

2020-2021 Scholar Bios



Name: Svetlana Malevanciuc

From: Causeni, Moldova

Job: Director and Project Manager at NGO Center for Development of International Relationships

- **Career highlights:** NGO founder since 2006, English teacher for 20 years, TOEFL instructor, implemented a big number of local, national and international educational projects for young people as a project manager/facilitator, iEARN Master teacher since 2014, exchange program advisor since 2006, student advisor since 2014.
- **What are you excited to contribute to the International ACAC association and annual conference?** My experience (even though there is not so much so far)! My positiveness, successes and failures.



Name: Alex Muiruri Kihara

From: Nairobi, Kenya

Job: Music & Swahili Teacher (since 2014), International Colleges Counselor (since 2018) at Starehe Boys Centre and School

- **What's a proud moment from your work that you'd like to share with the International ACAC membership?** Sharing students' recommendation letters with them, and receiving their acknowledgement statements and smiles (sometimes tears) on how positively and effectively they have been rendered; their expectations surpassed. I cherish these moments the most, as I sincerely feel fulfilled and appreciated. I hardly contain my joy then; I cry!
- **Why did you apply to be a Scholar?** To learn more about college counseling through personal experience accounts from seasoned counselors. To expand my professional network in college counseling.



Name: Arnold Habyarimana

From: Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Job: Counselor at Bridge4Future2DRC Scholars

- **Career highlights:** Before my current role, I was a MOOC Camp Facilitator of US Embassy Kinshasa and I served as a Goma American Shelf Coordinator at Maison des Jeunes/Goma.
- **Why did you apply to be a Scholar?** I applied to be an International ACAC Scholar because it is necessary for me to acquire skills and knowledge that will enable me to effectively guide scholars in their admission application processes. Also, I would like to network with different university representatives who will be present at the Conference and exchange experience with other counselors from across the globe.



Name: Nathalie Elkik

From: Lebanon

Job: Assistant to the Dean-Grade 12 & College Guidance Counselor at College Notre-Dame de Jamhour

- **What's a proud moment from your work that you'd like to share with the International ACAC membership?** One of the proud moments was when I was working with one of my students as she wanted to apply and was very anxious as the deadline was the next day, we worked so hard until the early morning hours in order for us to submit on time. And after a month, she got accepted and she was very happy as she mentioned that if it wasn't because of me she wouldn't have made it & for that it was for me the best credit I could get!
- **What are you excited to contribute to the International ACAC association and annual conference?** I would like to show the colleagues I will be attending the potential of the smart youth we have in the middle east and especially in Lebanon. The generation I work with is demotivated due to the situation we have currently in Lebanon and hence they are applying to foreign universities. The exciting part is that the students leaving are the top ranked ones and I am very sure that they will make the university they will graduate from very proud like they made their school very proud as well!



Name: Azamat Tulepbergenov

From: Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan

Job: Head of College Counseling Department at BILIM-INNOVATION International Social Foundation

- **Career highlights:** I started my teaching career in 2007. I taught English and held different administrative positions (i.e. principal of dormitory, vice-principal of schools, Olympiad coordinator, head of alumni associations, social media manager, curriculum manager, coordinator of afterschool clubs and events). Outside the office, I like to read about early childhood development. I periodically conduct workshops on reading methods. As a parent of a polyglot preschooler, I run cost-free seminars on language development. As a weekend hobby, I read books to children in the neighborhood and organize reading camping to strengthen parent-child relationships.
- **Why did you apply to be a Scholar?** I have a class consisting of 34 individuals, college counselors across Kazakhstan, whom I have to teach and support through their students' career planning and college application, which is 13211 students in total. However, I myself am new to the job so I have to learn from experts in the field. Since Scholars are provided with an experienced mentor, I could not miss this golden opportunity.



