognize the importance of using these skills and acting with urgency and resilience in doing so.

I still have so much learning to do before I am sufficiently ready to make my contribution towards bettering this country, and while I am not too certain what that will look like yet, I am determined to do the work to get there. Despite all the serious issues we are facing in the world at present, we are living during a monumental time in history—technologically, politically, and socially. I am so grateful to be living in this time, and I want to actively participate as much as possible.



Megan de Vasconcellos, 19, South Africa, Female

Megan has overcome mental illness and a medical diagnosis demonstrating that she can do anything she puts her mind to. She wants to achieve her BA and make the world a better place, inspiring others and advocating for those who do not have a voice in society.

My name is Megan de Vasconcellos, I'm a 19-year-old female currently living in beautiful South Africa. In 2020, I completed a higher certificate in business management; in 2021 I will be beginning my BA (Bachelor of Arts) Degree majoring in English and Psychology. I am a great lover of all thing's books, and I have a great passion for writing so, naturally, I am ecstatic to begin my degree.

Being successful in life is important to me because I want to be able to give back to my parents who have given my sister and I so much over the years. I also want to prove to myself that anything is possible and that I can achieve whatever I put my mind to as well as inspire others that if I can do it then they too can do the same. I have often felt as though I underestimate myself and that others do too, however, I had a major mindset shift and know that I am capable of amazing things, I just need to start!

Success is not the only thing I want to achieve, I also want to be the best possible version of myself, physically, mentally, and spiritually. Personal growth is something I have been heavily focused on for the past few months. I have been taking my gym training seriously, eating healthier, focusing a lot more on my mental health, and learning about what my spiritual path is in this life which has already had many positive impacts on me.

However, it has not always been all sunshine and rainbows. Two years ago, while in high school, I was diagnosed with mixed depression and anxiety disorder which progressively worsened over time to the point where I did not care about anything anymore, I was also frequently experiencing verbal sexual harassment during this time (I am grateful nothing serious occurred, but nonetheless it did affect me). It negatively affected my performance in school and my relationship with my family had never been worse by the time I graduated from matric. However, I decided I needed to seek better help and take control of my demons before they took control of me, and so in October 2020 I was diagnosed with severe depression and borderline personality disorder—I was not surprised. I have come such a long way and feel almost like a completely different person, the person I always was and was always meant to be.

I know some people feel shame in sharing their experiences with mental health, however, I am not ashamed, and no one else should be either. It is a chapter in my story, not the whole book.

Despite my struggles with mental health, I was able to push through. I achieved a bursary for my 2020 studies, managed to achieve a total of nine distinctions out of the ten modules I had for my higher certificate, and I achieved a bursary once again to continue my studies for 2021. My goal for this year is to achieve distinctions in all my modules for my first year BA studies.

Being a South African citizen, the news is more often than not, filled with stories of crime and corruption, the failing economy and so much negativity in general, and most of us have a negative mindset towards the country and its future. Due to this, it was incredibly difficult for me to find some sort of inspiration and motivation to do anything because I did not see the point in trying since there was no future for me here anyways. However, once I started dealing with my mental health I realized that I can either let the future of this country (or lack thereof) hinder me from aspiring to anything, or I could let fuel me to work as hard as I possibly can in order to achieve my goals and take back my future and make it what I want it to be.

I now have an optimistic outlook for my future. I know that I am fully capable of creating the life I imagine in my head every single day. I will achieve my dream of living in England, I will achieve my dream of being a successful novelist. I will also achieve my dream of helping to make the world (or at least a small part of it) a better place by being an advocate of mental health, speaking out against gender-based violence, domestic abuse, etc. by being the voice for those who can no longer or who are too afraid and unwilling to speak.



Paige Webster, 25, South Africa, Female

At a young age Paige knew what she wanted to do in life–work in IT. Through sacrifice and hard work, facing down the challenges she encountered along the way, she achieved her goal.

I first harbored an interest in software development and technology when I was in grade 10. I had I.T as one of my chosen subjects and we were creating (what we thought) the coolest and most forward-thinking applications written in Delphi. When I first discovered the incredible things you can do by creating software, the kinds of basic everyday problems that could be solved with a simple application, I knew this is what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. At the time being young, ambitious, and very naïve, it didn't occur to me what kinds of obstacles I would face on my chosen path. In my final year of school, I went to an institute for Java Development called Van Zyl and Pritchard. I did an aptitude test to see if my brain functions along the lines of someone who can solve problems logically and swiftly. After what was the longest five hours of my life, I was graded and I passed, much to my disbelief. They offered me a contract to study Java through their institute of learning and all I had to do was ensure that I passed all three exams weekly or else the contract would become null and void.

It sounded simple enough until I actually started and realized all the sacrifices I would have to make in the coming months in order to get where I needed to be. I had to sacrifice social time, family time, even sleep time to ensure I studied and worked hard enough to pass well. Throughout my experience at Van Zyl and Pritchard, the reality of trying to find a place as a woman in a male dominated industry hit me punishingly. I had to work twice as hard as the men just to get noticed or to get recognition for all the hard work and hours I was putting in. Men would constantly put me down and degrade my abilities to code because I was a female, a typical "girly girl". People would tell me "You look like you should be doing hair and nails, not writing code.", however, I knew that as long as I kept working hard and pushing towards my goal, I would prove to myself and everyone else that I deserve a place in the world, in this kind of environment. Upon completing my studies at Van Zyl and Pritchard I finally entered the real working world, at the young age of 18, while continuing my studies on a part-time basis. Getting real work experience for me was the most exciting feeling I've ever experienced. I started a Learnership position at a software house called BBD. I was also doing a diploma in C#, C++ and Objective C through City and Guilds at the time. The work environment really helped me grow and finally practice all the things I had learned, but I came to the realization quickly that in I.T you never really know everything, and you always have a lot of learning to do, which is the most thrilling part. I started off on a team developing apps then I moved to another client developing cell network websites. After two years, when I started seeking other job opportunities, I faced an entirely different challenge that was quite new to me.

Growing up mixed race I never really experienced any form of racism especially being "born free" (being born after apartheid years). However, being mixed-race in South Africa means you are neither black enough nor white enough and with the current BEE act in place in SA, it's quite difficult to find a job as a mixed-race person. I never imagined I would be turned down solely based on the color of my skin. As the saying goes, "Everything that's meant for you always finds its way to you." and it did. I got a new job at a company called MCI. It was a completely unique environment; we were almost completely self-managed. You did not have someone telling you what to do the entire day, it was up to you to manage your time and get things done by the expected deadlines. It was also a much smaller company than I came from, which in hindsight presented much more opportunities for me. The heightening in my skill set was incredible, being given so much more responsibility at work and being thrown into the deep end really teaches you how to swim. During my time at MCI, I was also furthering my studies through Unisa on a part time basis and everything I had practiced at work came in handy when it was time to complete assignments and exams. Over the past couple of years, I have forgotten what sleep really means because between work and studies I had very little time left for other things, but I do know when to press the pause button and unwind and rejuvenate. I am now an Intermediate Developer at Psiber. Still continuing my studies, still hungry for knowledge, still pushing myself to be a better version of what I was yesterday.

My journey hasn't been easy, and it has presented a lot of unforeseen obstacles on the way, but I'm super proud that I've always managed to rise above all that was thrown at me and all the negative voices who told me I couldn't do it. All the voices who said I wasn't good enough. All the voices who told me I.T is no space for a woman. All the voices who told me that I'm not black enough or white enough to be employed. I'm grateful for how far I've come and for all the support and love I've received over some of the most difficult years of my life from family, friends, and my darling husband. Never let anybody tell you that because of a certain factor you will never succeed. Every success story is a tale of constant adaptation, revision, and change. I hope to inspire women who are feeling like their dreams are irrelevant because they should choose the path most taken. The price of doing the same old thing is far greater than the price of change.



Faraz Shahsavan, 22, Iran, Male

Faraz adapted to his journey through life to overcome challenges as they presented themselves to him. He believes his ability to identify when he needed to fight and change his direction has led him to the successful career and lifestyle he now enjoys.

What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you read this name? Indeed, there are numerous factors that contribute to the overall inconvenience widespread for talents in Iran, and no matter how bright or technically adept you are, the only thing that can help you flourish is adaptability. Now, what do you suppose adaptability means in this context?

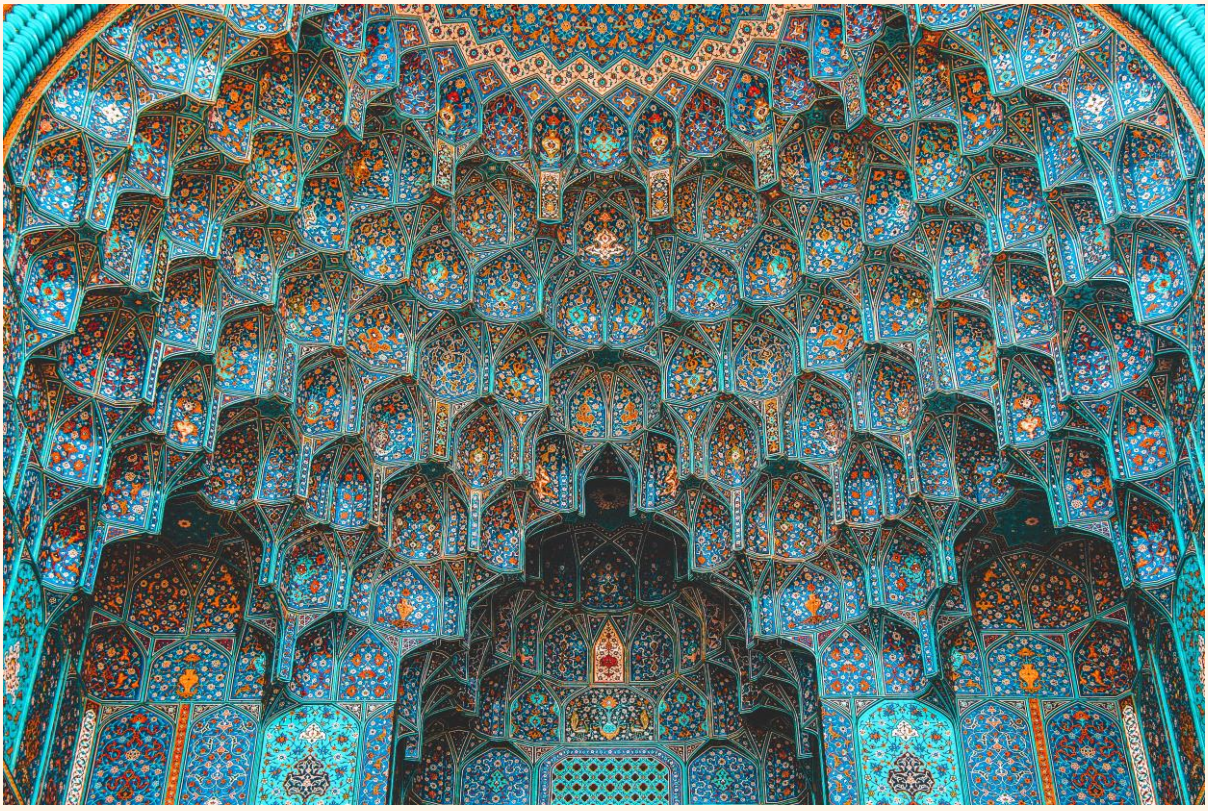
I studied at the National Organization for Development of Exceptional Talents for secondary and high school, the same organization Maryam Mirzakhani attended. I started my academic journey by attending the Physics Olympiads for high schools, and even though I achieved great knowledge and a clutch of awards, I came short 2% from the final cut of the national team, which was probably the smallest unit of grade that could be granted. This was a critical point in my life. It was the first time I realized that you do not always get what you set your mind to, and this revelation was shocking to me. Just imagine how cruel it is to spend more than two years focusing on one thing, with all your passion and dedication involved, but lose it in a 4-hour period and then there is nothing left of it for you. In addition to this, acing the exam was supposed to exempt me from having to take the nation-wide university entrance exam, which has over 150,000 participants every year, and students often tend to spend all four years of their high school preparing for that. But now, I was slammed with the fact that I had to take it, and I had only one year to prepare. So, here is what I did. I stayed up that whole night crying. I mourned the future that was not going to be mine anymore, and by sunrise, I had something new to fight for. In only a few weeks, my rate of progress surprised all the educational counselors and top students in our school. I was able to be in the first rank among some of the best students in the country, even though they studied for much longer than I.

At the end of that year, I finished in the top 0.2% of the whole country in the university entrance exam. I received a scholarship from the state and had the privilege to enter the University of Tehran to study computer engineering, which was the most selective major throughout Iran at the time. Not only does all that I went through make a great story to tell, but also, having failed the course of study I had selected earlier in my life helped me realize that I wanted a change of career. I had become self-aware enough through fighting for my goals that I decided a career in computer and technology was going to work out for me the best. Now, I would like to point out, that as I look back, had I made the cut in the Physics Olympiad in the first place, I most probably would not have considered this pivot from physics and its relevant majors to computer science.

I asked you what you thought adaptability here meant, at the beginning of this piece. In retrospect and in short, I adapted. I adapted so many times in my life that I am not afraid of any sort of detour in my predetermined plans anymore. I adapted when I had to let go of a lost future. I adapted when I entered university and noticed that I needed an incentive and engaged in startups. I adapted when I realized I had to get over each of the startups and gravitate towards academic research. And finally, I adapted every time the unstable economy of my country, along with all other factors, struck. Unfortunately, due to lack of sufficient support, I had to witness the doom of many of my highly talented friends in whatever they did. They did not adapt, and that is probably why I pulled out the best.

Today, I am a professional chess player, with a rating of 2200 on Lichess, a former participant in the Iranian master league, and the former team champion of Tehran high schools. I do research in a handful of topics related to distributed systems, under direct or indirect supervision of three professors, the most famous of which being Prof. James Larus of EPFL of Lausanne. I lead weekly social hiking tours, and host online free discussions for English and movie discussion gatherings.

My concluding advice to younger people that have not still figured out what they want to do with their lives, is to experiment with different sorts of activities, and not be afraid of something not working out, since this is the only way we learn—by trying out.



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Joanne Rahme, 24, Lebanon, Female

Despite having to grow up at a young age due to family responsibilities, Joanne received a good education with the support of her parents. Despite a lack of basic commodities such as Wi-Fi or a laptop, she finished her education and found employment using her skills as an engineer.

As people, we are defined by every moment we go through, every thought we get and every day we live. For me, my childhood defined and shaped me. I was raised by a modest family. Ever since I could remember my dad was sick and my mom got sick at a later age. Since I am an only child, I was left with big responsibilities. I grew up having ambition and big dreams that one day I would turn my life around and achieve all the goals I wanted. But despite the hard times, my parents did their best to give me a good education since this was the only thing they could give me as a kid.

Later in life I started dreaming about going to my dream college, the Lebanese American University, one of the top universities in Lebanon. I got help paying for my SAT test from a friend who stood by my side since day one and I was able to score the grades I needed to get into Engineering School from the first try. At the age of 17, I graduated from high school and went off to college to start a new chapter of life. Going to LAU was closer to a dream than reality. But luckily my parents managed to get an educational loan and did all they could to help me achieve my dream.

Dreaming of course was easier than actually doing it. I still remember the long nights of studying when I had minimal resources, no Wi-Fi at home, 4 years of engineering with no laptop to use and sometimes no money to even get to university. All that was happening while I was working as a receptionist in a resort and an assistant at the president's office of the university. However, each day that passed was taking me closer to my goal. And that kept me going.

In October 2019, a revolution against the political system started, stopping all activities in the country for months. An economic crisis hit the country, job opportunities dropped, companies closed, and people lost their jobs. All that while the COVID-19 virus hit the world making everything even worse. Despite the difficult situation, I managed to finish my studies and graduate after five years of hard work and minimal sleep. After a few months, I got back to my previous job as a spa receptionist until I got an opportunity to work as an engineer. A month later and out of the blue, I got the opportunity to be part of the maintenance team of the resort I worked for. So, while I was still managing work for the spa I was also preparing to transfer and begin a new journey. The job needed months of preparation and hard work until I finally transferred officially on the 1st of April 2021.

I would be lying if I said I have everything figured out. The road is still foggy, and the end is still not clear but the secret is to enjoy each moment of the way and do your best with whatever you are doing until you make it. The journey will never be easy, and it never was but I have big dreams and many years to come to achieve them. I might not have my own business yet or work for the biggest company, but I am on the right track to make everything I want to happen.

I believe that when a door closes in front of you it means it was never your path to cross in the first place and a new and better door will be open soon. We just have to be patient (as my partner always tells me) and open our eyes to see the opportunities that this world has to offer us.

I am grateful for the hard times because it made me who I am today and made what I have achieved taste even better. And I owe what I have today to the support of my family, friends, and partner. Looking back at all the things I went through from where I stand today, makes all the long nights, tears, hard work, and sacrifices seem lighter. Never lose hope, dream big and wait for the magic to come.



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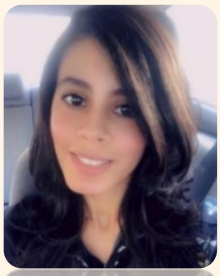

Arwa Aboushahada, 30, Palestine, Female

Arwa believes in lifelong learning and self-care. She is ambitious and will face challenges head on in order to achieve her goals and dreams.

I am an ambitious person, loving to develop my personality and learn something new every day to achieve a better reality and a happier life. In my career as a graphic designer, every day there is a new challenge and having a calm personality helps me to reduce stress. What defines me as a person, is that I will always keep going forward and will never let anything stop me from achieving or reaching my goals, dreams.

I started to reach my goals and I am sure that reaching them all will be just a matter of time. Learning is the key to success and growth in life. You must read books, exercise, eat healthy, and stay in shape.

I started my career in graphic design after graduating from college as a freelancer and learned so many things from connecting with clients and having the perfect work experience. Having an online network can help a lot, especially to reach any place and achieve any work or goals. I started my Instagram page for graphic designing and the next goal I am looking forward to is building my own website.

Having a bright future is the goal. I hope to reach my goals and dreams in the coming years.



Nancy El Khatib, 27, Lebanon, Female

Nancy hopes to use her brand Scarlt to disrupt the fashion industry while representing and supporting strong, independent women. She wants to support women to gain positions of power in the business world, while being a role model to help them achieve their potential.

A futurist with an entrepreneurial mindset; I studied Digital Design and Advertising at the Lebanese American University in Beirut, I am interested in all thing's tech, innovation, and fashion. Being an entrepreneur at heart, I launched Scarlt in June 2020 with a mission of disrupting the fashion industry and representing every independent and strong woman. I always wanted to contribute to making the world a better place for the people of today and for future generations, and I believe each person can play a role in their own way. In my case I think making a change could be achieved through innovations related to products and services which can lead to an easier and more efficient world. What drives me towards success is love for life and the mystery of what tomorrow holds. I founded Scarlt not because the region needed another fashion startup, but because I saw a gap in the market, and it solved a problem.

I left Beirut back in 2017, before the economic crisis, but back then it was time for me to start a new adventure in Dubai, not because I lost hope in Lebanon, but I believe problems are not meant to be solved if you don't treat their core. The decision I took a couple of years ago many other millennials are making now, as the situation is still as it is. Unfortunately, my home country with its wars, corruption, and failures year after year, couldn't be the place where I could start my startup, however, going through all those problems helped form my personality of being strong and persistent. As Lebanese people, I feel we face challenges from a different perspective and are ready for any difficulty we encounter. In the end we are known to be a resilient nation. However, knowing my country and the complications of it, I knew it would be hard to start in Lebanon. So, I had to start in Dubai with a future plan to be present in Lebanon and other countries for a better tomorrow and for a positive change. I am very proud of Scarlt and what the team and I have achieved in this short period. Our future milestones would be to expand and add new features that are a first for the region. As I mentioned, each person can start making a difference and I believe with Scarlt I will continue to empower and represent strong, resilient, and goal-oriented women. We are aiming to expand in the region and for international exposure.

Women are still underrepresented in key positions but the trend towards women in leadership positions seems to be on the rise. I hope to give opportunities to more capable females in the near future. Aiming one day, to be the woman who others look up to and aspire to become better.



Maria Iakovleva, 26, Russia, Female

Maria's journey to her current position as a UI/UX designer has been diverse, but it helped her to find her passion in fintech. She is proud of what she has achieved so far but wants to do so much more.

I'm a UI/UX designer and design which definitely affects all of my life—the place I live in, the way I look, the films and exhibitions I choose to see. I believe in visuals, I believe in better solutions for everything, and I believe that a good aesthetic and functional lifestyle is the key to success and sustainable growth and development.

I'm so much into technology and I LOVE to see the work of engineers and scholars—this motivates me so much to work every day, to learn new things, to keep going on the same line with the whole world. Can you imagine that people have done all these amazing wireless, nano, fast tracking things? And we are literally placed on a flying rock somewhere in space. Whoah!

All my life I have tried different things—filmmaking (I have a degree in documentary journalism), the fashion industry, but it was always about the visual and not the function. I wanted to make things beautiful but also something which will help people. That's where I met design itself—the product UI UX design is a symbiosis of technology, art, and deep research, and that's where I stayed. I started in different ways—I worked on dating apps, personal sites, eCommerce, but the thing I found was that my passion was fintech.

I realized one day that most banking apps need to be improved—they are inconvenient, old fashioned looking, they're boring. I started from creating a concept for NBD bank and posted it on Dribble—just for fun, cause I'm an NBD customer and always struggling with the app. I got noticed by a small startup, which is now known as Zand Bank—the first in the world to fully digitally cross platforms for retail and corporate banking. It was a great year of creating something from scratch—the biggest challenge in my life, because I didn't have banking experience before, and I was the only designer in the team. But it was so special for me—because, finally, I could create something which would really respond to my requests to the modern banking systems.

