

REFUGEE ADVISORY GROUP TO THE CONSULTATIONS ON RESETTLEMENT AND COMPLEMENTARY PATHWAYS

Member Bios

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Bahati Kanyamanza

 **United States of America**

Bahati Kanyamanza is the Global Partnerships Director at the International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP), where he leads strategic collaborations with refugee-led and civil society organizations across the globe. He brings over two decades of experience working with displaced populations, combined with professional expertise in refugee advocacy, leadership and global policy engagement. Before joining IRAP, Bahati served at Asylum Access, where he led global advocacy efforts and institutional engagement with key actors such as the World Bank, UNHCR and the U.S. government. Originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Bahati spent 17 years as a refugee in Uganda before resettling in the United States, where he is now a naturalized citizen. Throughout his career, he has founded and led impactful organizations and initiatives, including CIYOTA, a nonprofit empowering conflict-affected youth in Africa's Great Lakes region through access to quality education and family-centred livelihood initiatives. A recognized leader in the global refugee space, Bahati's work has been honoured by Ashoka, American Express, UNHCR and Echoing Green. He is a published author, with contributions featured in Forced Migration Review, Humanitarian Practice Network, Reuters, ODI and WUBR. Bahati also serves as an advisor to the U.S. Refugee Advisory Board, is a trained lawyer and holds an MA degree from the School for International Training.

Basma Alawee

 **United States of America**

Basma Alawee is a former refugee who resettled in the United States in 2010 after fleeing Iraq. Trained as an engineer, her professional trajectory changed when she experienced the systemic barriers preventing many refugees from reclaiming their careers after resettlement. This ignited her passion for refugee advocacy and policy reform. Over the past 15 years, Basma has become a national leader in refugee resettlement and integration, leading initiatives at local, state and federal level to strengthen U.S. resettlement infrastructure, expand complementary pathways and centre refugee voices in decision-making. As Deputy Executive Director of the Community Sponsorship Hub, she oversees national mobilization and communications for the Welcome Corps programme, which has engaged over 160,000 Americans to sponsor more than 87,000 refugees. In 2025, she became a sponsor herself, leading over 30 Americans in welcoming a refugee family, deepening

her commitment to building a more inclusive and responsive sponsorship system. She is also a co-founder and advisor to the U.S. Refugee Advisory Board and previously led the “We Are All America” coalition, expanding it to a 21-state network advocating for inclusive policies. Basma’s work is grounded in both lived experience and strategic leadership, making her a strong advocate for meaningful refugee participation in global dialogues and a powerful voice for more just and durable resettlement and sponsorship systems.

Dacious Richardson

 **Canada**

Dacious Richardson is a Liberian-born Canadian community leader, refugee advocate and the visionary founder of Rise Above Reality Expectation (RARE) Community Services Society. Arriving in Canada at the age of 13 after fleeing civil war in Liberia, Dacious turned his personal experiences of displacement and adversity into a lifelong commitment to empowering youth from marginalized communities. A former high school and varsity athlete, Dacious found healing and belonging through sports, especially soccer and wrestling, which later inspired him to use athletics for community building, mentorship and inclusion. At just 17 years old, he founded RARE to provide leadership development, mental health support and safe spaces for Black, refugee, newcomer and at-risk youth. Through RARE, Dacious has organized countless community events including free soccer and basketball tournaments, youth leadership workshops, cultural celebrations and mentorship programmes reaching hundreds of young people. Internationally recognized, Dacious has represented Canada as a refugee with lived experience delegate at the CRCP and served as a Youth Advisor to the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, focusing on youth, conflict and resolution, sport and preventing violent extremism. He is also a former member of the Canadian Council for Refugees Youth Network. Dacious has received multiple awards for his leadership and service. In addition to his advocacy work, Dacious is employed by the Surrey School District as a school liaison, where he mentors students and fosters culturally responsive support systems. He is also deeply involved with BC Wrestling and Canada Wrestling as a referee and coach and serves on various advisory boards at local and national levels. Dacious is passionate about dismantling systemic barriers, creating safe spaces for refugee voices, and ensuring that the next generation of youth are equipped with the tools, pride and support to rise above expectations and lead change in their communities.

Daniel Gamboa

 **New Zealand**

Daniel Gamboa is the CEO and co-founder of the New Zealand National Refugee Youth Council, the only refugee youth-led organisation in New Zealand. Daniel is passionate about empowering refugee youth to thrive, express their concerns and shape policies that promote their rights and well-being. As a proud member of the rainbow community, he has also led multiple initiatives supporting rainbow refugees. At age 12, he and his mother fled Colombia after threats to his life. They spent six years in Ecuador facing discrimination before being resettled in New Zealand in

2012. These experiences fuel his commitment to ensuring that refugee youth have meaningful opportunities and voices in society. Daniel holds a bachelor's degree in Political Science and Development Studies, a leadership diploma from the University of Cambridge and a certificate in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies from Oxford University. Daniel has held senior advisory roles across New Zealand government departments, including the Ministry for Ethnic Communities, the Department of Internal Affairs and the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care. He also served as Private Parliamentary Secretary to several New Zealand Ministers. Daniel has spoken at major forums such as the UNHCR Global Refugee Forum, 2016 Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement, Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Conferences. He serves as Deputy Chair for the Youth Working Group of the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN), connecting refugee youth across the region. Daniel has recently received the New Zealander of the Year Local Hero Award and the Lower Hutt Civic Honour Award for his outstanding contributions to refugee communities in New Zealand and internationally.