Name: Mateus de Castro Magalhães

From: Fortaleza, Brazil

Job: Pedagogical Assistant at Colégio Ari de Sá Cavalcante

- **What's a proud moment from your work that you'd like to share with the International ACAC membership?** In 2018 I had just arrived in the advanced classes coordination and I had the pleasure of helping one of my students in his process of application. It was something really new to me but I was very excited to help him. He was used to coming every day in my coordination to ask for a little help.
- **Why did you apply to be a Scholar?** It is quite scary to hold the position of a counselor in such a big school and having the responsibility of helping talented students to achieve their dreams when you do not feel full of experience. By being involved with other counselors from different parts of the world makes a real difference for me. I want to learn more and more from the resources ACAC provides.



Name: Mary Appiah-Adjei

From: Kumasi, Ghana

Job: Mathematics teacher/International College Admission Counselor at St. Louis Senior High School

- **What's a proud moment from your work that you'd like to share with the International ACAC membership?** I can recall my first college admission experience where I put in my maximum effort in preparing a student for admission but the student was not granted a visa. It really dampened my spirit but after two weeks of brooding over my predicament, my student was called by the embassy and issued a visa. In fact, I was so happy and this encouraged me to continue with the counseling work. This has always been one of my proudest moments.
- **What are you excited to contribute to the International ACAC association and annual conference?** I want to create awareness that there are high achieving students in sub-Saharan Africa who are less informed about the whole concept of international college admission processes.



Name: Abraham Habibi Barry

From: Monrovia, Liberia

Job: Program Manager at SMART Liberia

- **What's a proud moment from your work that you'd like to share with the International ACAC membership?** My proudest moment would have to be the graduation ceremony of the inaugural class of the Education Advancement Program. The class was a massive learning opportunity for me. Having to support 12 scholars gain admissions to University to pursue their dreams with no prior experience in that line of work. The excitement and gratitude from scholars and their parents will always remind me why I do what I do.
- **Why did you apply to be a Scholar?** I believe the empowerment that this professional development opportunity provides will allow me to improve the support I currently provide to my students. The year-long mentorship will provide access to seasoned field professionals to answer some of my questions and provide guidance as I continue to support young Liberians accessing higher education.



Name: Margaret Elaine Grant

From: Bridgetown, Barbados

Job: Guidance Counsellor at The St. Michael School

- **Career highlights:** A teacher of Spanish, Art, Caribbean History and Guidance in about five secondary schools. I am the current President of the Barbados Association of Guidance Counselors (BAGC), having served in similar positions from 2010-2012, 2018-2019.

In 2009 my first book, "Entering Secondary School: A Survival Kit for Students With Helpful Tips For Parents" was published and co-authored by another colleague of mine. I created and implemented The ELAINE Model which is a one -week orientation program designed to ensure that new students have a seamless transition from primary to secondary school.

I was one of the writers of lesson plans in the Health and Family Life CARICOM Common Curriculum and in 2002 was recognized for sterling contribution by the then Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports for my invaluable contribution to the Education Sector Enhancement Program.

- **What are you excited to contribute to the International ACAC association and annual conference?** Wherever possible I would share my culture, share about the programs we have in Barbados and some of the best practices used to help students transition from secondary school to higher education. I can do presentations on various aspects of school to college / university transition.



Name: Fanele Chester

From: Mbabane, Eswatini

Job: Executive Director at The Knowledge Institute

- **What's a proud moment from your work that you'd like to share with the International ACAC membership?** TKI has survived for 7 years as a start up in the education space, and we not only have achieved our mission of expanding access to higher education (an ongoing mission), however we have also garnered enough brand recognition to work directly with the government of Eswatini to assist them improve their processes for the outcome of higher participation in tertiary education once students complete high school. Our small and nimble nature and the large institutional body of the government makes for a good working relationship based on shared strengths.
- **Why did you apply to be a Scholar?** Although students from Eswatini are successful in studying in Africa and Asia, the North America region is still a tough market even for our best and brightest. I want to learn how TKI can help students and governments align with the needs and processes of institutions in America, so our students can have the opportunity to study there.