Dubai is super open minded in terms of technology and young talents. If you're brave enough to speak, to suggest something, if you're not afraid to speak out loud—you'll be heard. And that's the best thing that Dubai can offer you as a young specialist.

I'm really proud of the Zand Bank project—the most amazing product I've done so far, but looking forward, I want to make something bigger. I'm currently working on some cryptocurrency projects because I believe it's something that will run the future and I want to be a part of it.



Munaz Mohammed Nibraz, 25, Sri Lanka, Male

Despite shyness and a struggle with mental illness, Munaz has successfully graduated from university as a software engineer, published papers, and won accolades. He has a strong network of friends and ambitions to pursue a PhD. He wants people to understand that having good mental health is as important as having good physical health, and that being shy or introverted or mentally unwell is not a weakness.

When faced with trauma, some people manage to emerge stronger than ever. This is the story of how I managed to overcome my challenges as a student, as a son and as a human. My name is Munaz Mohammed Nibraz but people call me 'Nibbu'. I think it means faith. For most of my life I wondered if there is any connection to the meaning of my name and my own self. I was that quiet and shy kid you see at schools and in teen Netflix shows, not very outspoken, just minding my own business, no close friends and getting bullied all the time. Though my life moved forward with that repo, I had a secret talent and a love towards public speaking. That is the moment I knew that I had a voice to be heard. My school life went on with me struggling with studies and my grades, but I had a simultaneous problem at home with my parents. You know how parents can be overprotective and be very sensitive about the grades of their children. It's a typical thing in Sri Lanka where most of the parents think their child's grades decide their reputation and social status, and yes, my family is no exception. My parents tried every single way there was to motivate me and see progress in my studies. Unfortunately, all their time, money and energy got wasted, as did my dream of becoming a doctor.

I've always dreamed of becoming a doctor, wearing a plum-colored stethoscope, and being called Dr. Nibraz. I find that title has a nice ring to it. But unfortunately, things didn't go as planned. As you can guess, I failed to embrace my ambition. I did my Advance Level examination twice and still failed to get selected to the medical school. For those who didn't know, Sri Lanka has a free education system, and we have to perform well in our studies to get selected for universities in specific majors. There's another option for those wealthy kids, to go abroad and do everything they intend to do. I guess I wasn't that lucky, and I didn't have any other options either, so I got myself enrolled in a private university called Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology (SLIIT) to follow my next passion, IT.

I still remember my first day at the university. It was my father who drove me there. I guess we both shared the same series of emotions just rolling within our bodies. I didn't know whether to be excited for my next journey or to be saddened by the fact that I am saying goodbye to my ambition once in for all. My dad, on the other hand, had no reaction when we sat there during the orientation. I can still picture his face; I saw nothing but emptiness. I knew for a fact that he gave up on seeing me as a successful person. I wanted to say sorry, I wanted to comfort him, but I didn't. I just sat there and let everything sink in.

The four years of my university are where the true changes started happening. I met genuine, caring friends who accepted me for who I am, depressed and with social anxiety. They made sure that I become this bold, social, and friendly person in order to face the world as it is. My introverted inner self slowly started decaying, I became more social, I met more people and most importantly, I started understanding people. While these things were happening, I had this mission to make my parents proud when I graduated, especially my dad. My father is a very outspoken and goal-oriented person. He always judges someone by their success, and he always has given importance to education and education only. To be honest, I hated him for that. I hated him for never allowing me to skip a class or never allowing any fun that affected my education. Now I look back at him and his actions, I see what he really meant. He wanted me to understand the importance of education and he wanted me to be happy.

I graduated from my university this year. I am a software engineer now, I graduated with a class and on top rank. I have published two papers, I have won competitions, medals and trophies, and I have made changes in people's lives by counseling and helping them, but still, I find myself unhappy. Not because of any monetary reasons or less vacation, but because my dad isn't here to see my success. His little boy, who he wanted to be successful, is yearning to look him in the eye and tell him that he has made him proud and continue to do it till his death.

Some may find this boring, and some may have other opinions but the reason I wanted to tell my story here is to tell people that they are not alone and to let my voice be heard. Our country has this weird way of labeling people. They expect everyone, especially youngsters, to follow pre-defined rules to earn respect. I was a failure at school; it's ok to be a failure. I was an introvert; it's ok to be an introvert. I was bullied; it's ok to get bullied, and all we need is courage and self-motivation. Whatever happened to me, I have never let the faith in myself fade away because no matter what happens to me, you or others, life will move on and we need to learn to move forward with it, with our heads up high.

Now I have great people around me, I have an ambition to complete a PhD and most importantly I have a goal to find and help people who need help. As we are in a fast-paced world with evolving technologies, I want to incorporate technological stack into this initiative and help the ones who need it the most. Most of us have some kind of view towards the future, especially how we want to make changes in the world, and as people around us are the key to a successful change, I think change should start from and with them. Mental health is something we ignore which has the potential to snowball and ruin an individual. In my country, people just neglect mental health, calling a person weak and mentally unstable, but little do they know the struggles and the battles that victims are facing are hard and real. Strong mental health isn't just the absence of mental health problems. Being mentally or emotionally healthy is much more than being free of depression, anxiety, or other psychological issues. Rather than the absence of mental illness, mental health refers to the presence of positive characteristics. Let us all understand the fact that mental health is as important as physical health and let us all stand together to help those in need to make a safe and stable society and eventually a better world.



Yesmine Zouari, 22, Tunisia, Female

Yesmine's dream is to make an impact in the Arab region, and eventually the rest of the world through the field of finance and social impact. She is keenly interested in venture philanthropy and impact measurement. Having majored in finance, Yesmine has found that the concept of impact investing aligns with her world view.

My little journey was filled with turning points and attempts to translate my inner voice and strike a balance between utopic dreams and harsh reality. The idea of leaving a positive impact on this planet has been growing in me since an early age. I was specifically influenced by the "love army" movement initiated by Jérôme Jarre to find a sustainable solution for Somali families after the drought in 2017. And that was my first handshake with the concept of sustainability as a better alternative to charity. However, I felt lost, not knowing how to start the change I wanted while being oblivious to the way the "real" world operates.

I started my discovery journey, hitting almost every event that fell under my sight: cultural events, self-development, IT-related, entrepreneurial hackathons... And here I should be grateful for the post-revolution development of civil society in Tunisia that allowed for such diversity of events. Something that wasn't easily available for the previous generation. The events I attended have most certainly helped me have a better grasp of the opportunities available to me, and they bridged the gap that our educational system had unfortunately dug between science and arts, knowing that loving both of these fields doesn't make you a fool, but a well-balanced person. That was just the beginning of my self-discovery journey. The latter hit a wall when I was faced with the first biggest decision to take at the time: college choice.

I was fortunate to graduate from high school with an excellent grade, but that only complicated the process for me, creating a competition between having to choose only one of numerous vocational alternatives versus my lust for discovering and trying each one of them.

It was like taking a kid to the candy store with hundreds of appealing desserts and telling them they have to choose only one, without any tasting samples. After weeks of research and asking around, I made up my mind and chose medical studies, with the main goal of helping others.

My first year ended, and I passed with good grades, but I was now sure that being a doctor is not what I was made to do. That, and that there are billions of other paths I can go on to help people. Here again, I was left with a crucial decision to make: to listen to my inner voice, believe in my skills, and switch paths to the business world, or to follow society's standards and carry on with medical studies hoping that I would love it as years pass by. Eventually I trusted my own judgment, and it was after this rather bold decision that I started "doing" instead of just "observing". During my first year in business school, I was elected project manager in one of the university's clubs, leading a group of 10 and organizing two of the most successful events in my college: TEDxTBS, and International Cultural Day.

I finally got to practice the concepts I have listened to in awe for hours in TED talks and experienced the unearthly feeling of seeing your thoughts and dreams come to reality.

I joined other associations such as AIESEC, the Tunisian International Model of the United Nations, and co-founded She Starts Africa-TBS, empowering young women to act and start their own businesses. Soon, this once-lost girl struggling to make her way to the "real world" was an Organizing Committee member of 10 events, competitor in 5 social entrepreneurship hackathons, and a winner in one!

In fact, it was social entrepreneurship that met both my longing to make a social impact, as well as my "businessy" side. I went on a fellowship with the Arab Council for Social Sciences to better nurture my knowledge about Arab communities, believing that the first step to helping a community is to understand the roots of their problems.

As for finance, my academic major, it helped me see the world through other lenses, discover the wonders of financial markets and the wide investment world, and discover a newly emerging tool that aligns perfectly with my vision: impact investing.

I got intrigued by this concept and started to pull at that thread, only to find even more interesting concepts such as venture philanthropy and impact measurement. Having found the specific field that meets both of my main interests: finance and social impact, I decided to take that path and learn as much as I can.

I am now in an internship with the first Venture Philanthropy in the MENA region "Al Fanar" and a content writer position with the Tunisian Center for Social Entrepreneurship. Jointly with my finance major and my social sciences fellowship, I am filled with hope and the will to develop myself and get closer each day to my dreams: making a substantial social impact in the Arab region, and eventually the world.

These varied and equally thrilling journeys are testaments to the determination fueling our contributors.

Thank you for reading these stories from our contributors. Clicking on their name will bring you to their profile to learn more about them and eventually get in contact with them.

Keep on reading to discover the personal achievement a select few are proud to share with you.

PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

When it comes to securing job openings, personal achievements can make all the difference. While a diploma is a standard requirement for most positions, it's not enough to be set apart from rivals. Candidates who have gone above and beyond, whether by studying harder to earn top grades, volunteering at globally recognized organizations, or winning prestigious contests, demonstrate to recruiters that they have the drive and dedication to excel at their company.

In this chapter, we are privileged to share the jaw-dropping personal achievements of our talented contributors, who have overcome incredible hardships to make their mark. Their exceptional extracurricular activities have been game-changers in their job applications, helping them stand out, gain admiration, and become inspirations for future generations.

Indeed, each person who has contributed to this book is an achievement in themselves, and I would like to take this opportunity to applaud them all. In the following sections, we highlight just a few of the many outstanding individuals whose stories have inspired us.



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Here are extracts from our contributor's stories.



Fouzia Adjailia, 29, Algeria, Female

Fouzia is a woman with a passion for promoting diversity and inclusion in the field of AI. She has taken on the role of an ambassador for women in AI and has dedicated herself to empowering and inspiring others in the industry. She firmly believes that technology and education have the power to bring about positive change on a global scale.

At the outset of her career, Fouzia faced challenges in finding like-minded peers who could offer guidance and support. Nevertheless, she refused to let this obstacle hinder her progress. Instead, she actively sought out mentors and support from other communities and online platforms, which proved to be invaluable resources for her growth and development.

Her achievements are simply outstanding.

> *I am the first female Arab and Muslim woman to build an intelligent humanoid robot, which has been a defining moment in my life. Being nominated for the global award for the most disruptive woman in the field of AI and being a public speaker all around the world have been other major accomplishments.*

source

Antonio Arizpe, 21, Mexico, Male



A truly inspiring young man, Antonio hasn't been blinded by the common injustices, abuse of power, violence, discrimination, and racism present in his Mexico. He is driven by the victims of profound issues, those he was surprised to see that even though they have less, they are the most generous and always make time to give a helping hand. He is preparing himself to live the best version of himself as a student, entrepreneur, leader, son, brother and friend—to be ready to take on big responsibilities when the time comes.

I have gotten scholarships to study abroad, take classes at MIT and The Wharton School and get a full scholarship to study at one of the best schools in Mexico, The University of Monterrey where I am majoring in economics. Thanks to the education that I am receiving, I have been able to start a successful business and export products all around North America.

My philosophy is that if I am given opportunities and blessings, I should be a bridge to give others the same chances that I got. That is why I take a big role in organizations that help improve the community. I have founded, participated in, and taken leadership roles in organizations like Rotary International and Techo Mexico. Nowadays I have a directive position at an international organization named PROVS (Programa para la Vida Sustentable), where we work with the United Nations, governments, and universities to empower refugees, native populations, and people in vulnerable conditions all around the world.



Gisell Cottone, 18, Panama, Female

Gisell is a young woman with an admirable resumé. Her plan is to develop a professional career in business, in which she can help, improve, and inspire the lives of others at a local and international level by providing helpful personal products, devices, and services, creating inspiring actions/events, and even initiate a charity of her own. Already what she had achieved by the tender age of 15 many yearn to achieve in a lifetime.

At the young age of fifteen, I decided to put my abilities to the test: I challenged myself to create a glove that can stabilize Parkinson's tremors. The yearly science fair was coming up, and as a three-time first-place science fair winner, I wanted to surpass myself and create my biggest invention yet. That's the moment I thought about building a personal low-cost technological device that could stabilize tremors. Excitedly, I told my friends about my incredible idea, however, their first reaction was truly unexpected and heartbreaking: they thought it was impossible for me to accomplish my project. Nevertheless, instead of becoming discouraged and disappointed, I decided to convert those underestimating comments into fuel to motivate myself to achieve my goal.

After a week of supreme determination on researching, designing, and developing the prototype, the prototype got tested on an actual Parkinson's patient. The results were unbelievable—it worked! When we realized the glove succeeded, everyone was surprised, and we all broke into tears, tears of joy and astonishment. The Parkinson's patient who tested the prototype told me amidst tears, "It has been years that I haven't been able to write my name properly, without my tremors… thank you". That's the moment I realized my true passion for helping, inspiring, and improving the lives of people, by leaving a positive footprint in their hearts. The next day, the glove participated in the science fair and people were so touched with the story and innovative creation, that SENACYT (Panamanian National Secretary of Science, Technology, and Innovation) invited us to collaborate on several occasions, projects, and conferences to present the glove.

Husam Adel Rajab, 23, Palestine, Male

Husam loves Technology and Sustainability. In his point of view, they are two of the most important things on our planet. He believes that without sustainability, the resources of our planet will vanish and without technology, these resources will not be used sustainably. He is certainly driven and determined to make a difference, and his achievements so far show us he's on the right path.

I went to England to learn more about intelligent electronic machines and devices and the year after I went to California to learn more about robotics and technology. Then I had the chance to mix sustainability with technology in my graduation project so I made a smart greenhouse from scratch.



Batoul Tamim, 27, Lebanon, Female

Batoul sees herself as a strong woman, shaped by the difficulties she experienced growing up. She's studying for her PhD in France to ensure a top, world-recognized education in Cause-Related Marketing—a concept that encourages companies to donate all or part of their sales, whether product or service, to a nonprofit organization to support their cause and in return enhance the image of the company. As if that wasn't remarkable enough,

My other commitments are mainly associative, I am a volunteer with UNICEF with a mission to promote and defend the rights of children around the world. As I grew up in Bamako, Mali, my dream is to be able to open my own association there to help African children in need. Acting to protect children is a priority since "all grown-ups were once children…" according to Le Petit Prince de Saint-Exupéry. I am also the creator of a project promoting equality between women and men, which is based on l'ODD N°5 Sustainable Development Goals set up by the United Nations Organization concerning gender equality. This ongoing project aims to combat violence against women and girls.

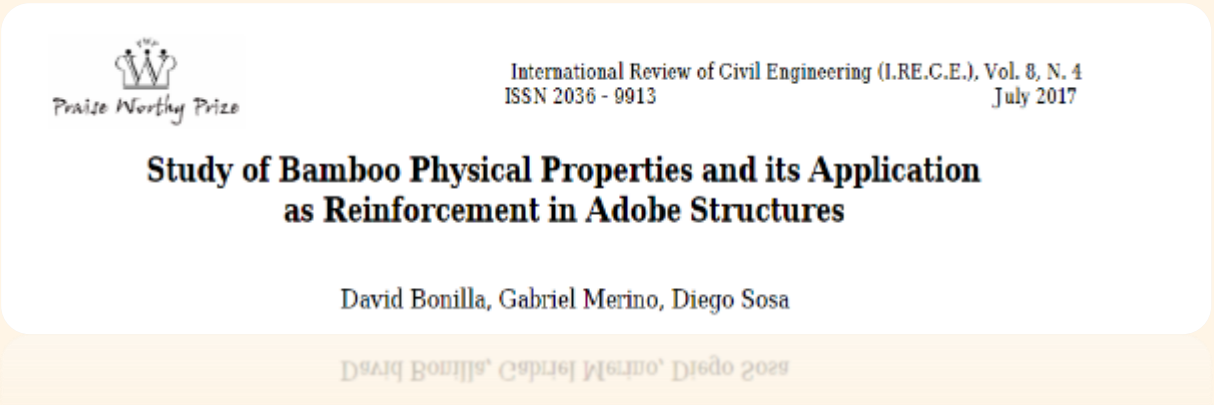


Ceyda VARLIBAŞ, 19, Turkey, Female

Ceyda is a 19-year-old law student and a true inspiration to her peers. It doesn't matter that war is raging on her country's borders, or that Turkey is facing economic difficulties. She wants the best; she's going for the best—check out her resume!

I am the founder of a publication platform for law students across Turkey at my university. Previously, I worked as an intern at the Harvard University Policy for The People Organization and as a beginner designer at Yale Entrepreneurial Society. I participated in many hackathons held at MIT, Harvard, Yale, Stanford, Brown, UCLA, and Cambridge and started my entrepreneurship journey there. I want to describe my entrepreneurial journey with a sentence that impressed me very much: "To find a summer that I cannot beat inside me in the coldest time of winter."

David Jahel Bonilla Sánchez, 26, Ecuador, Male


Praise Worthy Prize

International Review of Civil Engineering (I.RE.C.E.), Vol. 8, N. 4
ISSN 2036 - 9913 July 2017

Study of Bamboo Physical Properties and its Application as Reinforcement in Adobe Structures

David Bonilla, Gabriel Merino, Diego Sosa

Coming quickly back to David here (inspired to make earthquake-safe buildings), check out this impressive achievement.

I did my Bachelor's thesis on the use of alternative materials such as bamboo and adobe bricks to build earthquake-resistant structures. The project got published in the International Review of Civil Engineering—Praise Worthy Prize Journal, the title of the article is "Study of bamboo physical properties and its application as reinforcement in adobe structures". Furthermore, I gave a local conference about it at Universidad de las Fuerzas Armadas—ESPE.



Anuj (AJ) Manchanda, 19, Thailand, Male

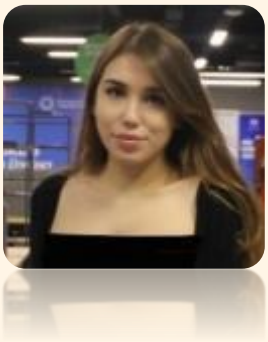
Anuj is an inspiring young man who has done so much already at such a young age. He chose not to hide from the slums that were a mere five kilometers from his home; instead, he went to visit them to figure out ways to help the despairing unemployed of the region.

I worked alongside Manish Sethi to initiate a socially conscious business called Rescued Glass. Through developing a relationship with various bars and restaurants around Bangkok, we collect used glass bottles and recycle them into decorative household items like drinking glasses or snack bowls. Rather than falling into the same trap of donating our funds to charity and using quantitative evidence to 'sell our story,' the empowering tone of my melody motivated me to take our team to directly interact with the Khlong Toey slums. With the preliminary funds we gained from selling our products, we purchased over 20 glass cutters and worked with Second Chance in Klong Toey to educate young adults about safe glass-cutting practices to earn an income, whilst also empowering unemployed women in the Khlong Toey slums to earn an income by producing our upcycled packaging made from used clothes.

Aside from his forward-thinking altruistic actions, he's also achieved the following:

- Achieved the Global Citizenship Diploma with Distinction.
- Achieved a perfect 45/45 score on the International Baccalaureate examination (Top 0.21% of all candidates)
- Amongst 39 students to receive a full ride scholarship to the University of Toronto.
- Being heavily engaged in trips to build an artificial reef in Thailand's “Turtle Island”
- Developing various initiatives within the school such as producing a show called “Falcon News” and creating an anonymous bullying report system as the vice president of the student council.
- Led and grew an Instagram page called “Humans of Bangkok” or @hobisbkk that shared stories to inspire Thailand’s youth.
- Sang in various events, most notably the Global Goals World Cup, with actor Nikolaj Coster-Waldau in attendance.

Not only does he have a great voice, but he's also using it to inspire and motivate the youth of Thailand to take action and drive positive change. It's amazing how a catchy tune can be so effective in spreading a powerful message and creating a ripple effect of impact. He's truly singing the right song in every sense of the phrase!



Aytaj Kalbaliyeva, 23, Azerbaijan, Female

Aytaj sees that her country isn't perfect, but she doesn't blame anyone. She's resolved to carve her own path in her country's capital Baku. She is actively working toward a better future for her country folk, and her personal achievements are steadfast in that direction.

Throughout my university years, I worked on diverse projects together with fellow students for the purpose of solving problems in our native land. One of them was related to reducing the amount of paper waste with the assistance of recycling as well as raising awareness in society, thereby mitigating the negative consequences of this action on the environment. Despite the fact that it was a small-scale project in the beginning, the reverberation it brought along was colossal in Baku. International experience is one of the necessary elements for being a highly-skilled worker; therefore, I applied for an internship opportunity at the European Parliament. I was one of the few selected people who had a chance to witness how one of the EU institutions functions and deals with the issues of its member states. I decided to volunteer at one of the non-governmental organizations. Translating documents, organizing awareness events and helping people in need became valuable parts of my experience in this place since I felt like a useful member of my country.



Andrew Okello, 22, Uganda, Male

Andrew is a young man set to become a leading data scientist with one goal in mind: to improve the healthcare system of his country. A truly altruistic vision to work toward. He is very much involved in computer and data science and has completed many online courses, along with his university studies.

I am a person who is interested in leadership and teamwork and this is seriously backed up by my current roles as a volunteer at the OpenCode Foundation, StartHub African ambassador for my university, and also the co-lead of the student developer club at my school. I have also been lucky to be a seed for the future, this is a program organized by Huawei technologies. I have also been able to join the OpenCode Foundation as a volunteer to help extend computer science to communities that have no access to computer education.

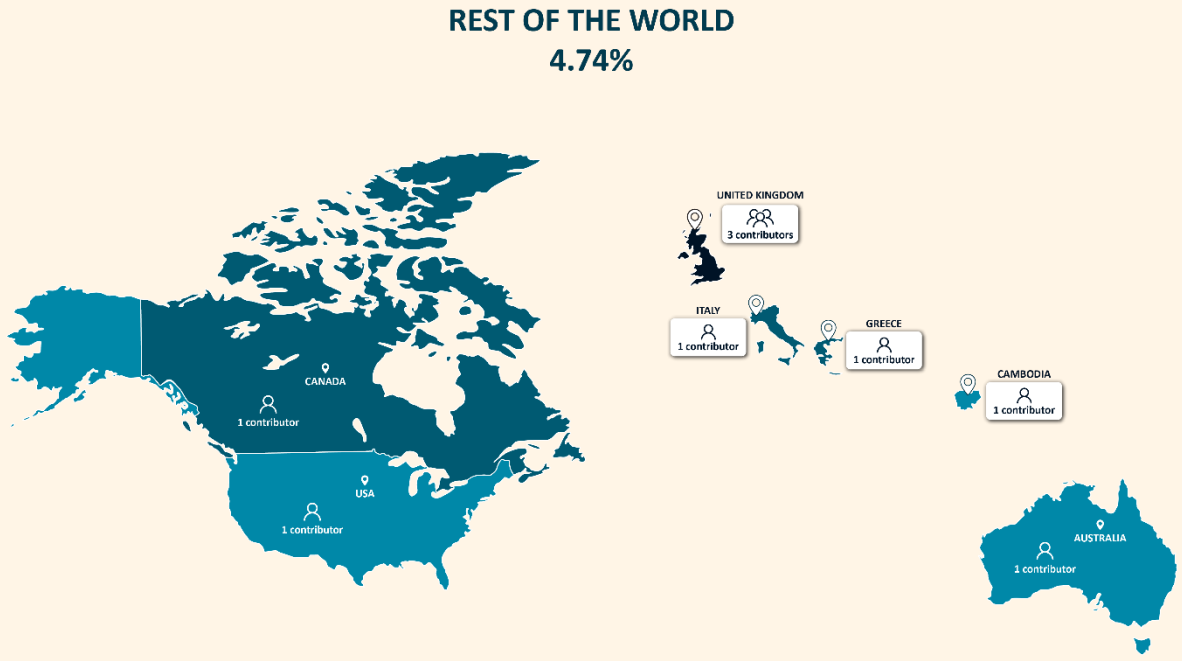
Fariha Tasnim, 24, Canada, Female

THE COHORT COLLECTIVE WAS FOUNDED WITH ONE GOAL IN MIND. EMBOLDEN THE GEN Y + Z CAREER.

As a woman of color in STEM, Fariha explains how hers is not the path of least resistance. But through the constant barrage of impediments, she's had the support of incredible communities by her side. It's not only allowed her to break through as a standout leader, but also to advocate for people like her in the process.

The Cohort Collective is a standout accomplishment of mine. As a Gen Y + Z career coach, I founded The Cohort Collective to support students who fall into marginalized communities, equipping them with the mindset and skills needed to accelerate their career development. I'm looking forward to building my firm and expanding my reach to champion the Gen Y + Z career.

Fariha is driven by two core elements—to be fulfilled and make an impact. As long as she's progressing with that intent, she's a happy woman, so she tells us.





Chane Naude, 25, South Africa, Female

Chane understood very early on how it was her family's sacrifices that allowed her the privilege to a good education, a roof over her head, and food and clothing. She is a young woman who recognizes that hard work and perseverance pays off.

I had the honor and privilege of being the first person in my family to attend university. With this enormous honor came great responsibility to pave the way for my family's generations to follow. I completed my Degree in BCom Entrepreneurship and Business Management at North-West University. Knowing that I needed something extra to give me the competitive edge I needed to get into a well-known organization. I decided to study for another year to complete my Honors Degree in Entrepreneurship and Marketing.

In South Africa, most parents can't afford to send their children to pursue further education, and although we were in a similar boat, my parents sacrificed and bent over backwards to ensure that I had that opportunity. I put in many hours in the library to ensure that my marks were the best they could be to ensure that I could apply for merit bursaries every year. While studying I also took on a few part-time work opportunities that would provide a form of income. I sold my subject notes, worked as a lecturer's assistant, worked at a second-hand book store, and even signed up to be a hostel representative ensuring that all under my guidance stayed informed and in line with the rules set out for us to live in the post-graduate housing. While taking on this leadership position I learned that leadership is not a title, but an example.

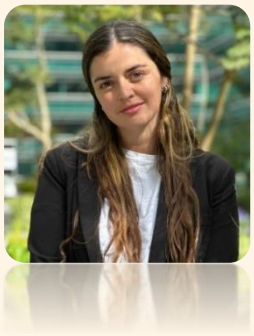


Leen Elkhatib, 20, Lebanon, Female

Leen is a true inspiration to those who wish to break out of societal norms. She chose to rise rather than to succumb to the reality she was born into. She ranked first in South Lebanon in the official Lebanese Baccalaureate exams, received a fully funded scholarship to study at one of the most prestigious universities in Lebanon, and is an undergraduate senior studying Marketing with a minor in Advertising and PR.

I have a Beta Gamma Sigma lifetime membership due to my high CGPA. I have recently won Unilever's own regional business cases competition "The Quest 2021" which started off with over 10,000 participants from all over the MENA region, and I was among the three finalists selected to represent the MENA region in the global Unilever Future Leaders League competition. As for what's coming next, my ultimate motto for my future choices would be led by the fact that I strive to constantly reflect on my actions and beliefs and amend them to beget self-actualization, while simultaneously helping other people find their own voice and aspirations through exposure to opportunities, guidance and sharing my own story and takeaways.

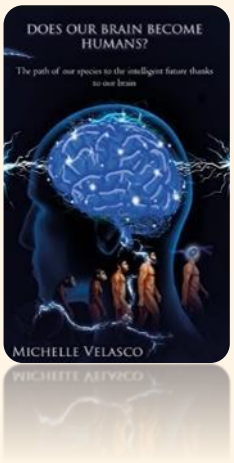




Micaela Pallares, 25, Ecuador, Female

Micaela is charismatic and sociable, two traits that have helped her get to where she is today. She has worked for some of the top companies in Ecuador in the insurance and medical industries, while overcoming the difficulties of dealing with her mother's illness. Her goals for her future include gaining more experience and completing a master's degree in Europe related to entrepreneurship, customer experience, and leadership.

Networking I believe is one of the most important tools in life and that can only be achieved with a good attitude.



Michelle Velasco, 28, Ecuador, Female

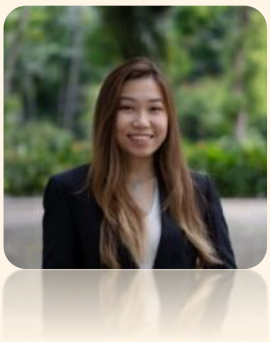
Michelle is a published author in a very complicated field: neuroscience. She describes herself as a simple human seeking to discover the secrets kept in our brains that leads our species to govern planet earth—a very ambitious goal for someone who considers themself "simple". Her primary course in education was Business Administration, but she always had these questions burning inside of her. She left her stable life and relocated to Australia to find her answers. She has since traveled to 16 countries and learned: ***not everything is perfect, that time is the only thing that you cannot recover from, and that we must always fight for what we want to achieve because no one else will do it for us.***

I published my book "Does our brain become human, the path of our species to the intelligent future thanks to our brain". I published it first in my country and now it is available on Amazon in my native language, Spanish, and in English. This book is only a small part of the constant learning about how our brain works. Neuroscience is a branch that we should all start studying because it objectively shows us what we are, how we act, and how we can be better human beings if we know how our brains and our biological processes work.

Martin Wairimu, 26, Kenya, Male

Martin is the first member of his family to attend university, which has given him the experience to value high-quality education. Martin believes that education is a powerful liberatory tool to induce systemic social change. He thrives on issues related to access to high-quality education, advocacy in policy, and entrepreneurship. Martin recently graduated from the African Leadership University with a BA (Hons) in Global Challenges, 1st class honors. Martin feels privileged to be the first person in my family to attend university. He's had a challenging journey growing up orphaned at the age of 5 and working through trauma caused by Kenya's 2007 post-election violence that saw his family lose everything. He is compassionate, thoughtful, and eager to succeed in making change for others.

I represented ALU Rwanda in the Hult Prize Regional competition in Nairobi where my team was 1st runner-up. In 2017 I was recognized with a service award for my leadership and commitment to improving learning. I was nominated as an Unsung leader of the Month ALU, Rwanda. Later on, I was nominated for the Humility Award and Most Likely to win the Nobel Peace prize award.



Catherine Teo, 21, Singapore, Female

Catherine is a people person and basks in large groups. For her, making new connections is the foundation for success. She allowed others to influence her choices but not blindly. She built strong relationships based on trust and from there grew her own thought process. She tried out many different careers to give herself a wide range of choices to make a well-thought selection.

Utilizing great teamwork also helped my team to emerge champions in a marketing case competition. In years to come, I can see myself dwelling in either digital or brand marketing. I wish to be a part of an MNC managing a renowned brand and be able to contribute to the greater good of consumers using that particular brand. For now, I do not have a particular brand that I specifically want to work with. If there are any brands that I instantly find interesting to play a part as a marketer, I would not hesitate to give it a try. The ball is now in the hands of employers to choose who they would prefer to take up the job role—would it be a student with perfect scoring GPA but has less working experience, or would it be a student who is more eager to contribute with his or her experiences in the relevant industry?



source



Sabina Zulfiyeva, 19, Azerbaijan, Female

Sabina is a law student in Azerbaijan who has set and achieved several short-term goals with a results-oriented approach. Thanks to her enthusiasm, sense of responsibility, and ambition, she strives to continually improve herself. Sabina believes that being sociable and having good communication skills are key to success in any field and has shown this by working as an editor for INJURIA Law Magazine and as a Director of Law Schools at ELSA Azerbaijan.

One of Sabina's immediate goals is to continue her education in law at Harvard University in the United States, with the ultimate goal of contributing to the restoration of justice in her country and society. She believes that a country's strength is not only measured by economic growth but also by the protection of citizen rights and justice. Sabina's attitude towards her work and life is that patience is key to success and that obstacles should not prevent one from achieving one's goals.

During my preparation for the university entrance exam, I aimed to enter the faculty of law with the highest score. I moved forward in this direction confidently and achieved my goal and became the only entrant who got the maximum score in the entrance exam among the 3rd specialty group students. Setting and achieving goals on time always motivates me, because it gives me a sense of success and I say, "I achieved". Unfortunately, some factors may prevent us from achieving our goals. These obstacles may be caused by several factors, such as the country and environment we live in, and the people around us. Currently, I am studying to get my bachelor's degree in jurisprudence in Azerbaijan. Unfortunately, the level of legal education in our country is lower than in European and American countries. There are several reasons for it. For example, Europeans focus more on practice, but we focus on theory. In my opinion, if the teaching was more practice-oriented, it would help us a lot in our future professional life. To fill this gap, training and seminars are held in our country instilling practical skills in students.



Obed Imbahafi, 21, Rwanda, Male

Obed is currently a student at the University of Rwanda pursuing a degree in creative design. His interests have always evolved around helping his country to move forward economically after reading and hearing about the issues of the genocide. It has also been his habit and drive to help in the transfer of knowledge to the youth and generations to come.

Came out as the first in computer electronics option in 2018. I emerged with the award of photo prize winner which gained me an unprecedented opportunity of attending a special WIPO summer school on intellectual property and transfers technology. I did not only take this course, but enrolled in many others, and I was a speaker on intellectual property at a youth innovators bootcamp 2021. As an alumnus, I have joined a network of like-minded people writing on intellectual property management and transfer technology, particularly focusing on helping youth driven start-up companies in Africa and I publish at Hubpages and co-Founderstown. The future path has already been created with a major focus on developing technology-driven innovations focused on solving Africa's pressing need in knowledge deficiencies. This idea came through inspiration from a previous idea of developing an electronic payment system in Rwanda to reduce the spread of COVID-19 through the physical exchange of money.

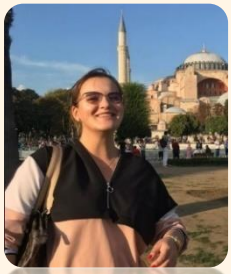
I'm optimistic that this generation of Africans will shape the course of the continent. For this reason, I will always use my hand to communicate what I have and always make it a habit to put myself at the edge with learning new things all the time.



Anna Oleksenko, 20, Ukraine, Female

Anna's journey began in middle school, where her love for learning languages, particularly English, sparked her interest in exploring the world. This led her to Estonia, where she found a program that was close to her interest in business administration. During her bachelor's studies, Anna participated in various projects, as well as in volunteer organizations. Anna's perseverance led her to a marketing internship, where she gained valuable skills and new knowledge. Anna is only 20 years old, and she is proud of who she is now, and grateful for all the challenges she has overcome. In the future, Anna wants to try her hand in different fields of business and learn from the best. Her motto is "nothing ventured, nothing gained," and she believes that even small steps can lead to great accomplishments.

During my studies at UT, I also participated in various projects, such as the Unilever Future Leaders League and the development of a startup in the sTARTUp Lab supported by Tartu University, as well as in volunteer organizations, such as the Erasmus Student Network and business festival sTARTUp Day.



Deliu Mihaela, 22, Romania, Female

Mihaela is driven by her will to move forward. She has an excellent educational repertoire and is choosing a career in coaching to help and mentor others. She's a human rights activist and actively volunteers. She finished her official trainer course and got accredited in 2021, ready to start positively changing people's lives. She's an ambitious, creative, determined, and persuasive young professional who is defined by how she handled the opportunities she was given, and how she decided to take life into her own hands from a young age. Always willing to learn and with an open mind, Mihaela considers herself a hilarious person to be always around. Her sense of humor has yet never let her down and is "*the color of my paintings*". Mihaela already has a lot to teach us at a very young age.

I did volunteer work at the Erasmus Student Network and United Nations Youth. My final thesis, also one of my best works, entitled "Studies in Terrorism—The impact of religion in international relations" led me to finish with a 4.0 GPA.



Kseniya Bromirskaya, 27, Russia, Female

Kseniya is a marketing enthusiast. She considers it as a portal to creating products that consumers actually need, accompanied by touching communication campaigns that drive brand loyalty, preferably for brands with strong meanings with a mission to make the world a better place for all of us. She dreams of building her own brand, bringing disruptive worldwide innovation to the market, with a strong social mission at the heart. Her passion is expressed through her actions and achievements, and one cannot but help admire her drive and optimistic beliefs.

My professional background is mainly around marketing. I started my journey as a trainee first at Amway, then Unilever and Nestle while I was studying at university. After graduation, I joined MARS as a participant of the Leadership Experience Program. The program is developed for young ambitious people to grow them into leaders in three years. During the program I was lucky enough to work in marketing and sales departments in Russia, and then I worked in the Global Marketing team with all the regions from the US to Australia. My favorite project I was a part of, and still am in Russia, is Sheba Hope grows. In 2022 it was granted three Cannes Lions which is the award in the ad industry similar to an Oscar in the movie industry.

My key motivation driver is about proving to people and myself that the impossible is possible. I experienced this very many times. My parents didn't believe it's possible to be enrolled in the best University in Russia. I didn't believe it was possible to create a new product for a global brand in Russia and have Europe interested in it.



Monika Jakutyte, 26, Lithuania, Female

Monika Jakutyte is the Founder of Lithuanian-based virtual leadership focused on entrepreneurial manufacturing in eSports.

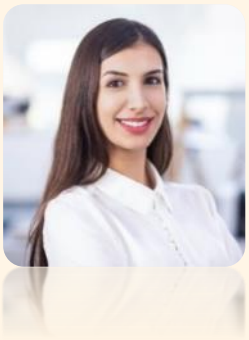
Monika created her first well-known avatar called “Hansa'' in the MMORPG game “Aion” when she was 16 years old. After the pitfall of server switches and a stolen nickname, she turned her path to start her studies in Vilnius. With previous knowledge of MMORPG skill set, she successfully transferred into the virtual fashion industry. This broke barriers between technology and the standard of “women'' for further generations. Now the Vilniaus College University of Applied Science gives lessons based on virtual fashion.

She brought fun into industries where technology is misunderstood and abused by stereotypes. In 2018, she started her career in active sales and transferred virtual leadership skills into the process of sales by increasing value and trust. It led her to the self-growth industry, where she learned from industry pros such as Tony Robbins.

She has certainly grown professionally and continues to leave her mark in the international business world.

Founder of Lithuanian-based virtual leadership focused on Entrepreneurial manufacturing in eSports. I have my own YouTube channel since 2021. I currently build collaborations with companies in Switzerland helping them build up e-commerce in NFT real estate. Basically, what I'm doing is non-existent yet.

You can find Monika on Twitch "kindnessoriginal" spreading wisdom.



Reine Metlej, 24, Lebanon, Female

Reine is a remarkable individual with a strong entrepreneurial spirit and a passion for women's empowerment. With a master's degree in civil engineering and a minor in environmental engineering, Reine started her career in sales and operation management before taking the leap to start her own sustainability-driven business, BIOwayste. Despite facing numerous challenges, Reine demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability. She enrolled in various boot camps and training programs, which helped her to further develop her business skills and achieve success with BIOwayste. Reine's passion for women's empowerment is evident in her daily routine, as she works tirelessly to promote the power of women across the globe. Her dedication and hard work have earned her recognition as a member of the Lebanese League for Women in Business. Reine believes that every challenge is an opportunity for self-discovery, and she encourages others to take risks and seize every viable opportunity.

I built my business persona that has fulfilled my readiness to work on my startup "BIOwayste", a sustainability driven business offering decentralized systems to convert organic waste into cooking gas and liquid fertilizer. I've been a warrior, I've been there and failed for years and years, until I discovered that the downs create just as much, if not more, motivation than success does. I don't hesitate to jump head-first into the next challenge as soon as the last one has been completed. Few years back I went through a very rough time and that stayed in my little world never shared with anyone. I learned and learned to become super proud of the person I am today. A 24 years young lady, an engineer, a founder of a globally rewarded tech startup, and a member of the Lebanese League for Women in Business. I believe that every successful person has her own secret success recipe. Every challenge we face makes a fulfilling experience of self-discovery. So, grab every viable opportunity and take the risks where needed, because easy is not a choice you'd want to take.

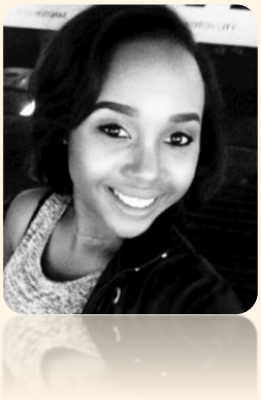


Angy Al-Gemayl, 26, Egypt, Female

Angy is a driven and ambitious individual with a clear vision and plan for her future in the world of law. Since she was born, her passion for law has been evident, believing it will play a crucial role in building fundamental rights for individuals and corporations while regulating all industries and sectors in all countries. Even though law schools graduate more than 800 students per year on average, Angy is determined to set herself apart and have a different, bright future based on a different vision and plan. To achieve this, she started her career as a legal researcher and editor while still studying, facing many challenges along the way.

Angy's hard work and dedication paid off when she was chosen to be a part of the G.World legal team, where she specialized in more than 14 investment sectors in the Middle East region, including sports investments, venture capital funds, family offices, and sovereign wealth funds. Her passion for merging sports, eSport, law, technology, and investment has inspired her to pursue a sports management diploma from FIFA/CIES and prepare for her master's degree. Angy firmly believes that the universe cannot help you unless you have a plan, and her clear plan and determination to succeed in the world of law and sports management are sure to lead her to great success in the future.

So I decided, I will be different. I started my career as a legal researcher and legal editor while I was still studying. No doubt I faced many challenges in order to be able to achieve all my goals with a keen focus on training, working and studying too. I was very lucky to be chosen to be a part of G.World legal team and as a researcher and developer specialist for almost a year, specialized for more than 14 investment sectors in the Middle East region, including sports investments, venture capital funds, family offices, sovereign wealth funds..etc.



Khomotso Madiba, 24, South Africa, Female

Khomotso holds a BA in Marketing & Communications from the AAA School of Advertising. Growing up, she was unsure of what career path to take, but always believed that she would become a successful and influential leader. Khomotso's entrepreneurial spirit was sparked during her high school years when she sent an email proposing an idea to the top CEO of an international company. She is driven by her own achievements, and her resilience and lack of fear have been instrumental in her success thus far.

Currently, Khomotso owns companies in the energy, pharmaceutical, and property industries. She was the youngest individual in South Africa to obtain a petroleum license at the age of 23, but has faced barriers due to the male dominated nature of the industry. However, this has motivated her to work even harder to open industries to young people and women, as she believes they are capable of making difficult but necessary decisions that will contribute to economic growth.

Khomotso plans to build a major city in South Africa that will be an important contributor to the economy. She believes that creating opportunities for individuals to provide for their families and help lift them out of poverty is one of the most important things she can do for the world.

I currently own a company that operates within the Energy industry. Having obtained a petroleum license at the age of 23, this has allowed me to be one of the youngest individuals to achieve this. Africa's economic growth is quite stagnant, with many factors contributing to this such as corruption, elderly leaders, inequality + Gender inequality, economic and socioeconomic challenges, etc, which all hinder economic growth.

In a few years time, I'm going to build a major city and the largest energy company in South Africa which will be a great contributor to stimulate our economy. It is time for change & for South Africa to be viewed amongst some of the powerful nations in the world. I know that I was destined for greatness. I am a giver, and further believe that creating opportunities for individuals to be able to provide for their families by doing the little that I can is imperative in affording people a chance to live out of poverty, will be the good that I can contribute to this world."