Name: Zhao Yuan

From: Urumqi, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, China

Job: School Counselor at Urumqi Bayi High School

- **What's a proud moment from your work that you'd like to share with the International ACAC membership?** Summer and winter vacations are the happiest time for me because many graduated students will come back to school and visit me. Normally, they will share their feelings and lives in universities abroad. They will also talk with me about many interesting things such as the food, their courses and so on.
- **Why did you apply to be a Scholar?** Frankly speaking, as a counselor in public high school in Xinjiang, I don't have many opportunities to get vocational training, nor do I have a high salary. Although the city of Urumqi is far away from other developed cities such as Beijing and Shanghai in China, and things about studying abroad started late, overseas studying developed very fast. I've already joined some training to improve myself, such as Education USA in other provinces on my own expenses. I really want to grasp this opportunity to come to the United States.



Name: Lim Chien Hau

From: Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei

Job: Career Counselor at Meragang Sixth Form Center

- **What's a proud moment from your work that you'd like to share with the International ACAC membership?** I encounter many academically gifted first-generation university students in my work as a counselor. My most moving, funny, and proud experiences has to be my experience with Adele*. Upon the release of A-level results, I called up Adele* to tell her that her excellent results make her eligible to further her studies at an overseas university under a Bruneian government scholarship. To my surprise, she told me that her parents would be reluctant to let her go because attending university costs money. I had to explain to her that scholarships actually awarded money, and coached her on how to talk to her parents so that they too would understand that scholarships were amazing educational opportunities. We worked on her UCAS application, then I crossed my fingers and sent her on her way. Imagine my happiness when she dropped by the careers office months later to tell me that she got the scholarship and will be studying in the UK. I am proud of her achievement; I am moved by how easily this could have been a missed opportunity; yet, I can laugh about it now because my initiative in contacting her meant it all ended well. (*not her real name)
- **Why did you apply to be a Scholar?** I applied to be a Scholar because I believe that I will make the most of the opportunity given in attending the Conference and meeting like-minded scholars and my mentor. I wanted to up skill myself so that I will be able to serve my students better. My students mostly come from less socioeconomically privileged backgrounds, and many of them are on their way to becoming first generation university students. As they are navigating a path so unfamiliar to their families, I felt that it was crucial for me to equip myself with the necessary knowledge and networks as I may be one of the few bridges allowing them to learn about educational opportunities that could potentially change the trajectory of their lives.



Name: Tracy Lubega (Juliet) Nansubuga

From: Kampala, Uganda

Job: Careers Teacher at Gayaza High School

- **Career highlights:** Besides my cardinal role as a distinguished teacher of English Language, and literature and now teacher counselor, community work is my niche. It is those radiant smiles and sense of belonging to those in need that glows my heart and re-energizes me every other day. Thus, with my students, I support the teaching and learning process in the public primary schools around our school through peer teaching, specifically in English Language proficiency, mentoring, leadership skills especially for the girl-child, and provide scholastic materials and sanitary pads. Such activities open up the real-world challenges to the learners and an irresistible call for action. In 2018, I was awarded an online study scholarship in Project Based learning by iEARN-USA (International Education and Resource Network), an opportunity that has redefined my education goals and reshaped my mode of delivery, to which I have initiated a good number of my colleagues across the country.
- **What's a proud moment from your work that you'd like to share with the International ACAC membership?** Being crowned 1st, Runner Up in The Teachers Making a Difference Competition 2019. Emerging 2nd out of 1114 submissions was just ecstatic! The Teachers Making a Difference is an annual country wide competition for all teachers (Primary and secondary) organized by the government through the national newspaper, The New Vision and sponsored by the Embassy of Ireland. They recognize the best 12 teachers who offer exemplary service and innovation in developing and improving Uganda's education.
- **What are you excited to contribute to the International ACAC association and annual conference?** The wealth of experience in empowering young people or high school students for community improvement. How do we make our learners agents of change or active members in the community so that they do not have to wait until they are out of school to make a difference?