Thank you for reading these stories from our contributors. Clicking on their name will bring you to their profile to learn more about them and eventually get in contact with them.

Keep on reading for goals, hopes, and dreams...



GOALS, HOPES, DREAMS

Now that we've seen the birth of the inspiration for our rising talents, I'm sharing with you their goals. You could surely decipher that yourself from what you've already read, but many of our contributors told me their specific goals, hopes, and dreams, and I thought they'd be worthy to highlight separately. For some, their goals were nurtured from a young age; for others they discovered their direction along the path itself, spurred by sheer determination to succeed. It doesn't matter how long they've held this dream, what's important is that it progressed organically to a working, achievable goal.

Why these young talents shine so brightly is partially due to their altruistic approach to their hopes and dreams. Their mission in life is to not have material possessions—ultimately, they're striving for a better life for the next generations to come. They're actively inspiring their peers to progress and make a change politically, socially, and environmentally—in all aspects of life.



Take Mehrdad Ghassabi from Iran, for example. He spent his childhood quite alone with his computer. He didn't waste his time, however. He started programming at 13 and now his endeavor involves the creation of contemporary systems for Artificial Intelligence, other introverts and highly intelligent young people who can't find their footing in society.

"I spend more than 10 hours per day coding and studying science. This made me more isolated every day, especially in my high school days. My classmates and even some of my teachers began to pester me, those days were the hardest days in my life…"



Another savior of lost souls is Antenor Teixeira Neto from Brazil with his host of skills he wonders and thinks big.

"The combination of engineering, marketing and entrepreneurship motivates me to build a legacy and shape the future in some way. Why not connect a big brand to promote and create a pipeline for low-income artists that didn't have opportunities in the past, due to biased music producers and media channels? Why not work on big data to better understand social preferences and offer better services and products? At the end of the day, it's not about an exact milestone in the future, it's about cutting-edge transformation improving people's lives."

Here are some other goals, hopes and dreams from our awe-inspiring young talents, all of which share the same outlook as Udit Kaul ***"I'm an ordinary guy with an extraordinary dream."***



Do Huu Truong, 21, Vietnam, Male

Do Huu was thinking of global economics when he shared his goal with me. It's quite incredible that a young man of his age has lofty aspirations as such, to become an angel investor with this dream of helping small companies flourish.

The next step of my career ladder will be a position in either venture capital or private equity. Those businesses have always been well-known for their duty of leading and transforming small companies or public companies. The core of their responsibility is also related to the support towards those acquired firms. My last step in my career ladder is a seed investor or an angel investor with the hope to give potential companies funding to thrive in this business world.



Andrej Jakovljević, 20, Serbia, Male

A natural academic, Andrej hopes that his university will become globally recognized so gifted students like himself may be better received abroad in developed countries. A young self-taught man in mathematics, programming, and physics deserves to be welcomed by any university or company of his choosing.

I am deeply moved by a desire to make the world a better place. That is why I got into engineering. For me, it is a path which will allow me to build products that will help ordinary people live better. Being from a non-EU country, it is a challenge to break through in the field of engineering to a wider audience. Although we have very good professors at our university, our school isn't well known in other countries which makes it difficult when applying for academic and industry positions abroad. I am hoping that our country will help students like me to have better mobility with other countries around the world, in order to broaden our horizons and return home with those experiences.





Benedict Kargbo, 31, Sierra Leone, Male

Not an entrepreneur, but a politician that will change his whole country. Benedict wishes to study Ethical Hacking and use all experience, including being a refugee for over 24 years, to protect, educate, and serve the people of Sierra Leone. He has a wide following with his SierraLoaded entertainment website and is an ambassador for FELS (a social enterprise he launched), yet is still concerned about and driven to improve the lives of displaced refugees in Africa.

This young man is driven and has proven how he can achieve his goals, even in an unstable situation. I won't be surprised when he appears in the presidential elections as a forerunner candidate.



Caroline Michael Asiala, 28, USA, Female

Caroline is an environmental health major with a passion for social impact. She prefers to live in developing countries to help boost opportunities rather than stay in the comfort of her globally leading home country. She is another contributor hoping to impact change economically with businesses. Uhuru Network bought B-Corp Centrico Digital marketing agency, in which Caroline grew the portion of the company serving purpose-driven organizations from 1.5% to 23% over a 2-year period.

As a strategist at Uhuru Network now I'm getting a chance to expand the work done for purpose-driven companies and be a part of a larger organization that has the potential to make a much bigger impact on the world. I hope to lead that change, expanding the reach of our NGO and social enterprise clients, and making safe, well-paid, and fulfilling remote work opportunities available to more people around the world.





Meena Abdula, 19, UK, Female

Meena hopes to change the world we live in through architecture. She wants to mix up architectural styles on an international level. Her dream is to be a part of the Venice Biennale fellowship program. In this program, she can expose herself to a variety of projects and exchange ideas with thoughtful creatives from all around the world. With these ideas, she aims to return with new trajectories on how to improve the way we build.

In general, the Middle East is filled with traditional and futuristic designs that look very different to the buildings in the UK. Climate and culture are factors for this difference that have always interested me. Having this comparative exposure has allowed me to understand the reasons behind the differences. In my case, this understanding exposed me to the possibilities of integrating Middle Eastern building techniques for the benefit of the country I live in (the UK). This is one of the things I wish to integrate into my work whenever I see fit.



Mohammad (MJ) Albdour, 24, Jordan, Male

Mohammad, or Mj as he's warmly called, is a self-named geek. He was studying mechanical engineering when he stumbled across the internet and website applications. He quickly changed his major to study computer science. **Download his free source code for niche and custom invoicing system for small to medium businesses in Jordan on GitHub*

I truly believe that good software engineering can be a major force to build a better world and that's what drives me every day. I spend quite some time learning then implementing clean-coded software such as cross-platform applications which support Android, iOS and the web. I'm able to achieve this with the help of amazing software development technologies engineered and delivered by smart and caring engineers at Google. Hint: I aspire to work there in the future!



Mayyada Abdal Salam, 25, Palestine, Female

We got to know May earlier with her drive to succeed. It comes as no surprise that her goal in life is to become an advocate for refugees to gain fair educational and employment opportunities.

I aim to spotlight an uncommon kind of suffering faced by refugees other than sustaining food and accommodation: learning opportunities scarcity. In my journey so far, I come to realize that belonging to an unknown spot of the world can automatically disqualify you from an opportunity. As I said earlier, I had to learn everything in my life the hardest way; I learned languages, contract drafting, public speaking, and communication and I prepared for TOEFL, ELETS, DELF and GRE entirely on my own, and I am satisfied with the outcome. However, I imagine how more fruitful the outcome would have been if I had received proper training by experts in the field?! I aspire to become an influential leader advocating for humanity and justice, empowering the helpless youth of my nation and other miserable nations.



Mohamed ElFouly, Egypt, Male

Mohammed is probably one of the smartest men in his country, headlining our pool of talented rising stars. His 4.0 GPA broke university records and opened up many opportunities for his progression. But he doesn't want a simple, comfortable role. He's eager to continue being a self-proclaimed life-long learner. He also took the initiative and arranged a partnership between his university and Coursera, resulting in hundreds of student enrollments and completions of online courses from elite universities and companies. He actively teaches advanced modules: Algorithms, Data Structures, and Computability, Artificial Intelligence, as well as Data Management and Analysis.

I looked for non-traditional ways to deliver the content. For instance, regarding the Algorithms and Data Structures course, I tried to implement a more practical approach to presenting the subject, whilst maintaining the priority of a deep comprehension of what the essence of the module entails. As this was somewhat new to what the students were used to, I faced some discontent at first, which drove me to look for alternatives to my presentation, without altering my original goal, so I added a fun part to the learning process which abstracts the tedious process of learning behind somewhat funny games.



Camryn van den Bergh, 23, South Africa, Female

Carmen grew up in the privileged part of South Africa. She went to private schools and had a secure life ahead of her. She had lived a sheltered life and didn't realize till very late in life the disparities that existed in her own country. It was then that she felt the connection between duty and fulfillment.

My hopes and dreams are for more people to question their reality. To question what it means to be human and what it will take to see a real and productive change in the world. My goal is to continue to have these conversations or to present them to crowds of people on a TedX stand one day. I want to inspire and evoke emotion that makes people question their actions and life paths in a way that encourages them to shift direction, to find fulfillment in helping others or advocating for others. This lifetime is not made up solely of you, it involves others—a collective. This means we have a role to play in the ecosystem of life and if we don't, no one benefits.



Semanur Konur, 21, Turkey, Female

And let us not forget the wise words of young and aspiring Semanur Konur, self-described as dominant and authoritarian:

It is very important to be aware of our dreams and ourselves. These are the things that will lead us to the future. Our effort to realize our dreams keeps us constantly improving ourselves.

Ever since I realized what life is like, success has been to satisfy myself. The moment when my passions and desires won my fight with myself, I became me, I grew up. Recognize myself, humanity, nature and universe or I can say to meet. My motivations are thinking about the future, imagining my desires, and knowing that what I am fighting for will do me. Briefly, power and success are the primary motives of my life.

There is always a tendency to think of the future that has not been lived yet, the future in the mind of man. My hope for the future is that humanity will act by taking all humanity into consideration, and it is my most realistic dream to learn more, travel more and walk with determination on the road to all my goals.



Mirna Al Banna, 26, Lebanon, Female

Mirna is a busy woman who doesn't shy away from long hours and hard work. One of her dreams is to create an e-commerce revolution, focused on helping small businesses in her country to expand their reach by providing them with an online platform to sell their products. Mirna believes that e-commerce can be a powerful tool for economic growth and job creation, and she is passionate about empowering entrepreneurs and promoting financial inclusion through technology. While she isn't working on building her company Erom, she is busy as a Finance & Investment Manager at NIIAR International.

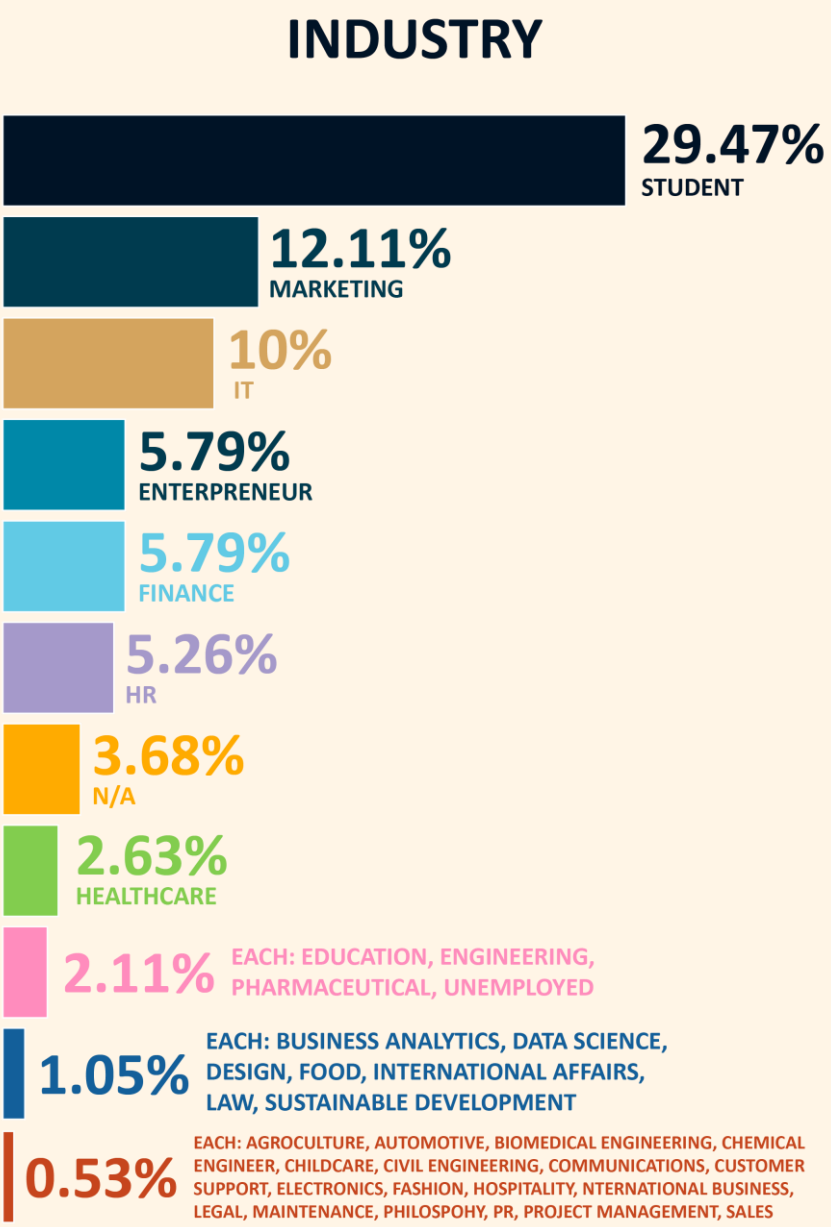
Through her e-commerce revolution, Mirna hopes to bridge the gap between traditional businesses and the digital world, enabling them to compete on a global scale. She aims to create a vibrant and dynamic e-commerce ecosystem that will benefit all stakeholders, including consumers, businesses, and the economy as a whole.

My positive attitude tends to attract other successful and positive people around me. This has helped me establish my own business lately with the idea creator and co-founder, Rami. We have developed a research team and trained them excessively on their research skills, analytical abilities and business requirements. Our company EROM.TECH is a tech solution provider, a business consultancy firm that provides numerous consultancy services all of which are paper-free, encourage sustainability practices, and help with the e-commerce revolution, especially to our lagged-behind beloved country, Lebanon. One of our current major projects is an online platform that connects the big wholesalers to the legal retailers in the Food and Beverage Sector in Lebanon. This online marketplace will be the needed medium to make sure all the trading activities are happening with minimal margin of human error, environmental pollution and, most importantly, in a cost efficient manner. We plan to launch this solution in Lebanon and abroad, and we are communicating with the official organizations to try to get their accreditations and exclusivity on this activity. In other words, our platform will be the only certified platform in the country, in that specific industry. We are also in the phase of searching for the right fund providers to fund our project so that we can accelerate our success.

Lebanon's current situation made it hard on current businesses to survive and stay profitable, and that's why at NIIAR we expanded our operations regionally, but this same situation created opportunities for other lines of business, and that's what my company, EROM, is trying to exploit. My partner, Rami, and I, with our research team, are trying to find the right solutions to the current medium of business by providing financial, marketing, strategy, management and corporate consultancy, as well as trying to protect the trading activity between wholesalers and retailers from recurring business interruptions (due to lockdowns and inefficient sales processes).

Having all these activities happening altogether, is extremely exhausting and requires more than 15 hours of daily productivity and work, but this makes me feel proud of where I am and what I do, and I find real passion and pleasure here where I am.

Everyone has the seed of accomplishment and success within, but not everyone knows how to create the right medium for growing this seed and nourishing its output. I believe people should follow certain habits and acquire certain traits to make this possible. I personally believe that my strength and the main reason for my accomplishment so far is two things: consistency and dedication, as well as great time management.





Maryse Abi Haidar, 21, Lebanon, Female

Maryse Abi Haidar has a goal to be happy and make other people happy, to be successful and help other people succeed. She wants to help and empower the youth through giving them essential training, such as the power of emotional intelligence, and to use her startup business, WhaleTrade, to benefit her country and people. Maryse has a passion for training and helping people around her, which led her to become a trainer in LAU's simulation programs. She wants to make a positive impact on her country, especially during difficult times, by supporting people to empower each other and stand by each other. Overall, Maryse is driven by the desire to make a difference and create a better future for herself and those around her.

I decided to challenge myself and take a step further to help my country by working on my startup business; WhaleTrade (Instagram: @whale_trade). Through extensive market study and research, I knew exactly that Lebanon needs tremendous help in its financial sector, that is why I am currently working on this startup idea that I hope will grow and be of benefit to my country (and every other country) and people. I often get asked the question, "What motivates you to do so many activities at once? How do you have enough time to do all this?", and I reply with one simple sentence: love what you're doing and you'll have more than enough time to do all of it. Dedication, discipline and commitment are needed in order to succeed, but passion is the secret ingredient to success and without it you can never call it a real victory.

My motto in life is "If there's a will, there's a way", which pushed me out of my comfort zone and made me change my lifestyle and do things that I never thought of doing. I have lived each day following the same principle; do not let time control you, control time because time, if harshly used, can lead you and your dreams to the grave without accomplishing any of them. In this universe, there are so many people living miserable lives or within unhappy circumstances, yet, no one takes the initiative to change their own situation. So, my advice for everyone reading this is: detach yourself from conformity, conservativeness and routine and, trust me, you will find your purpose and happiness at the end of the road.



Joaquín García Ackermann, 22, Peru, Male

Joaquín has clear goals and aspirations for his future. He is currently studying economics at Universidad de Piura and hopes to finish his degree and find a job that he enjoys. He is proud of the work he has done in the finance area of Luz del Sur, a leading energy distribution company in Peru, and hopes that his knowledge and skills have contributed to the company's success. Joaquín also has a passion for music and enjoys playing the piano, which he does for about a third of his day. His ultimate ambition is to make a positive contribution to his country and its development, while also building a happy family. He hopes to promote the values that he believes are being lost in today's world, such as love for family, love for oneself, and love for one's country, and believes that collective well-being must be the engine of all ambitions in order to lead a fulfilling life.

I hope, from my position in a Latin country, to be able to make this world better in terms of promoting the values that are being lost; love for family, love for oneself, and love for your country. Collective well-being must be the engine of all our ambitions that is what will make us happy at the end of our lives.



source



Juan Carlos Martínez Castillo, 21, Ecuador, Male

Meet Juan Carlos, a remarkable chemical engineering student with a double minor who is thriving academically while simultaneously holding a 100% scholarship awarded through a national contest. When he's not excelling in his studies, he's dominating the karate and track and field scene with his sights set on winning additional state and national championships. Juan Carlos also has a passion for music, playing both the piano and the harmonica simultaneously, and dreams of pursuing a career in the industry while using his tutoring skills to help others. He holds a special place in his heart for his family, who has supported him unwaveringly throughout his journey. Juan Carlos is determined to make a difference in his country's education and sports systems by overcoming corruption and inspiring others to achieve success on their own merit. His ultimate goal is to positively impact the education system by enhancing its quality and opportunities for students to flourish.

In addition, during all my activities I have met people from low-income backgrounds and some people that already have their life fixed. And it really disappoints me that most of the people that are born with a wealthy status are the ones that do not care about studies or doing something else to improve the life of people who don't have that privilege. I come from a middle upper-class status and that has made me appreciate things in life and see how blessed I am. As I said, I have been giving tutoring sessions to poor people who are smart, but due to corruption and lack of attention from their families they would never overcome their situation. By learning that I never turn down an opportunity for development because I think if I turn that opportunity down, that would be a lack of respect to the people that do not have those opportunities. And that is one of the main reasons why I have done so many things.

Finally, the most important reason for why I´m trying to be the best of what I am is that I feel that my country needs me. With all the abilities that I have gained in my life, I think it is my responsibility to give the poor people of my country the opportunity to succeed and the only way that I came up with for doing so is to become the president of my Country. I know it sounds impossible, but I think all of what I have done sounds impossible as well, but I did it. I know it is going to be hard since corruption levels will be higher there, but I have a plan which consists of getting a Ph.D., developing a new industry with my knowledge, and then running for president.



Nicholas Mangia, 24, Brazil, Male

Nicholas is a curious individual who has always been interested in knowing how things work. He has a passion for the technological world and his dream is to contribute positively to the development of society. As a child, he loved to disassemble old electronics and spend hours in front of a computer. With the advent of the internet, he had no limits to seeking knowledge, which led him to pursue computer engineering at university. He left his hometown to search for better opportunities in the big city, aiming for a better quality of studies and more job opportunities after graduation.

During his university years, Nicholas got his first job as an intern and took advantage of the opportunity to learn from his co-workers with years of experience in information technology. He has a strong desire for continuous improvement and sets goals to explore new stages in his life. After completing his internship, he landed his first job in cyber security, an area he has always been fascinated with, due to its broad applicability in our lives.

Nicholas' greatest aspirations and desires are to contribute positively to the development of society and elevate people's feelings of happiness, satisfaction, and well-being. He hopes to inspire future generations in their professional and personal development, and he is envious of the vast knowledge that future generations will be able to enjoy. Despite having made good progress in his career, Nicholas believes that there is still much to achieve, and he is determined to keep moving forward.

I take my life as a process of continuous improvement, where after reaching a stage, I then set goals to explore a new one. Today, in view of where I came from and what I have already achieved, I can say that I managed to make good progress, but many things are yet to come.

From now on, I am envious of future generations, generations who will be able to enjoy the vast knowledge accumulated in the most diverse themes, after years and years of development and progress of science and society.

My greatest aspiration and desire is to be able to contribute positively to the development of our society, in order to elevate people's feelings of happiness, satisfaction and well-being and inspire future generations in their professional and personal development.



Mariana Vaitiare Ramírez Silva, 25, Mexico, Female

Maria loves her country, Mexico, and believes that it has the potential to become a first-world country. She believes that Mexico needs to invest more in education and provide a decent healthcare system to its citizens. Maria wants to give back to her country by generating jobs and creating better Mexicans that positively transform their environment. She is proud of her achievements, such as graduating from college while having two jobs and learning to put herself first without falling into selfishness.

Maria's goals for the future include growing her business, achieving a balance between her passion for helping people and her love for business, and pursuing a master's degree in economics or neuromarketing. She also wants to travel and learn about different cultures and places in the world. Maria has great expectations for the future and has a lot of confidence in herself. She believes that it is important to enjoy the present and work towards the future without letting the opportunity of living day by day pass by.

Maria hopes that humanity starts focusing more on emotional intelligence and becoming better people. She wants to make the world a better place by transforming her surroundings through humility and service.

I hope I will be able to generate jobs alongside the business that I started as well as from my current job, with the purpose of forming better Mexicans that positively transform their environment. My hope is that humanity starts worrying about emotional intelligence. I hope with all my heart that every day we can be better people and more empathetic, get excited by the achievements of our peers, and borrow that reason to achieve our own dreams. Maybe while you're reading this you might be thinking that I have too much faith in humanity and, well, why lie to you if I do?

I want to make this world a better place starting with me, learning, studying, getting to know myself, being a better sister, friend, future mother, future wife, future boss, while keeping in mind and looking forward that the manner of each action that I perform ends up transforming my surroundings by way of humility and service.



Aygul Ismayilova, 32, Azerbaijan, Female

Aygul's hopes, dreams, and goals include becoming a professional in the IT field and creating a higher-level ERP system through the analysis of all ERP systems. She also aspires to establish a school that will allow talented students to innovate in the field of IT with a rich material and technical base, and a high level of education. Additionally, she dreams of working in a company that makes discoveries in the field of technology, given her creative talent and desire to discover innovations. Aygul believes that giving back to others is an essential aspect of life, and she values the positive impact of acknowledging and complimenting others. Despite facing challenges in her career, Aygul remains dedicated to her goals and motivated to achieve them.

In the future, I want to establish a school that will allow talented students to innovate in the field of IT with a rich material and technical base and a high level of education. Technology is growing fast and changing our lives, which our future depends on. But technology is developing slowly in our country despite many talented young people. We must guide young people in the right direction and use their potential for the future.

I have faced many challenges in my career and also achieved many successes. Sometimes I decided to give up halfway through difficult times. However, our goals, our love of our job, our desire to succeed prevent us from doing this. My biggest dream is to work in a company that makes discoveries in the field of technology. Because I have a creative talent, and my desire to discover innovations that do not leave me comfortable. In our country, such companies have not yet developed much.

Life isn't about possessions and accomplishments. It's about what you've done with those things—what you have given back. It's about caring enough for others and seizing the opportunity when you have the chance to do some good. Nothing feels better than giving someone an honest, heartfelt compliment. When you start acknowledging beautiful things about other people we can guarantee the positive messages you put out into the world will come right back to you. Plus when you start focusing on the best of others it will literally change your view of the world.



Sonja Babić, Serbia, Female

Sonja's dreams and aspirations are nothing short of impressive. Her main goal is to establish her own digital marketing agency and build a great team that provides top-notch marketing services in her country. However, Sonja understands that achieving this goal will require taking things step-by-step and being patient. In addition to her professional ambitions, Sonja is also dedicated to giving back to her community through humanitarian work. She sends gift boxes and financial donations to children with health problems and those without parental support. Furthermore, she wants to tackle the problem of animal cruelty in Serbia by working legally on animal shelters' issues. With her ambition, drive, and passion for marketing, there is no doubt that Sonja is well on her way to achieving her goals. And, with her dedication to making a positive impact on her community, she is sure to inspire many along the way.

My journey started a long time ago when I started my university experience after finishing the Russian Embassy High School in Belgrade. I used to live in Belgrade when I was young but because of my father's work we had to leave as a family to live in Moscow, Russia. After three years we came back and I was sure that I would leave for Moscow again as my wish was to study political sciences there. But my adventure led me to the Faculty of Organizational Sciences which was believed to be the best university in Serbia. I have studied Management and Organization at the Faculty of Organizational Sciences at the University of Belgrade and got my Bachelors degree after 4 years of studying. During my studies I was a part of several student organizations such as ESTIEM, FON's career center, and Students' parliament. After all this experience I was sure that my interest in life is to study, learn and practice more in marketing. My hopes for the future are to get my own digital marketing agency and to have a great team that will work together and provide the best marketing services in my country.



Tatjana Burg, Serbia, Female

Tatjana is a curious and eager learner who values personal and professional growth. She holds a bachelor's degree in management and public relations and an MBA degree with a specialization in marketing. Tatjana strongly believes in social responsibility and sees it as a crucial aspect of successful business practices. She is motivated by the end results of projects that support local communities and improve the quality of life of end-users. Despite facing obstacles on her career path, Tatjana has learned that there is always a choice and an opportunity to try something new. In Serbia, career growth opportunities are limited due to political and business connections trumping qualifications and knowledge. Tatjana hopes for a future where freedom and true values prevail, and where marketing is geared towards support rather than profit. She strives to contribute to projects that improve the quality of life and knowledge, believing that marketing is the greatest resource in the world if used for support.

My career path has been like that of most countries: with a weaker economy and quite thorny, which is probably unavoidable in such countries. The real question is how that thorny path affects you as a person. Every trial and tribulation which I have come across turned into a business lesson which allowed me to adapt to various work environments more easily. What I've learned is that you always have a choice. If something doesn't succeed, you have the choice to try something new. 20 years ago, these choices weren't as easily accessible.

My outlook for the future is connected to freedom, as we are currently in the midst of a sort of paradox. We live in a world where the availability of information was never greater, but on the other hand, censorship is at an all-time high. Journalism and reporting are no longer tied to truth but are used solely as a tool for manipulation. As I would love to say—the problem is not that you can't do anything without money, but that you can do everything with money. I would like my child to be able to one day live in a world with true values, rather than in a world embedded with short-lived sensations which serve only to numb and dull the intelligence of the masses.

I strive to make the world a better place by making sure that I'll use any opportunity to contribute through projects I work on and tie them to the improvement of quality of life and knowledge. There isn't a TV commercial that can substitute help and participation—both in local communities and on the global level. Marketing is the greatest resource in the world if it is geared towards support rather than profit. Profit will arise on its own once trust towards a brand or company is being created and well-maintained.



Presley Cornel Apson, 23, Tanzania, Male

Presley values self-care and treating others with respect, regardless of their background. He strives to be a positive influence and inspiration for others, both in the United States and his home country of Tanzania. Presley has faced challenges, including loneliness, depression, and financial difficulties obtaining funds for his undergraduate studies. However, he's proud of his achievements, including graduating soon with a degree. Presley's future goals include pursuing a music career and promoting global unity, better health, and mental stability. He wants to help others, be an achiever, and never compromise his integrity.

My journey so far has been challenging mostly because I have not been back home or seen my family members in four years. Within that time period, I have lost family members and friends either through death or through estranged relationships which has caused me to grow as a man way more quicker then I originally anticipated. Growing up as a kid, my two biggest dreams were either being able to play soccer professionally at a very high level or being able to do music professionally since I write and I am a rapper. Due to age, achieving my dream of soccer is highly unlikely; however, I hope one day I can get enough exposure, networks and connections in order to have a platform to distribute my music content worldwide.



source



Aleksandra Wróblewska, 24, Poland, Female

Aleksandra has had a passion for science since she was a child. Her dream of becoming a scientist started with a desire to become an astronomer and evolved into wanting to be a university professor. Aleksandra studied Technical Physics at Poznan University of Technology and actively participated in two Science Clubs. She was involved in Ph.D. research, conducted experiments to encourage children and teenagers to study physics, and became the president of one of the Science Clubs. Aleksandra is proud of her experiences using the scanning tunneling microscope to modify the surface of the Bi2Te3 in the nanoscale during her undergraduate research. For her Master's Thesis, Aleksandra researched the oscillation and luminescence properties of KYW crystals doped with rare-earth ions, which was challenging and exciting, especially during the pandemic. Aleksandra has always had an openness to new things and a willingness to learn, which has enabled her to gain experience in various industries and live in different countries, allowing her to meet people from different cultures. Aleksandra's perspective on being a scientist changed during her university years, and she realized that she wants to make life easier and better for people. Her involvement in the Retail Institute allowed her to work on solutions to make daily shopping more sustainable and environmentally friendly. Aleksandra's greatest impact on the project was providing ideas and solutions based on the newest technologies, and the project won in the Challenger 2.0 competition for the most innovative solutions for shopping malls' customers.

Currently, Aleksandra is involved in the creation of hotels for wild pollinators models for 3D printers. The insect hotels will be made of environmentally friendly, biodegradable polymers, and will be available for 3D-printer users and educational institutions. The main two aims of the project are creating safe shelters for insects and educating young people about the importance of biodiversity. The project was part of the LeaderSHEp in Tech Academy program and recently became part of Shesnnovation Academy, an accelerating program for Start-Ups. Aleksandra understands that her interest in the field of technology and her aim to protect the planet may seem like two entirely different goals. However, she believes that her actions can and will have a positive impact on the well-being of the planet, and she wants to use her skills and talents to change the world we live in into a better place.

I am fully aware that my interest in the field of technology, and my aim to protect our planet might seem like two entirely different goals. How can those things connect? That is a question I would like to be able to answer in the future. I realize that being born in the central part of Europe I am privileged. With the change of the climate ongoing, I was lucky enough to be born in a place that is likely to maintain conditions that will allow the human race to live. For me, it is not an excuse not to care about others. Being part of the world means taking care not only of ourselves but, more importantly, of others. I know that my actions can and will impact many people. I want the results to have a positive impact on the well-being of our planet and its inhabitants. I am strongly convinced that modern technologies can and will be a meaningful factor in the process.

And a few more worthy of mention…



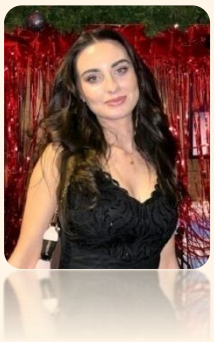
Karolína Follerová, 22, Czech Republic, Female

Karolina feels she was lucky to find employment in her country. She is ecologically minded and wants to limit the building of large complexes which destroy green spaces in cities. As an international relations student she is keen to find employment abroad where she can make use of her language skills.

Fortunately, in the Czech Republic it's not a big problem to find a job, we also have low unemployment (really one of the lowest in Europe, yes!) but I dare say it's more of a problem to find a good job that you enjoy. I was lucky, but not everyone was. Low wages are also a noticeable problem here, and they are in a really bad position at the moment with rising prices all around. Since I live in the capital, you can find work around every corner compared to people who live in the countryside, but the bad thing is that everything is much more expensive here for a not so high salary. This is where people near the border have an advantage, as the surrounding countries are incomparable in this regard. I think that it would be good to increase the salaries of teachers and health workers in particular, at the expense of the salaries of people in the office, because there are very few of them and they are very important to our society.

My big goal for the future is to get the opportunity to work in a foreign company as I enjoy English and Spanish, which I am also studying as an International Relations student, and I also want to travel further. I will try very hard to achieve this in some time when I get the necessary experience, which in a foreign company is usually required. I don't want to outright identify myself as a career type, but for the most part I am. I don't think career takes much precedence over family, but it's an important milestone in life before one settles down.

In the place where I grew up, study, and work I would still like to help, try to find some innovative solutions, and I would also like to fight against the building of huge complexes (which I have already tried to do by signing petitions, didn't work eh) that destroy the greenery around us; and every time something like that grows in a place where there was at least a part of nature in the city, a part of me gets shattered. I think it also affects the mood around us a lot. I would also like to advise the people around me to enjoy the little things and try to smile at the world, because Czechs often seem to me quite grumpy, negative and do not like to open up to people, compared to other cultures that I have had the pleasure to get to know.



Paulina Motyl, 21, Poland, Female

Is very ambitious, with a strong desire to bring controversial stories to public attention through research and journalism. She would like to be an author, using her voice to highlight the realities of social inequality, helping readers to expand their view of the world.

I studied a BA in Modern Languages (French and Spanish) for one year before pursuing a BSc in Criminology and Sociology, but I decided that it was not the path I wanted to take. I love traveling and the French language however, I decided that I would like my interest in languages to be an additional asset, rather than my main occupation. Thus, I think that my decision to change courses was one of the best decisions of my life! I initially didn't choose this degree because as 17- or 18-year-olds we are surrounded with opinions on jobs and the prospect of a good career and prosperous lives. The financial element is something that people put too much emphasis on, which is why there are so many students dropping out, or not enjoying their course because someone else made the decision for them. In my case, although I studied sociology at A-Level, it was a niche subject and there was no job role which was specifically linked to sociology, apart from teaching. However, I realized that this is its most significant benefit! I am currently in my final year and am conducting my dissertation on the effect of the Coronavirus pandemic on the Self. I would like to go on to study Sociology at a postgraduate level because sociology is a subject which encompasses everything in society. It is very eye-opening and shows the realities of what we are experiencing, for example with the Coronavirus pandemic, as we are not in control of some of the elements that are presented to us.

I always wanted to be a journalist, an investigative journalist, but now I am nowalso a researcher. I would like to uncover the realities of the social world which are not shown in the traditional media and newspapers. I like controversial stories and I would like to make people aware of these, and of the disparities between those with the most power and the weakest in society. I am very inspired by a journalist, Marcin Margielewski, and author, Laila Shukri, who write about Dubai and the many sad realities of individuals living there. As these non-fiction books are based in a huge, wealthy metropolis which is Dubai, it is interesting that the phrase which states that 'All that glitters is not gold', is true and very relevant in this context.

Although the future is unpredictable, I would like to use my past and present experiences to help me in the future which I am free to create. In the future I would like to travel and see as many countries as possible. I would like to have a happy family and a job that I love and am passionate about. Health is the most important element and so if I am healthy, I will be happy. I am looking forward to the future, however, it is important to value what is in the present and take time to acknowledge it in order to avoid stressing about the future. I would like to make the world or my surroundings a better place through possibly releasing my own non-fiction books in the future. I would like these to expand our view of the world and present controversial cases as well as different experiences that people face. I would like them to be facing the realities of social inequality. Although this may be difficult, I am up to the challenge.



Cecilia García Pimentel De Palacio, 24, Mexico, Female

Cecilia is another rising star with a desire to write, to use her talent to find a connection with others. She is acutely aware of the inequalities that exist in her home country, and how she has been fortunate to have had the opportunities to achieve all that she has due to her position in society.

It is tough to write about oneself without sounding conceited and I guess it is hard for you to read the text of a stranger. Therefore, I will try my best to relate to you by using my own words and my story. Before you read my text, I want to let you know that my native language is Spanish, so there might be a language barrier.

I am twenty-four years old, and I just finished my bachelor's degree in Psychology. I am currently working in Human Resources at a big company. Nevertheless, my real motivation is writing, I would love to become a writer and I am working on it. I already published some poems and a foreword, and I am currently editing my novel which summarizes certain aspects of my life and my culture. I love being Mexican, that's my favorite quality of myself.

Even though I have a passion for writing, right now, I must work in order to have stability in my life. That is another trait that defines me, stability, and structure. I do not have the soul or strength to give up everything in order to become a writer, and that makes me feel unhappy every other day. I think that every person holds on to something while living in order to feel safe, I feel safe having an ordinary life.

We do have a lot of issues in this country, poverty, insecurity, corruption, hate, racism, and so on. These negative traits make me sad, and I try coping with them every day, but every time I hug or laugh with my fellow countrymen, I feel at home.

If I am being completely honest, I would say that I belong to the small number of Mexicans who have had opportunities in this country and if I have achieved anything in my life is because of that, not solely because of my efforts. This situation makes me feel a lot of impotence because the difference between me and the kid that sells candy in the streets is pure luck. I hate when people say, "they are poor because they want to, not because they have to be", this phrase really upsets me.

I want to tell you that I understand what you are going through if you live in a country like mine. I have been thinking my whole life about the current situation in my country, and I have had many thoughts, frustrations, and activities related to this. But I realize that the best way to overcome this was by being empathetic and loving with every person I encounter in Mexico. I am trying to transmit this emotion to every Mexican that feels bad, different, or insecure. I know it sounds a little irrational to say that this insignificant action is the solution, but I see it as my own rebellion against this unfortunate situation.

I would love to say that I have a bigger plan or a solution to all of this, but after putting a lot of thought into it I realized that my way of giving back to the world has to do with my own perspective of life. In the only situation I feel completely safe is while reading a book. Every author I have read has given me something to hold on to such as hope, love, a hug, a smile, an emotion or just words, simple but authentic words. This is what I want to do. In gratitude to my favorite authors, I want to make one person feel safe and secure, regardless of their external situation, by reading one of my poems and texts. I am putting a lot of effort into being as authentic as possible in my writing, in order to connect with someone, even if it is just one person.





Karolina Korockina, 21, Latvia, Female

Karolina is a talented equestrian and athlete. With ambitions in her further education and in business, she wants to support upcoming artistic talent, while highlighting global issues such as war and environmental change.

I am passionate about luxury business and sport. At 21, my qualifications include 10 years of professional horse-riding experience in showjumping, being nominated as the 2nd best junior athlete in Latvia according to the Youth Olympiad results and 10 years' experience being involved in a luxury furniture business. The path in the furniture business involves the organization of exhibitions in Europe, such as Decorex or ImmCologne.

I am passionate about luxury, art and its distribution, which inspired me to create an online store platform.

My ambitions are to develop the family business of luxury furniture and open an art gallery (or even galleries) in Paris and worldwide. The purpose of the gallery is to distribute the art all around the globe, give a green light to talented artists, and unite the world by paying attention to global issues, such as wars, global warming, and animal species extinction. The other goal is to create a jewelry brand which specializes in natural stones, which have a particular healing effect on the human body. My major drives are to make the world a better place, by people for the people.

Nothing motivates more than personal growth and self-exploration through the challenges that you face during your journey, which hopefully, in the end, brings positive changes and beauty to this world. The achievements that made me proud apart from the professional sports achievement are participation in the European Union model simulations, which allowed me to win the journalism contest, write articles and take an interview for the geopolitical journal Eastwest. I often take part in voluntary activities, such as UN or EU simulations, sports event organizations and animal healthcare projects. Helping my friend with the financial startup and contributing to it by writing financially oriented articles makes me happy. My next goals are to do the Business and Communications Master's degree in Paris, open an art gallery and a jewelry store. I want to give the possibility to talented artists to be noticed and to be commercially successful. The primary goal is to attract attention with the help of art to environmental issues, wars and animal extinction.



Sigita Rautmane, 28, Latvia, Female

Sigita sees good in everyone. Her main drive in life is to use her experience in people management and qualification as a professional coach to inspire people and to help them to overcome the difficulties they might be facing in their lives. She believes that a happy and satisfied population will make the world a better place.

I am a simple and positive person with many years of experience in people management. I love to work with people, help them grow in their professional field, support them, when needed, etc.

8 years ago, I couldn't imagine that my professional life would look like this. At that time, I was studying Chemistry at University and started to work in this company due to the most popular reason for young people—I needed my own money; I wanted to be financially independent of my parents. My first position was Game Presenter in an online Casino. In the beginning, I thought it would be just a temporary job for the summer, however, I liked it so much that I decided to stay for a longer time. Later, when I felt that I was a professional in the field and I got stuck in "Automatic mode" by doing the same thing every day, I made a decision that I have to move further. I applied for the Team Managers position. I felt that this "thing" was meant for me. I was, and still am, passionate about psychology and knew that I like to work with people, communicate with people, help them to solve their problems, etc. I wanted that so badly that they hired me for this position, most probably due to the fact that my eyes were sparkling when I spoke with them in an interview about the position and the field itself. Now I am in this position for 7 years already. There have been a lot of challenges along the way, however, I have always kept on track, as I know that hard times make us stronger and with this belief, I'm unstoppable.

I truly believe that there are no unsolvable situations, and we always learn something valuable from those hard times. I am a person who never stops learning. I feel ALIVE when I "grow". My motivation is my willingness to help people be better and in the future to make even more spectacular changes in their lives, therefore, I am on my way to becoming a professional coach. I will receive my certificate in March 2023. With this and all the additional knowledge that I constantly gain, I will be able to fulfill my mission in life—inspire people even more and help them to overcome hard times and troubles in their lives. I will help them to see the world differently by showing what prevents them from doing it and help them to live their life to their fullest. I truly believe that there is always something good about everything and everyone, and each and every person has the potential to make their dreams into reality. My job will be to help them see the way they can do this. That will be the next step in my career. I truly believe that happy and satisfied people will make the world better. I cannot wait to do this and be part of this.



Harambe Qondela, 22, South Africa, Female

Harambe means ‘unity’, and Harambe believes that her name reflects her personality as she is someone who can interact with people from any walk of life. She hopes to give back to the world by supporting youth development, and the construction of sustainable buildings, especially homes for those people who are most in need.

I am currently pursuing an honors degree at the University of the Witwatersrand, from which I also obtained a BSc degree in Construction Studies. My character traits include honesty, compassion, outgoing, courageous and that of leadership. What defines me as a person is my ability to interact with people from all walks of life. I am one who believes in the spirit of Ubuntu that is “I am because you are and you are because I am”. I believe in the spirit of unity (my name actually means unity) and to always show respect to people as you may never know what that person may contribute to your life. My father taught me that respect is not earned, contrary to popular belief, and the older I get, the more I realize the truth in that.

I one day hope to positively impact many lives through the work of my hands. I plan on owning a construction company that will specialize in sustainable building and will also give back to my community through building homes for the poorest communities. I also want to open a youth development center, in honor of my father. The center will develop the youth through school and technology and aim to inspire the youth to follow their dreams by exposing them to endless possibilities. I would also like a jazz lounge because I am a lover of music. What motivates me is the love I have for all that I would like to achieve. I definitely believe that where your heart is, there also your treasure will be and so it is important to always guard our hearts and check our intentions at all times.

One of the achievements I am proud of is completing my degree in record time in one of the most rigorous universities in Africa. My next short-term goal that I am looking forward to is completing my honors and getting employment (another challenge, employment).



Kabuye Andrew Benjamin, 22, Uganda, Male

Kabuye sees the world through the lens of love. He wants to empower and support people to reach their full potential through existing charitable organizations and, one day, through the creation of his own.

Am an African from Uganda, currently a student looking forward to achieving an award of a bachelor's degree come 2022. I am a jolly person, supportive and loving. I love to look at everyone close to me not only as a friend but as a brother, and also love to look at strangers not as strangers but as friends and wake up every day knowing I will make a new friend.

Right, love, persistence and being a go-getter define my life. I am not perfect, but I love doing what is right always because something done right does not only positively affect me but also the people around me. I don't give up on what I want to achieve, no matter how tough it gets. I keep fighting because I know the success achieved is worth the fight. I always look out for opportunities and try to strive hard to achieve them. Even if I lose out like have lost out too many, I don't lose hope: I know that tomorrow a better opportunity may come my way

My ambition is to be a person that empowers, inspires, and helps others most especially fellow Ugandans to discover their potential in life and in society, gain the esteem that regardless of their imperfection they can be positive change makers in this world. Currently I help out needy people and talk to my fellow students as well as friends and am really happy to have seen many of them transform and also no longer look at only themselves, but also mold themselves to live to inspire others.

I have had a chance to acquire education unlike many fellow Africans who also attain but most times due to unbearable circumstances fall out. I have acquired knowledge. I am proud to be a person that encourages and supports others, and a person onto which other people look up to and believe in. I have been a leader at college from my first year and hopefully had a great impact in the sector that I was leading. I look forward to transforming from just a leader to an inspirational leader, not only to my comrades but to the entire country, and have a good impact in inspiring, motivating and equipping fellow Africans with knowledge to know their worth in this world.

My dream is to see Africans and an Africa where people achieve all the primary necessities of life such as education, health. A country where people believe and understand their worth and the role they have to play to promote prosperity among all the people. I also look forward to joining more great charitable organizations, if possible, setting up mine so that I can reach out to more people that are marginalized in my country.

Promotion and encouraging the spread of love is the way I think we can make this world small enough for all of us to interact. Love among mankind eradicates all the divisions since all of us can be able to appreciate the beauty we hold regardless of the differences such as color, tribe, religion, enabling proper interaction. Spreading love is among one of the core values I think we can use to make the world open for all of us to be proud to live in.



Cynthia Fata, 21, Lebanon, Female

Cynthia has been passionate about engineering since she was a teenager and rose above the negative comments about being a female in this field. She wants to use her knowledge and position to rebuild her country, support the development of Lebanese electricity production, and inspire other women and girls to follow their passion for electrical engineering.

I am a 4th year electrical engineering student at Saint Joseph University in Beirut. My passion for math and physics started at the age of 16, that was the time when I decided that I wanted to pursue my education in the engineering field. I heard many negative comments like "you are a girl, do something easier", "engineering is for boys only", and many more negative comments that made me more sure of myself that engineering is the road I will follow at that time. Today I became one of many female electrical engineering students who refused to abide by the traditions of society and are willing to inspire many young girls to pursue their degree in electrical engineering.

It has been more than 30 years since Lebanon has no electricity 24/7, knowing that it is a country blessed with an abundance of water, wind and sun which can help in creating renewable and clean energy. The corrupt political system destroyed every sector of this country and stole all the resources from it. Even when it comes to electricity, the country has accumulated many billions of dollars in debt and till now we still have no electricity 24/7. But change is coming, and this generation will rebuild this country, and I will use my knowledge to help make a change in the electricity of Lebanon.

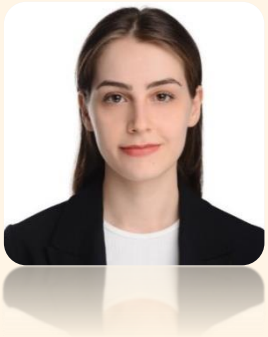


Rouba Salameh, 24, Lebanon, Female

Rouba is looking forward to pursuing her studies in social sciences and psychology and hopes to one day have her own clinic. She is proud of her journey and who she is and hopes to contribute to the redevelopment of her country.

I'm an undergraduate of Social Sciences. This is my senior year. I will be taking my BA and applying for my masters, while still figuring out what to study next. Basically I am looking forward to studying social psychology because it's the main reason that made me study social sciences, so it'll help me more to understand society and how to evolve it. I really love to help people around me more than helping myself actually. I care about everything and everyone. That's what encourages me more to be in psychology, so I can help more and make even the slightest change in someone's life. I would love to have my own clinic someday or work with NGOs to help not only my country but the whole world. My qualifications and traits are not that many. I'm an excellent listener, a great motivator, I never judge, I always look at the bright side; I am a hard worker and always trying to find something new to improve myself.

So far I had a short journey. I'm a volunteer in the church near my house, we help families and provide them food, money, moral support, and if needed material support such as warmth supplies etc… I help children after school with their homework, and try to help them succeed in their class so they can be successful in life too. I look forward to expanding my abilities and skills further, and finding myself. Living in my country with the covid incident and economy made my path harder than ever, like finding a stable job, and getting the experience I need. I co-own a copy center with my brother which made my life a bit easier. I gained more confidence and more responsibilities and skills I could never think of getting, improving my creativity skills, and expanding my knowledge with many computer software. I really hope that Lebanon will rise again and let us, the younger generation, improve it, and get it to the top again. I'm proud of the person I am right now, because it made me stronger and an achiever. I have lots of hopes and dreams that I want to achieve and I really hope someday I can make the world a better place. To help as much as I can the people around me.



Selvinaz Ezgi Bezirkan, 23, Turkey, Female

Selvinaz wants to make her parents' dreams come true, as well as her own. She wants to use her knowledge to travel abroad and then return to Turkey to establish her own company. She wants to contribute to making her country, and the world, a better, safer, healthier place for everyone.

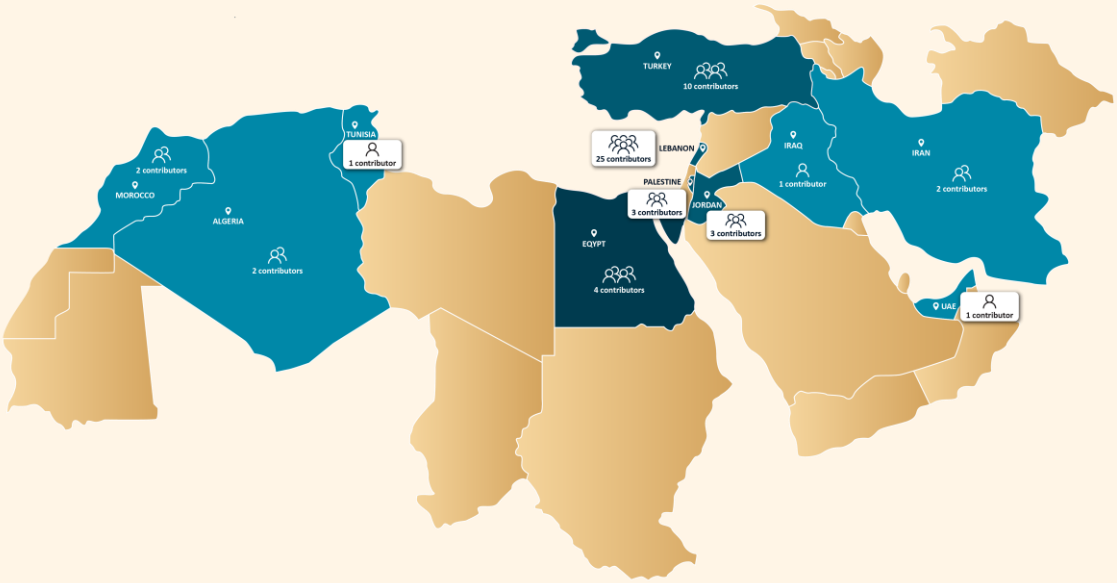
I graduated from Izmir University of Economics, Department of Accounting and Auditing in March 2021. I am a loving, compassionate and hardworking person for her family. At my school, I was known and loved by my teachers. I also worked as my teacher's assistant for a term. My teachers helped me find an internship, they were a reference. I worked a lot in places where I did an internship. I did every job, I learned a lot. But you need an acquaintance to prove yourself. I worked at workplaces with the support of my teachers. If they didn't praise me for being hardworking, maybe I wouldn't have gotten a job.

Auditing is a growing profession in all countries. In our country, companies with 4 big companies are serving in the audit. I would love to work in these companies. Since I finished school early, I decided to spend this process by improving myself instead of finding a job immediately. As you know in accounting, being CAP is a very important status. That's why I enrolled in the courses. If I pass the exam, I will be able to get a CAP license by doing an internship for 2.5 years. As I said, I want to work with one of the audit firms in this process. Audit firms are actually a school where we communicate with different customers and learn a lot. Here you can learn the information you will learn in 10 years in a normal company in 3-4 years. Of course, it is a very tiring and stressful period. But I don't want to do a steady job. I want to rise constantly. When I get a CAP certificate, I deserve many authorizations. When I work in the audit firm, I will rise one level every year. It's exciting to know this.

My father and mother want to have offices where they can do their own business. I want to support them in this period of ascension. I want their dreams to come true.

After a certain period of time, I want to work at a company abroad for a few years to improve my language and gain different experiences in a different place. When I return to my country with the knowledge I have gained, I want to establish my own company and create a new young active business environment. I want to prepare an environment where I can serve and develop my country. Business life should not be completely business life. I will defend this at every stage of my work life. The whole world is in chaos, fighting and brutal events. The world is crying. The world is disappearing. I am a little sensitive person. These events make me very sad. I will do my best so that more conscious people can exist. You can do some things by raising awareness in the people around you. And life can be better with one step of yours. I believe in this. We have to plant lots of trees and teach our children about it. Instead of unnecessary internet content, we should read and have books that can be informed abundantly. When we see a child who wants to go to school, we must pay their expenses. There are very valuable projects that will benefit our economy and our world. We must protect and increase the number of projects developed in energy systems. A good deed actually affects every field. A stronger country, first of all for the world, as a human being, as a woman, as an accountant and auditor, I do my best and I will do it even more. My hope and goal is to be doing my job and living in a more livable world.

MENA REGION
28.42%





Roanné Coetzer, 23, South Africa, Female

Roanné wants to be a global citizen and to use her skills both to develop her career and to help others. She has worked hard to get to where she is, and is keen to use data science theories to change the world by bringing nations together and preserving the natural environment for the future.

I am a young South African who aspires to inspire through the act of striving for excellence. This does not apply to academic study or the workplace alone, but the principle is incorporated into every aspect of my life. It applies to personal relationships—forming meaningful connections with people; it applies to menial tasks—approaching them with care and gravity; and it applies to tasks of pivotal consequence—viewing these tasks as opportunities to challenge and prove myself. I have recently graduated my Bachelor of Industrial Engineering degree Cum Laude and was in the top ten of my year group. I plan to further my studies into the field of Data Science, Deep Learning in particular.

As a young adult entering the vibrant and global economy, I find value in experiencing the world holistically. Travel and literature are pursuits I deem important. Exploring different cultures and world views allows for a deeper understanding into human nature and offers insight into how different nations, races, and religions can collaborate to better the world. Seeing the world and its peoples has the benefit that one starts to see oneself as part of a greater whole and not a single entity. Coming from such a diverse country with different cultures, races, and languages (11 national languages) and being exposed to these differences has opened my eyes on matters of self-importance. We are all equal in our needs. Our dreams, albeit different, are of equal importance. I would like to use my skills to pursue my goals, but I would also like to apply them in such a way that others can pursue theirs, perhaps even aid in their pursuit.

I am a native Afrikaans speaker and had to adapt to the English language, which is my second language. Communication is important, which is why becoming well-versed in English was a challenge I focused on during high school. I participated in courses to study literature, poetry, and the finer rules of the language. This journey was hard and is still ongoing. I am a firm believer in adapting to one's environment. I aspire to become a global citizen, which requires well-versed communication in a language vastly different from my own, but I am determined to continue my growth in this department despite stumbling and failing at times.

I have a deep bond with the beauty of my country. Its nature is diverse and bountiful. I want to strive to protect it in the future. This has led me to concern myself with the ecological and socio-economic problems the world (and my country) faces. In the future I want to use data science to apply the concept of the triple bottom line—people, profit, planet. It is a theoretical concept which fascinates me, and I want to see it fully realized. This means contributing to conservation of the planet's natural resources through the exploration of alternative energy sources or using the sources we have in a different, more efficient way. It also means bridging the gap between economic growth, technology, and unemployment. Lastly, it requires innovative thinking to ensure corporate success. Encompassing all three in equal measure is something industry aspires to, but I hope to one day improve it. It will require creative problem-solving and active reshaping of the world as we know it, but I am excited to see that future.

I have come a long way through hard work, dedication, diligence, and a hunger for knowledge that will never be sated. I am motivated to continue exploring the world and its people, to garner more information on emerging technologies, and to bring these concepts closer together. I am positive about the future. I have met many of my peers who are kind-hearted, passionate, and talented beyond measure—who strive to improve the lives of so many around them. I am eager to collaborate with them, to strive for excellence, and to change the world in a way which brings nations closer and preserves the natural world for the following generations.





Prisca Gebrayel, 23, Lebanon, Female

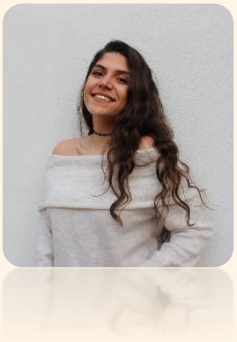
Prisca is driven by curiosity and considers everything she has learned important, no matter the subject. She is ambitious and wants to study for a PhD in research and development in food sciences with the ultimate goal of contributing to the development of better quality food and supporting innovation in product production.

Since elementary school, I've always had a passion for learning and discovery. Every course I took, whether it was at school or university, was considered a plus for me regardless if I was going to use the acquired information later on. Throughout the years, I developed skills in consistency, perseverance and most importantly critical analysis. I mastered the art of "reading between the lines" and "connecting the dots", that's why I majored in life sciences and biochemistry. In fact, it is a perpetuating cycle of learning and evolution. Moreover, I loved how biological foundations are built and learning the methods that led to modern scientific discoveries was a delight for me.

As a young woman, I have many ambitious dreams and goals that I am aiming to accomplish. I want to pursue a PhD in the field of research and development in food sciences. This way, I will be able to use my research time to make important discoveries within that field helping industries to attain better quality and innovative products. I think this can also impact to some extent the customers of such industries because they will be provided with high quality and secure food, making their lives a little better.

After my experience in the business field, I also seek to get an MBA. I consider this degree really interesting as it helps in learning business skills, such as the ability to quickly and accurately analyze large amounts of information, and the ability to develop smart solutions to business problems. These are indispensable in almost every work one will do.

Meanwhile, I will not stop working in the food industry whether as a researcher or a quality controller/food safety officer, as I am dedicated to contributing my knowledge to the industry and its customers. Hard work always pays off!



Stephanie Rahbani, 24, Lebanon, Female

Stephanie wants to make an impact and leave a mark on the world. Already, at the age of 23, she has founded 52designs, is employed as a graphic designer, and undertakes freelance projects in this field. She plans to own her own company and to support upcoming designers by working pro-bono, with the hope that they will, in turn, pay forward her generous gesture.

I am the founder of 52designs. At 23 years old, I graduated from NDU with a BA in Graphic design and have since been working as a graphic designer in an agency, alongside running 52designs and undertaking freelance jobs.

If I had to sum up what defines me in a concise sentence it would be this: I am a designer and an artist at heart that draws inspiration from the life I lead with passion and a "life-long learner" mentality. My ambitions are like any other designer who wants to make something out of themselves, to achieve things and leave an impact, or a footprint behind.

I have had many achievements in the past year including working on my brand "52designs", which allowed me more exposure and ultimately helped me expand my client base both regionally and internationally on freelance projects. I also focused more on my UI/UX projects and managed to obtain a certificate in UI/UX design with Adobe XD: Design & Prototype a Mobile App. These achievements are just the first steps of progress in my career and my brand image that I am proud of. My next goal is to expand my horizon as a designer, work more on my social media presence, promote my work locally, globally, and most importantly make my family proud because I wouldn't be where I am today without them by my side.

Seeing as the future right now is a bit hazy, I have had to miss any notion of a concrete plan and instead have had to adopt a harsh flexibility to adjust to the evolving status. My end goal, however, is to enter the world of entrepreneurship and own my design company one day, portraying and showing the world how the graphic design industry works. Being a part of the design community helped me build big dreams, such as having my own style in design, creating my own fonts, building personal color palettes and leading a group of designers.

Wanting to make the world or even a part around me a better place is something that has always been within me. Whether it is leaving small impacts on the people around me through design or helping out the people I care about emotionally or physically. I tried to make the world a better place this year mostly during the chaos happening in our country and the global pandemic by helping as many designers as possible with pro bono projects, giving as much design advice as I can and so much more. The pro bono projects I take are paying it forward, because I know that someday the designer I've helped will do their bidding and help others too.

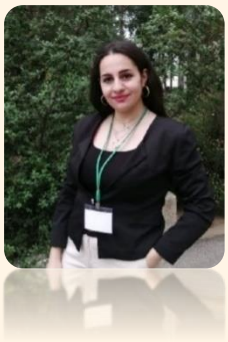


Özlem Akekmekçi, 27, Turkey, Female

Özlem believes that dreams can come true through hard work. Her dream is to be involved in economic and social research; her end goal is to reduce inequality and discrimination worldwide, and to make the world more accessible for its population as a whole.

I am planning to be an academic and to conduct my research on political economics, inequalities, democratic institutions, freedom. My ambition is to ask more questions to understand the world and life better, and to study and speak out in support of reducing inequalities. This is the motivation that shapes my life from daily habits to long-term goals. The world is meaningless, even cannot exist, without animals and nature, so I attempt to help the animals, speak up for them and try to minimize my environmental damage for a greener and sustainable future. I also think that even though sometimes it is tiring to work hard, it is also important to not lose your sense of humor. Thus, even when we cannot make the world better, we can cheer up a tiny part around us!

My dream is a more equal world for all. Although the types of discrimination and inequality varies in each country, the harms are common. By considering all identities and groups, I would like to work on equal rights, equal access to public services, and redistribution. Most of the studies and experiences show that equality reduces conflict, increases freedom, fairness, productivity, security, and happiness. We made little progress on this problem, which is way older than Lennon's dream of "all the people sharing all the world." Not only the dreamers but students, academics, artists, politicians: we all should think about equality and a more accessible world for all. It is not something we can only dream about; we can achieve this. Even though it is hard and complex, it is worth it.



Layal Al Banna, 22, Lebanon, Female

Layalis a woman with a lot of drive and a positive outlook on life. She makes decisions that may be difficult in order to achieve her goals in life. Despite her difficult journey, she has achieved her goals so far, always believing in herself, and being an example to others that they should follow their dreams, no matter what people might say to diminish them.

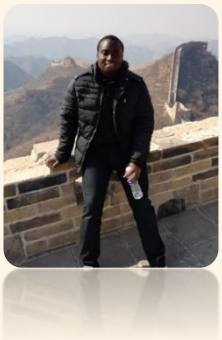
I identify myself as someone who always gives her best and strives her utmost to stay ahead of the pack irrespective of the hardships and challenges that might be encountered. I'm a person who actually enjoys empowering people, seeks out new adventures, aspires to grow, and, beyond all else, chases her dreams and ambitions. For instance, I made a conscious decision to relocate overseas in order to fulfill my visions and enhance my expertise in my field of knowledge since there were no automotive firms within my homeland. I did this on purpose to really quench my inquisitiveness about what I had constantly wanted to know and just do.

By pursuing my goals, I discovered that I was always looking for new knowledge and hankering for it. Almost everyone can agree that picking a future career is one of the most important but difficult choices they will ever make. As for myself, I began college as a computer engineer but soon realized I wasn't enjoying it or being as dedicated to it as I had hoped. I made the decision to switch my major to one that better suited my outlook on life, so I switched to the mechanical engineering department, where I truly discovered who I was, what I wanted to do with my life, and why. In this particular field, I discovered just how ambitious and motivated I am. Yes, I have had motivational slumps on several occasions, but each time, I was able to recall my life's goal. I constantly have goals to pursue and, as a result, plans to accomplish.

It wasn't an easy road for me! According to the society I was raised in, mechanical engineering is solely for males, has been conquered by them, and there is no place for women in such professions, so I decided to major in it first, and then I transitioned to vehicle engineering. In order to accomplish my objectives and fulfill my desires, I made the decision to fight for my dreams and to be resolute in my pursuit of them. As a result, I am now in possession of a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering, am overseas studying a master's degree in vehicle engineering with a focus on automotive engineering, and am working in a brake system firm, which has always been a dream job for me. I can honestly tell that my journey was not an easy one. I had to battle my society on many occasions in an effort to dispel the myth that such professions are solely for males. I also constantly sought to disprove the public's perceptions by demonstrating that women can succeed in these fields as well. As a consequence, maintaining this belief was a heavy weight for me to bear. Additionally, I would say that my society wasn't very supportive when it came to the decision to choose my job, but they unknowingly provided me a lot of inspiration to move forward and to fight for my dreams more and more, which led me to have more faith in myself and my objectives. The fact that they stood there and said that women should only work as teachers inspired me to rise up and advocate that women pursue their dreams and aspirations more.

Besides my long journey, I never gave up and always wanted to spread happiness and joy because in my opinion this act is one of the finest things someone can do to make the world a better place. So, in essence, that's what I often do—listen to people, make them smile, share encouraging words, offer support, and most importantly, show them that I care about them.

On top of that, everyone has a distinct role in life, therefore we must struggle to achieve what we set out to do. I want to encourage young people to always follow their aspirations despite what others may say and never forget that even the sky is never the limit.



Jordane Fannick Narcisse Bokpe, 29, Republic of Benin, Male

Jordane's journey has been an interesting one, both literally and figuratively speaking. He has excelled in many different environments and is on the way to achieving his biggest dream: financial autonomy.

I'm currently undertaking an MBA course In Marketing Strategy. Aside from my academic background I have had internship experiences in the Banking and Insurance sector as well as in the Hotel industry in Benin. I consider myself to be a reflective and reserved person, and my main hobbies include reading and listening to podcasts.

So far I have had an interesting journey. From the classrooms of my secondary school in Cotonou to the subways of Shanghai passing through Ghanaian roads. My home country of Benin had a huge part to play in my development. Its stability provided favorable grounds for my early years. I am happy to have not only been able to experience multicultural and multilingual environments, but also to have excelled in them.

My biggest dream is to become financially autonomous through my different investments in Technology and Cryptocurrencies. My biggest contributions to the world according to me are my 'Humane Trichotomy' projects : Minaggak, Veritas and Portfolio Inc. They can be found on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Tiktok using the following handles : @minaggak, @veritasbj and @conseilsbj



Anastasija Babarikina, 20, Latvia, Female

Anastasija wants to build a future free from discrimination, living beyond the boundaries of borders in a world of diversity that is safe and secure for everyone.

I am a Russian girl born in Latvia. This was the reason why I was raised in an international environment. I speak Russian at home, Latvian at school, and English with my international friends. I believe this is a reason why I am very broad-minded and tolerant. I quickly adapted to the situation my life conditions prepared for me and learnt to accept everybody no matter what color their skin is, or what kind of religion or cultural mindset a person may have. And I am grateful for that.

My ambitions are very high. I cannot imagine my life without learning, growth and development.. I strongly believe that in the 21st century a woman has a huge power to share her energy with the rest of the world. I want to be an inspiring person who does what she likes, who works in the position she likes. I am more than sure that it is a key for sustainable happiness. When it is achieved, I would be able to create my own family and teach my children this beautiful wisdom based on my life story and experience.

Latvia was always too small and too narrow for me. This is my biggest motivation—to learn, to grow and to expand. I am not sure what exactly I am going to do in the near future, but there are 2 possible options: to create something big and loud in Latvia or to escape to a different, bigger country.

I have had setbacks in life, but I healed, I grew and I am powerful. I have changed my mindset and learnt much more than I lost. I am proud of being the way I am and that I do not need to justify myself to others. My next goal would be to share this way of thinking with others, to make them speak about things they really care about, and destroy all the possible borders past generations or society may create. I don't really know for now, how exactly I am going to do it, but I am definitely thinking about it at least once a day.

My dream is to live in a safe and enjoyable place, where I do not need to be scared of getting fired for no reason, dying in the spotlight of a terror attack or economic poverty. I want myself and my children to live, not to survive.

I want to work on and invest in diversity. I cannot believe the fact that in 2021 we still know words like "racism" or "homophobia". Indeed, people can have their personal opinions on anything and they have all the rights to it. What I want to do is to convince them that it is not worth their time and energy. We live only once, and life has so many beautiful angles to discover. I want to popularize the careless mindset of being tolerant. No hate and no war. That is the future of a modern society in which I want to live.



Sarah Ahmad, 24, India, Female

Sarah brings her personality to her work, and in marketing this helps to connect to her audience in a meaningful way. She is ambitious and dreams of being an expert in the marketing industry–someone others will respect and view as a role model.

I am a marketing enthusiast with a colorful mind. I am a mindful daydreamer, openly sensitive and overly passionate about things that I love. I have a double major in Marketing and Management. The most unique thing that is visible in my work is a touch of emotions and my own personality. It's what I use to connect to my audience, it makes campaigns more meaningful as I make sure that everything I do has a story, creativity and thought behind it.

I'd like to build a strong reputation for myself in the marketing industry. I also hope to become a marketing consultant. My biggest motivation is my own ambitious personality. I won employee of the year within my 3 years of service. I was honored and it felt great to be recognized for our efforts. My next goal would be to start a small business of my own.

I would love to be an industry expert that others can come to for ideas, help and strategy. I have been fortunate enough to be around professionals that are great at what they do, so I would love to translate my learnings into progression and growth.

Thank you for reading these stories from our contributors. Clicking on their name will bring you to their profile to learn more about them and eventually get in contact with them.

Keep on reading to discover how these shining stars aim to make the world a better place.

MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE

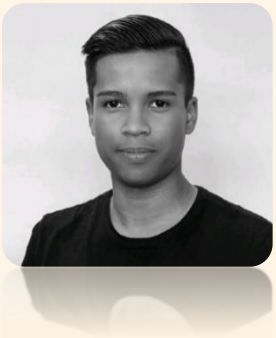
Let's conclude this book with a chapter that highlights the incredible efforts of our rising young talents in making the world a better place. As you read about their initiatives, projects, and commitments, you'll be filled with hope and inspiration for the future. These young leaders are not just dreaming of a better world; they're actively working to make it a reality. They're dedicated to creating positive change, whether it's through environmental sustainability, social justice, or education. Their unique perspectives and ethical values are what set them apart and make them such valuable contributors to society. They're not just thinking about themselves and their own success; they're committed to making a positive impact on the world around them.

As you read their stories, you'll be struck by their passion and dedication. They're not waiting for someone else to solve the world's problems; they're taking action and leading the way. We're honored to share their stories with you and we hope that they inspire you to join us in creating a better world for future generations.



Take Adanu Francis Kwaku for example, an optimistic and ambitious young man from Ghana,

"My outlook for the future is to see positive change and development in my society and to be part of that change. To be able to lead the coming generation into a new era where there are countless opportunities and limitless possibilities. And I hope we will be better, I will be better. And be proud of the future when it comes. I would want to make it better by creating more job opportunities and help in making the educational system more productive (by calling for a change in the approach of teaching in some schools). And impacting society through positive measures to cause change and development."



And David Rabarijaona from Madagascar is on his way to becoming a sustainable banker,

"All I am working on right now is to make a better future both for me and for society. I think the future depends on what we do now. If we work to make it better, then it will be better. I think that all things are possible really. Although I am proud and hopeful because of what people like Elon Musk, Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, and Sundar Pichai are doing for the world, I do not depend on them to make my world better."

There are plenty more empowering stories that we collected from hopeful young men and women throughout the world. The difference between these rising talents and other young adults their age? They're actively taking the steps to achieve these promises.



source



Iñigo Fernández Guerra Abdala, 22, Mexico, Male

Iñigo is an undergraduate student and part-time entrepreneur, currently developing a telepsychology platform. He is acutely aware of the social inequalities that exist in his country and the opportunities he has received during his life, opportunities that others have not been quite so fortunate to have had. He has a keen sense of social responsibility:

Being born in a country marked by great social inequality and having had the chance to receive an education, it is my obligation to create opportunities for those who have not had the chance to receive schooling. I hope I can contribute to building a better Mexico by improving the lives of people who live in rural areas. However, it is important to recognize that I do not need to create a company to start changing the world. I'm certain that simple gestures of amiability, generosity and even solidarity with others can impact the people whom I have the fortune to cross paths with.



Ricardo Cantú Aguilar, Monterrey, 20, Mexico, Male

José works as an intern at the Johnson Controls Monterrey company. Although he considers it possible to secure a good quality of life while living in large and medium sized cities in Mexico, like Iñigo, he is clear that problems such as insecurity, poverty and corruption are really important issues that unfortunately have not improved in his country. While acknowledging his personal ambitions to be a successful businessman, José told me that

It has always been instilled in me that money is not everything, and that it is nothing if it is not used for good; so my main objective is really to use my money to improve my state by helping to build houses for the homeless, supporting local businesses to grow, and financially supporting people to obtain a college degree as well as learn more languages other than English and Spanish.



Josie Gerbe, 23, South Africa, Female

Josie lives in South Africa and works as a business analyst for a startup company that analyzes draught beer. Cultural and geographical differences don't disguise the fact that poverty and inequality exist in rural areas all over the world, and these young entrepreneurs want to use their skills to make them a thing of the past. Josie's ambition is to start a company that will educate people living in rural areas in permaculture and regenerative farming.

I truly believe that educating people in this sector will help with rural development not only by supplying them with organically grown food but possible growth in business startups. I want to change the way food could be sourced and bring back a strong sense of subsistence farming through permaculture to try to help both the environment and the social status of the majority of the people in my beautiful country.

Making the world a better place by focusing on the environment and renewable energy is the admirable focus of some of our contributors.



Luka Radjenovic, 25, Serbia, Male

Luka is an Economics student, currently finishing an internship as a Price & Promotion intern at Nelt D.O.O. with a background in cybersecurity, AI and virtual technologies. However, his desire to contribute to the development of eco-friendly fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) products has evolved from witnessing how waste is managed in his country:

I want to try to push for a more sustainable working approach across the country and the region as a whole. Serbia and Belgrade in particular have a big problem when it comes to pollution and recycling waste, with standards well below the European ones. My dream is to leave this region of our planet in a better state than it was before, so that my children and future generations can benefit from it.



Myra Adnan Malik, 27, United Arab Emirates, Female

Myra is a Project Engineer for Environmental Sustainability working for Nestlé Middle East. She constructed her own path as a female engineer, succeeding in an area of employment traditionally considered a “man's world”.

Sustainability and renewable energy technology is my passion, and I look forward to further helping our facilities move towards these streams with a scope that can extend beyond manufacturing and into regenerative agriculture with logistics. In an ideal world, I would use my learnings and experience to influence a broader audience on the suitability of significant sustainability.

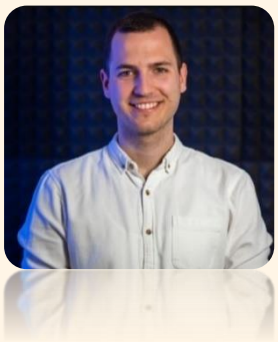




Nicolas Ortega, 21, Colombia, Male

Nicolas is training and working in the fields of Computer Science and IT. Growing up in Colombia he has had firsthand experience of the poor social and economic conditions that many Latin American countries face. He can see a future where connectivity and education will bring growth to Colombia and Latin America.

There's a huge space where, with proper help and guidance, people can start to improve their contribution to their own communities and make it easier to jump and hit the world with their own entrepreneurships. We need worldwide visibility in order to have a chance of changing the current global image of Colombia and Latin American countries. Getting next level education to this generation is a top priority, through the many tools that are available at the moment, such as internet access and well-built courses that can be arranged with the education ministers of every country.



Dominik Metličić, 23, Croatia, Male

Dominik works and studies in the Marketing field. He considers one of his university Professors a great mentor, both in academia and personally, and as someone who has opened doors for him in the world of business. Dominic credits his Professor as supporting him to achieve almost his initial potential, and would like to pay this back.

I want to make the tiny part of the world around me a better place by providing business value and help to company owners, as well as educational growth to students that I hope I would be educating someday, if not in universities, then at least at academies or colleges.

It doesn't matter what continent our Rising Stars come from—education and mentoring of the next generation is equally important.



Vusala Sarkhanova, 31, Azerbaijan, Female

Vusala is currently a student studying for a Masters in Marketing and Luxury Business Management, but she has a wealth of knowledge gained through working in several different industries over the course of her career. Her experiences have motivated her to found a charity, Help Society Baku.

Now I help people to understand themselves, what they really want and explain to them what enormous potential they have.



Ximena Figueroa, 25, Guatemala, Female

Ximena works for a pharmaceutical company while studying for an MBA with a special field in commercial and sales management. She wants to leave something good behind, make a change, and give back to the earth and people what they have given to her. She considers Guatemala a patriarchal country, and wants to create opportunities and make a change to the lives and careers of women there.

What I want is to create opportunities and make a change. As a woman, I would also like to help empower women in my country and show them that they can dream bigger and achieve more than what society expectations have shown them. It would be very meaningful to me to know that I have helped a little girl achieve her dreams of realizing a career that is considered only for males.



Malungelo Zondi, 21, South Africa, Female

Malungelo's description of growing up in South Africa echoes Ximena's experience in Guatemala. In a similarly patriarchal society most young girls do not get to finish their high school education let alone get some tertiary education, many become pregnant as teens and marriage and village life is commonplace. Malungelo considers herself a social-entrepreneur, and she wants to share her success with other disadvantaged youth, making their world a better place.

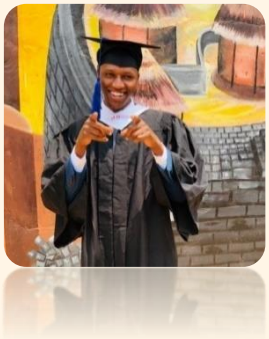
I want to eradicate the issue of the youth not having a formal education, and therefore remaining unemployed. My goal is to create a skills development center under my NGO called Imbiza Yolwazi (A Jar of Knowledge). This center will be a knowledge and skills hub, where people will have access to all information they need about career guidance and skills in general. They will be taught skills like hairdressing, make-up, welding, sewing etc., and these will help them be employable and even start their own businesses.



Kagisho Lekunye, 24, North West South Africa, Male

Kagisho admires motivational speakers and appreciates the influence they have had in driving him to create opportunities and achieve his goals in life. He wants to use his experiences to help others.

Manifesting career guidance tours for schools nationwide will help us support our upcoming generation to study their passions and market related courses.



Jean de Dieu Ndayisaba, 24, Rwanda, Male

Jean grew up in a developing country where he experienced firsthand the effects of poverty, poor nutrition, and lack of access to clean drinking water. His childhood experiences continue to affect his adult life, and he gave himself a mission to improve people's living standards and quality of life with a focus on poor nutrition.

I understand that every day, food systems and agricultural practices change every minute. Telling people and showing them how to behave in situations is what brings happiness inside me. I wanted to become a doctor first, but I realized that my impact with proper nutrition practices would be much more than surgery at the hospital though they are also important. I chose to do nutrition courses to increase my knowledge before I start making awareness of eating well.

I have a MEeat app project. The app helps people to choose their food wisely, while supplying knowledge. I also want to teach people how to make life easier and more sustainable with home gardens and healthy cooking methods. Let's eat well and remember to feed the needy who are also hungry. As Mother Teresa said, "If you can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one". We all need food and we need to eat well to live a better life.



Joanna Jleilaty, Lebanon, Female

As a teenager, Joanna had an unhealthy relationship with food, but she worked hard to become well and is now an expert in eating behaviors and disorders, treating clients through a combination of both psychotherapy and coaching. Realizing how people with mental illness are neglected due to mental health conditions being viewed as taboo, she wants to encourage people to follow a trend of not being ashamed of experiencing mental illness.

It opened my eyes to the importance of educating and providing the necessary treatment for those who are struggling with eating disorders in silence. I am passionate about helping individuals heal their relationship with food, their bodies and themselves. Today I help individuals discover the freedom and beauty of recovery, just as I did.





Mary Wanjiru Githinji, 25 years, Kenya, Female

Mary owns several businesses and is currently pursuing a Master's Degree in Digital Communications. Her philosophy is that every human being deserves a chance to discover their potential as they explore, share and grow with each other.

I want to make the world a better place by sensitizing and creating more awareness in terms of mental health and well-being. Mental Health is one of the vital issues globally and people are hiding a lot of emotions inside them yet they can't speak out. I just want to create a safe space for people to talk and share their pain and grief without being victimized.



Farah Hatem, 25, Egypt, Female

Farah graduated from high school with a passion for human wellness and psychology but went on to succeed as an entrepreneur in the business world. However, she found herself questioning her future and what her contribution to the world would be. This led her to the realization that her passion truly lies in the study of human wellness.

Human wellness is where I want to leave my footprint in this world, specifically in my hometown. My current aspiration lies in being able to change people's lives by making them lead better, happier, more fulfilling lives.



Sara Xhelilaj, 18, England, Female

Sara also views health and medical science as vessels that can make the world a better place. She is a Pharmacology student, with the desire to enter the world of medical research. For her, the hard work is worth the satisfaction of making a difference.

I enjoy how rewarding making a positive difference is, and it's through medical research that I hope to change lives. The idea of contributing to humanity's scientific understanding and bettering society because of it is beyond captivating. I look forward to working with other researchers to ultimately revolutionize our understanding of medicine.



Napat (Ta) Chindasook, 19, Thailand, Male

Ta recognizes the universal language of music and sound, and he wants to create positive outcomes for individuals, communities, and our society through this medium.

I am able to work directly with musical community-based organizations to help those in need through my experiences and passion for music. Hosting, organizing and raising funds through charity concerts and gigs, I am directly serving the needs of others, resulting in a long-lasting impact in people's hearts. As long as we believe in ourselves, nothing is impossible.



Jacques Strydom, 23, South Africa, Male

Jacques currently works as a foreman on his father's farm. Despite having a strong academic background he does not see this as his passion: he dreams of changing the world for the better, not just making a living.

I want to make the world a better place by changing attitudes. I don't want people looking down on other people or crushing their dreams by telling them that it's impossible. Nelson Mandela has a quote that says "It always seems impossible until it's done", to me that's one of the greatest quotes ever because if we look back, what we thought was impossible became possible. I want to create a foundation to give people the opportunity to grow and to help them financially to fulfill their dreams.



Nerissa Govender, 31, South Africa, Female

Nerissa is a positive and motivated young woman working in Human Resources. She is encouraged and inspired by her colleagues. She feels that making the world a better place can be achieved both through an awareness of what we have, reflection, and the appreciation of the other people in our lives.

I believe in a setback to a comeback story and so I am happy to share some of my experiences. My career did not take off immediately. I studied HR but worked in various unrelated fields until a breakthrough moment two years ago, being able to get back into my desired field. I believe I have been given a second chance to make a difference. I am currently a Human Resource Officer in the Clinical Research environment and studying towards an MBA in Management. I work with a team of diverse and intellectual individuals that inspire and motivate me daily. We also work long hours and face many challenges, which has taught me persistence and resilience. I still have a long way to go but I believe I am in the growth phase of my career and that this is the time to put in the long hours and sacrifices and to soak up knowledge like a sponge. I am a people person and would love to grow into a Management position. I would encourage others to lead a balanced life, explore new hobbies and new experiences. Given the current economic climate, I think the greatest lesson is for us to practice consciousness and to have an attitude of gratitude for the life we are blessed with, and for the people that we get to share it with.

And a few more worthy of mention…



Mariane El Khoury, 21, Lebanon, Female

Mariane understands the challenges women face on a daily basis, and the effects this can have on their mental wellbeing. She wants to do what she can to end the presence of misogyny in the world.

I'm a graduate student who's earned her bachelor's degree and is currently studying for her master's degree at USJ. I am an assistant psychologist in a private clinic and I am also a support psychologist at Saint Gerios School in which I observe, detect, and refer cases. On top of that, I am a member of the FCLL. Recently, I registered as a new member of an undergoing research at USJ concerning PTSD. In addition, I am a member of the Mental Health club founded in USJ, as well as gender and sexuality club.

I think fighting discrimination, gender inequality and gender stereotypes makes the world a better place. It's challenging being a woman in this male dominated world. Inequalities that women face every day have dire effects on their mental health. It is everyone's duty to do everything in our power to put an end to this ongoing cycle of inequality and violence against women, and this begins by educating ourselves, by reshaping the way we think, the way we view and treat women.



Naz Nasman, Turkey, Female

Naz wants to inspire others and make the world a better place by educating the digital marketing industry on their ethical responsibilities towards their customers and supporting them to create new ideas and marketing strategies that will respect the power they yield over consumers when delivering campaigns.

I aspire to have the economic freedom I need by doing the job that I most enjoy, and I also want to improve myself for the artistic fields that I am most interested in and make them a significant part of my daily life. I want to inspire others and become an honest, respectable human who can help all the living creatures as much as I can. In my plan to make the world a better place my current career goal is to develop marketing activities of firms, especially in the digital area, to make them more applicable to ethical purposes. Digital marketing and related platforms have high power over people, and this power can be dangerous sometimes. I want to make brands more aware of their impact on human psychology, thus, create new ideas and marketing strategies accordingly. I do not know if I can succeed, but at least I will try. Also, being respectful and susceptible to every personal choice of each individual, and being fair towards all creatures are already small but huge steps for making the world better.



Enhakkore Bope, 21, South Africa, Female

Enhakkore wants to share herself and her energy with the people around her–family, friends, and strangers alike. She wants to make an impact supporting vulnerable people.

I want to continue to grow as an individual and learn something from every experience whether good or bad. I also want to be able to expand 'My Palm Foundation NPC' (MPF) and make an impact on a greater platform, which is why the Directors will be traveling to Congo DR midyear to tackle issues related to vulnerable populations, women, and children, which include female economic independence and child homelessness. My goal in life is to give light and love for the future.

The future seems so far, yet it is tomorrow. I don't expect a bright future—which is quite contrary in context. This is because I don't demand brightness from the future but I give my portion of brightness to it. I hope that cumulatively we can all just spread a little love: to our family, neighbors, friends and total strangers. I hope that we bring brightness to the future and we contagiously spread this energy like a virus ☺



Duygu Ağbaş, 24, Turkey, Female

Duygu is environmentally conscious and has been doing her best to make a genuine contribution to protect the environment, not just for herself, but for everyone–future generations included.

As Albert Camus once said, "Life is nothing, live with care."

Earth is our only home for now and we must think hard before we act. With global warming the biggest disaster on our door, all people need to work together to minimize its effects. If there's one thing I believe in, it's that we are all connected in this world. For this reason, we should not forget that we consider every detail and act on behalf of everyone, both for ourselves and future generations.

I've been choosing a minimalist lifestyle for a long time to enhance my environment and life. I try to minimize my consumption, minimize all my purchases, reduce my waste rate and keep my carbon footprint to a minimum in order not to consume anything other than I need.



Enes Gök, 19, Turkey, Male

Enes has already demonstrated his drive to succeed at his young age, and wants to use his future economic success for philanthropic good.

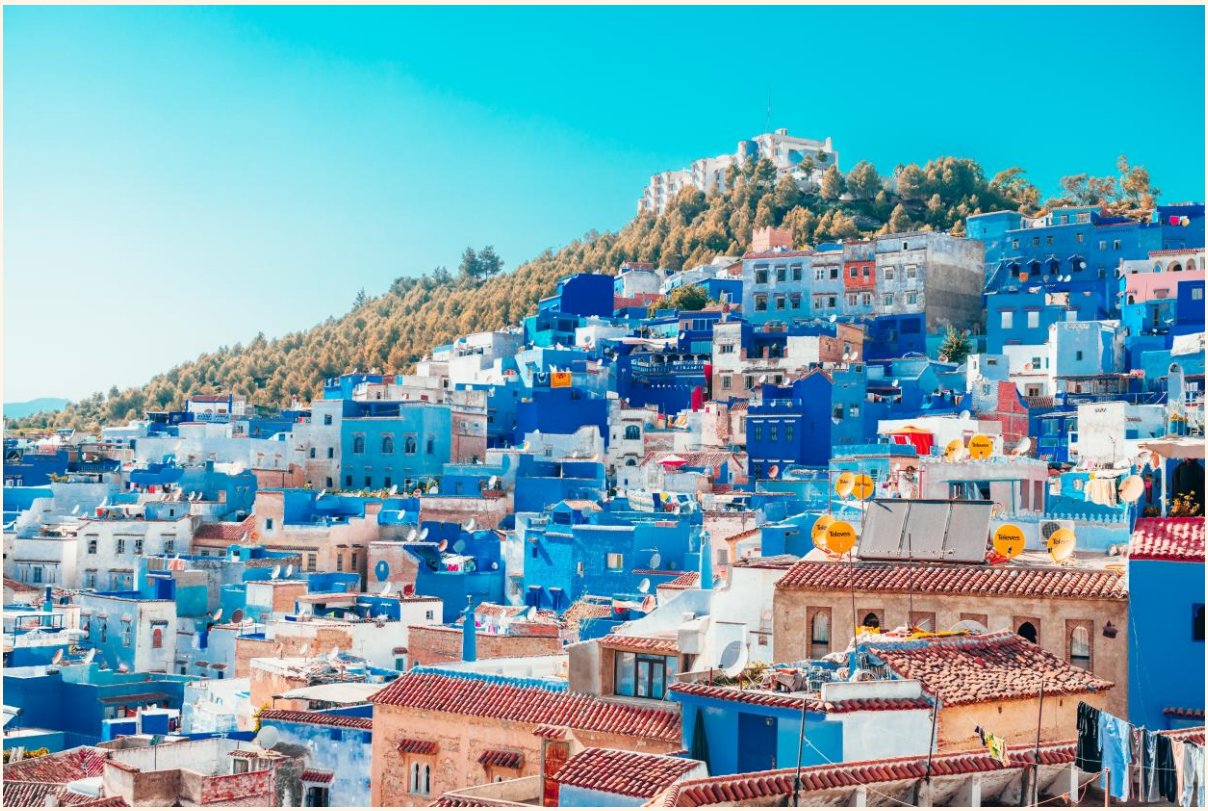
Since the education system in my country was not very good, I had to attend an additional course in order to get into a good university, so I went to the course after school and I was more tired. As a result, I had my first goal in this challenging track and I went into the first 6000 people from 2.3 million students, and I read at one of Turkey's best universities. In the future, I want to be the CEO of one of the world's largest companies. So I want to do my best to make the world a better place in my field. If I have good economic strength, I want to help people with poor financial means to live in equal conditions.



Safae Laghmari, 29, Morocco, Female

Safae is aware of the privileges she has been afforded in life and wants to reach a point in her career where she will have to opportunity to influence regional and national policy to support the creation of sustainable change on a global stage.

I am an ambitious Moroccan woman looking for learning opportunities and challenges to grow and bring a positive impact, always by showing empathy and spreading good vibes around me. I aspire to be a future policy maker with global perspectives at both country and regional levels. My current role will help me expand my know-how on pressing economic and development issues facing both Morocco and Africa, acquire practical understanding of a more sustainable world and make lasting connections to create positive and long-lasting change. I recognize my privileges as an African, and an Arab woman, who has had the opportunity to study, to go university and abroad. It would be humbling to share my experience and knowledge with other young leaders and become a bridge that sustains responsible and committed leadership to solve domestic issues that are common globally by empowering the young African talents to drive the change.



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Tashiana Lutchman, 20, South Africa, Female

Tashiana wants to shape the future for the better. She is driven to use her precious education to better not only her life but the lives of others too; her ambition is to create initiatives and drives that will bring an end to hunger in a world that is not solely defined by money, race or social status.

I would love to do so much with my life, especially as I am given the opportunity to do so, the opportunity that so many—young and old—have not been given: education. I want to inspire generations and make it known that they can do anything they wish, they can make a big difference with very little. The truth is, everyone is put into the world to contribute and make a difference in our own unique way. You don't need to start a revolution, you just have to do things with pure intentions.

I have lived a sheltered life and in very recent years realized how corrupt our society actually is. I want to change that. I want to create a world that understands its people and unites nations; a world that is not limited and defined by financial status, race, or background. And most importantly, I want to start initiatives and drives that end hunger. Being in the food field and learning so much about all the hunger stories is very heart-breaking, and upon completion of my studies my goal is to not only better my life and myself, but to try and make a difference in the world around me by using my knowledge and skills and actually doing justice to my years of education. It won't be easy, but it will be worth it! And always remember that we are not here to fear the future—we are here to shape it, and when challenges come, I hope you remember that anchored within you is the ability to grow and learn and by doing so you will become the best version of yourself!

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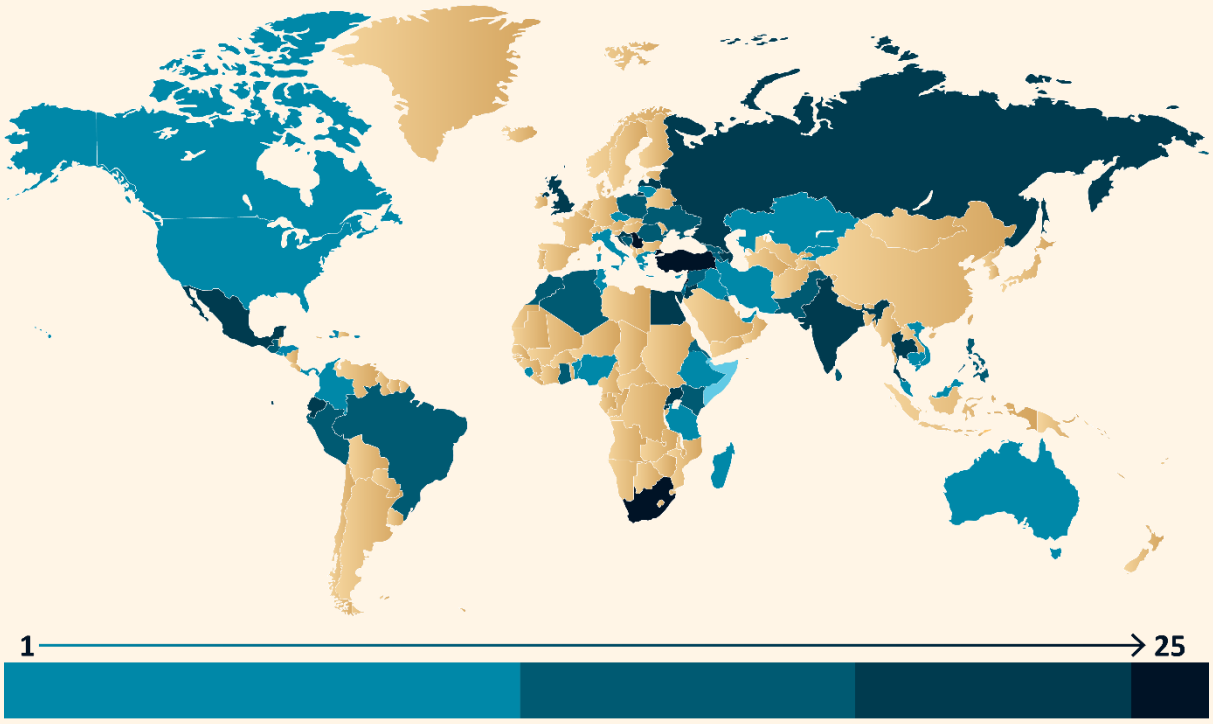

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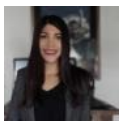	Michelle Velasco	Ecuador	28	Student: Neuroscience	
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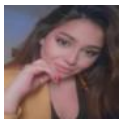	Elissa Sannan	Lebanon	20	Student: International Business Management	
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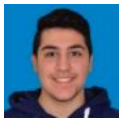	Husam Adel Rajab	Palestine	23	Work: Technical Support Engineer	
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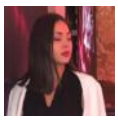	Mariane El Khoury	Lebanon	21	Student: Clinical & Pathological Psychologist	
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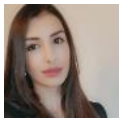	Reine Metlej	Lebanon	24	Work: Engineer; Entrepreneur	
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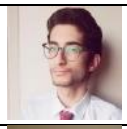	Faraz Shahsavan	Iran	22	Student: Computer Engineering	
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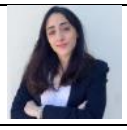	Prisca Gebrayel	Lebanon	23	Student: Food Chemistry	
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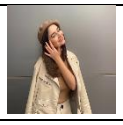	Ceyda VARLIBAŞ	Turkey	19	Law student at Hacettepe University (LLB)	
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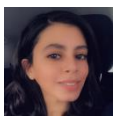	Arwa Aboushahada	Palestine	30	Work: Graphic designer	
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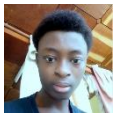
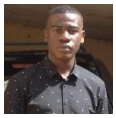
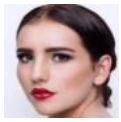
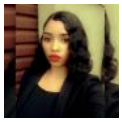
	David Rabarijaona	Madagascar	20	Student: Finance	
	Camryn van den Bergh	South Africa	23	Student: Sustainable Development Work: Internship; Tutoring & au pair services	
	Edem Godwin Kumahor	Ghana	23	Student: Philosophy	
	Chane Naude	South Africa	25	Student: Business Management Work: Intern	
	Elroy Ankelmbom Kimbi Yonghabichia	Cameroon	19	Student: Engineering	
	Enhakkore Bope	South Africa (Ethnically DRC)	21	Student: Biokinetics	
	Harambe Qondela	South Africa	22	Student: Construction Management	
	Obed Imbahafi	Rwanda	21	Student: Creative Design	
	Angela Omaro Ochieng	Kenya	31	Work: Client Experience Associate; Executive Education Programme manager	

	Jacques Strydom	South Africa	23	Student: Data Science Work: Farm Foreman	
	Mary Wanjiru Githinji	Kenya	25	Student: Digital Communications. Work: Entrepreneur	
	Kabuye Andrew Benjamin	Uganda	22	Student: Animal Production Technology & Management	
	Mitchel Jemima	Kenya		Work: Job Seeker	
	Kagisho Lekunye	South Africa	24	Work: Accounting Intern	
	Khanya Mamba	South Africa	22	Student: Finance & Accounting	
	Malungelo Zondi	South Africa	21	Work: Supply Chain Management	
	Martin Wairimu	Kenya	26	Work: Part-time Online English Tutor	
	Megan de Vasconcellos	South Africa	19	Student: English & Psychology	
	Paige Webster	South Africa	25	Work: Intermediate Developer	
	Presley Cornel Apson	Tanzania	23	Student: Psychology	

	Roanné Coetzer	South Africa	23	Student: Data Science	
	Robert Mugabo	Rwanda	22	Student: Entrepreneurship	
	Joel Naluwairo	Uganda	24	Student: Law / the Bar	
	Shenisé Pillay	South Africa	25	Work: Senior Audit Trainee	
	Thiasha Naidoo	South Africa	24	Student: Commerce (Finance) Work: Business Specialist Intern	
	Khomotso Madiba	South Africa	24	Work: Self-employed	
	Adanu Francis Kwaku	Ghana	20	Student: Mines & Technology	
	Jean de Dieu Ndayisaba	Rwanda	24	Work: Research & Business Development Associate	
	Tashiana Lutchman	South Africa	20	Student: Food Technology	

	Jordane Fannick Narcisse Bokpe	Republic of Benin	29	Student: Marketing Strategy	
	Josie Gerbe	South Africa	23	Business analyst	
	Rachael Refiloe Lamola	South Africa	26	Work: Marketing; Reseller	

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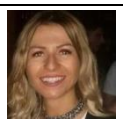
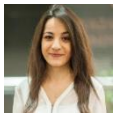
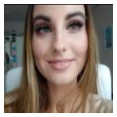
	Marija Stanojević	Serbia	24	Work: Talent Acquisition Operations Consultant	
	Tornike Pirveli	Georgia	22	Work: Data Science Intern	
	Andrej Jakovljević	Serbia	20	Student	
	Aygul Ismayilova	Azerbaijan	32	Work: Senior ERP Consultant	
	Aytaj Kalbaliyeva	Azerbaijan	23	Work: International Relations	
	Beka Barsonidze	Georgia		Work: Internal Auditor Student: IT; Digital Marketing	
	Adelina Fughina	Romania	22	Student: International Business & Management	
	Dino Kečević	Croatia	17	Work: Co-founder & CEO	
	Aleksandra Wróblewska	Poland	24	Student: Automatic Control & Robotics Work: Software Development Intern	

	Dominik Metličić	Croatia	23	Work: Marketing Strategist	
	Jelena Arsic	Serbia		Work: Hotel Management	
	Jovana Jakovljević	Serbia	30	Work: Credit Risk Modelling Officer	
	Luka Radjenovic	Serbia	25	Student: Management Work: Internship	
	Anna Oleksenko	Ukraine	20	Student: Innovation & Technology Management Work: Finance Specialist	
	Marijan Smetko	Croatia	24	Student: Computer Science Work: Internship	
	Matea Vučetić	Croatia	24	Work: Chemical Engineer	
	Mihailo Knežević	Serbia	23	Student: Graduate Research Work: Teaching Assistant	
	Hanna Salazkina	Ukraine	22	Work: Project Manager	
	Nikola Vukojicic	Serbia	22	Work: Product Designer	
	Sabina Zulfiyeva	Azerbaijan	19	Student: Law Work: Managing Editor; Director	
	Safura Aliyeva	Azerbaijan	24	Work: Human Resources Specialist, Job Analyst	

	Sonja Babić	Serbia		Work: Brand Manager	
	Tanja Milojević	Serbia		Work: Account Manager	
	Tatjana Burg	Serbia		Work: Marketing Manager	
	Tihana Petricevic	Croatia	39	Work: CEO	
	Vusala Sarkhanova	Azerbaijan	31	Student: Marketing & Commercial Management Work: Digital Marketing	
	Meerim Akimova	Kyrgyzstan	23	Work: Social Media Manager; Graphic Designer	
	Karolína Follerová	Czech Republic	22	Student: International Studies & Diplomacy Work: Fraud Prevention Specialist	
	Maria Iakovleva	Russia	26	Freelancer	
	Marina Pavlović	Serbia	35	Work: Senior UI/UX Designer	
	Kseniya Bromirskaya	Russia	27	Brand Manager in the Global CPG company	

	Deliu Mihaela	Romania	22	Work: English Trainer	
	Paulina Motyl	Poland	24	Student Work: Sales Advisor	
	Victoria Nikolaeva	Russia	27	Work: Marketing Coordinator	
	Anastasija Babarikina	Latvia	20	Student: Business Administration	
	Monika Jakutyte	Lithuania	26	Work : Founder; Pioneer in NFT Real Estate	
	Evelina Vilcina	Latvia	27	Work: Intern: Junior Software Developer	
	Marija Zimina	Latvia	29	Work: Professional Business Coach	
	Sigita Rautmane	Latvia	28	Work: Team Manager	
	Ajla Karajko	Bosnia and Herzegovina	31	Work: Management	
	Karolina Korockina	Latvia	21	Student: International Relations; Economics Work: Founder & CEO	
	Anesa Omanovic	Bosnia and Herzegovina	33	Working in the international affairs industry	

Eastern & Southern Asia - read full stories

	Angel Therese Esteban	Philippines	29	Work: Fashion Designer	
	Anuj (AJ) Manchanda	Thailand	19	Work: Founder; Cryptocurrency Investor	
	Kashish Nathani	India	18	Student: Economics	
	Sarah Ahmad	India	24	Work: Marketing Professional	
	Catherine Teo	Singapore	21	Student: Business (Marketing)	
	Udit Kaul	India	18	Work: Entrepreneur	
	Wan Nee Chow	Malaysia	28	Work: Business Development	
	Jiraput Thamsongkrah	Thailand	22	Student: Senior Computer Networks	
	Malsha Samarasiri	Sri Lanka	27	Student: Chemical & Biomedical Engineering	
	Mehr Un Nisa Mirza	Pakistan		Work: Creative strategist	

	Kush Bhardwaj	India	22	Student: Business Administration	
	Malaika Tabassum	Pakistan	21	Work: Experience Associate	
	Napat (Ta) Chindasook	Thailand	19	Student: Music & Recording Work: Producer, Engineer, Musician	
	Sidharath Joshi	India	25	PhD student	
	Myra Adnan Malik	United Arab Emirates	27	Work: Project Engineer	
	Do Huu Truong	Vietnam	21	Student	
	Iris Diaconescu	Philippines		Work: Talent & Performance Management	
	Munaz Mohammed Nibraz	Sri Lanka	25	Work: Software Engineer	
	Tasneem Fatima Nawab	India	29	Work: Entrepreneur	

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	Caroline Michael Asiala	USA	28	Work: Business Strategist	
	Fariah Nazir	United Kingdom	19	Student: LLB Law	
	Fariha Tasnim	Canada	24	Work: STEM Advocate; Career Coach; Sustainable Tech Engineer	
	Meena Abdula	United Kingdom	19	Student: Architecture	
	Sara Xhelilaj	United Kingdom	18	Student: Pharmacology	
	Eleni Avgenaki	Greece	20	Student: Biomedical Sciences	
	Sheu Ng	Cambodia	20	Student: Commerce; Accounting & Finance	
	Victoria Li	Australia	19	Student: Biomedicine	
	Denis Duilio Trevisan	Italy	23	Work: Hotel Management	

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: AIMAN KABLI



Hey there,

I'm Aiman Kabli, the founder of FELS—a global social enterprise dedicated to empowering rising talents from all walks of life. I'm on a mission to make the world a better place by helping to identify and nurture the most promising individuals.

My career began in HR management where I've worked with several large organizations such as Unilever, Emirates Airline and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)---but my heart always yearned for something more. That's when I left the corporate world and jumped head-on into the realm of entrepreneurship, being involved with nearly a dozen startups that had various outcomes teaching me valuable lessons.

Using these learnings I started the FELS movement in 2019, and made it my ongoing and eternal mission! Through FELS, I'm able to offer mentorship, networking opportunities, and career development resources to rising talents worldwide. It's incredibly fulfilling work, and I'm honored to have earned recognition as a Keynote speaker, panel finalist judge, presenter, and, most importantly, a mentor worldwide.

As a trailblazer in the field of talent empowerment, I'm living proof that passion, vision, and dedication can create positive change in communities around the world. I hope my work inspires rising talents everywhere to achieve their full potential and make a difference in their communities.

Current Roles:

Movement Leader – FELS (global thought leadership content)

Co-founder & COO – Eleva8or (virtual startup accelerator platform)

Co-founder on various apps and web platforms (details here)

Reference Links:


My LinkedIn page


Blogs I currently manage


Interesting Books I have read


Talks & and workshops I have given


Technology projects I am involved with

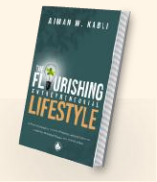

Global events & activities I participated in


The Flourishing Entrepreneurial Lifestyle


Getting in touch with me

Also from the author:

I write my books to inspire others about what can be possible in human ambition, talent and performance. Take the next critical step to achieve your goals and reach an amazing lifestyle of success and prosperity --download them to read and get inspired in a variety of ways.



The Flourishing Entrepreneurial Lifestyle (more information)
Learn about this advanced formula for success, prosperity and self-fulfillment from the global winners who practice it best.



Globalistas! (more information)

Globalistas is a first-of-a-kind compilation book of travel insights and learnings from the people who travel most — flight crews, digital nomads and bloggers.

Coming Soon:



Building Ecosystems (more information)
What makes entrepreneurial ecosystems grow and thrive?

The new landmark, data-driven book by eleva8or examines this important question from all sides, across multiple stakeholder viewpoints and several world regions.



THANK YOU FOR READING THIS BOOK. FEEL FREE TO REACH OUT TO ANY OF THE CONTRIBUTORS WITH PRAISE AND OPPORTUNITIES.

Special thanks to
Donna Gleize and Bróna Burgoyne
for your editing and proofreading expertise,
Andreja Milankovic for data analysis & Bojana Gjuroska for the graphic design.

FELS
www.my-fels.life

www.aimankabli.com



AUTHOR'S BIO:

Aiman is a passionate entrepreneur and content creator, leading the popular global online community known as FELS. Having worked in HR management for over 12 years and traveled to more than 85 countries, he is renowned as a connoisseur of talent and culture. Aiman enjoys helping people to bring out their best and get recognized for their talents and achievements, regardless of where they may be in the world or what obstacles may lay in the way. As an author he has produced several books focusing on specific talent groups such as startup founders, frequent travelers, and success lifestyle gurus.

BOOK SUMMARY:

Developing regions are often overlooked, although they are home to some of the world's most ambitious youth and fastest-rising talents, hungry and eager to build the future and create more greatness around them. This book features hundreds of such youth who are hard at work pursuing their dreams and aspirations. It shines a colorful spotlight on their amazing journeys, challenges, passions, achievements, future outlooks, and most of all their incredible qualifications in various fields. Enjoy the fireworks as these spirited talents reach for the stars!