Faiza Shakori

 **Australia**

Faiza Shakori is a community advocate with a strong track record in advancing equity, inclusion and social cohesion. Originally from Afghanistan, Faiza resettled in Australia as a refugee in 1999. Her lived experience of displacement and resettlement has shaped a lifelong commitment to empowering marginalized communities and influencing inclusive policy change. Arriving in Australia with limited English and few resources, Faiza overcame significant barriers to succeed academically and professionally. She earned a Bachelor of Economics from Macquarie University and later completed a Master of Human Resources Management at the University of Sydney. Faiza has spent over a decade working across the not-for-profit and corporate sectors, leading initiatives that promote economic participation, particularly for refugees and people with disabilities. Her work focuses on building cross-sector partnerships, elevating underrepresented voices and creating pathways to opportunity.

Hasan Almatroud

 **Jordan**

Hasan Almatroud is a Syrian refugee currently living in Amman, Jordan, since 2013. He is a changemaker and refugee rights advocate with a strong passion for using education and advocacy to drive community change. With seven years of experience in social and community work, Hasan is currently a programme coordinator and educator at Amala Education, where he helps facilitate the first internationally accredited secondary diploma program specifically designed for refugees—the same programme he graduated from three years ago. Alongside this role, he works as a refugee guidance counsellor on complementary pathways with WUSC. Hasan is also the founder of the New Horizons programme, which focuses on equipping refugees with essential skills and knowledge to empower them as changemakers within their communities. Hasan is currently pursuing a degree in Business Administration at the University

of London, Royal Holloway. Hasan strongly believes in advocacy and education as a means to create a better world. His advocacy journey began as a member of the Canadian Refugee Education Council. Since then, he has participated and spoken at global conferences, including the Global Refugee Forum in Geneva, Switzerland, and the Women Deliver Conference in Kigali, Rwanda. Hasan's work and advocacy efforts are rooted in his vision of empowering refugees and creating sustainable, community-driven solutions. He is committed to ensuring refugees' rights are recognized and advocating for durable solutions that allow them to rebuild their lives with dignity and be active agents of changes.

Lucky Karim

United States of America

Lucky Karim is a Rohingya refugee from Myanmar who, in August 2017, was compelled to flee. Following six years of resilience in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar camp, she resettled in the United States in December 2022. Commencing her career at the tender age of 15 in 2018 within the refugee camp, Lucky dedicated herself to serving her community by collaborating with numerous international humanitarian organizations to provide vital assistance. Pioneering as one of first Rohingya women in the camps who was proficient in English and capable of bridging communication with the international community by age 17, Lucky defied odds to pursue higher education at the Asian University for Women in Chittagong. Now recognized as a prominent human rights activist, Lucky collaborates closely with U.S. government officials, stakeholders, policymakers and UN agencies, focusing on addressing the Rohingya crisis and broader issues in Myanmar. Notably, at just 19 years old, she testified before the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission at Congress in 2023, advocating for the rights of women and advising policymakers on measures to ameliorate the situation in Myanmar and Southeast Asia. Lucky remains a catalyst for positive change, tirelessly working to uplift her people and effect meaningful progress on the international stage. She is the first Rohingya woman to write a memoir which is under contract now and expected to be published soon. Recognizing the power of women's leadership, Lucky founded Refugee Women for Peace and Justice, the first registered Rohingya refugee-led nonprofit operating directly in Southeast Asia including Bangladesh. She is also a refugee fellow at Refugees International.

Matthew Lam Joar

United Kingdom

Lam Joar is originally from South Sudan; he fled his country when he was 15 years and became a refugee in Kenya; a life he had never imagined experiencing, however, shaped him to appreciate situations that refugees have to go through. He is passionate about sports and was selected among the first group of the Refugee Olympics in 2015. After the 2016 Olympics, Lam decided to focus on his higher education and transitioned to working for the Refugee team through the Tegla Loroupe Peace Foundation and became the Camp Coordinator for the Refugee Olympics Team. Lam is a dynamic professional with unique experience across humanitarian programming, sport

and development and project management. He has worked with leading organizations such as UNHCR, One Young World, AHEEN and currently with On Running, contributing to sales, strategy development, capacity building and community engagement. His work spans Africa and Europe, where he has supported refugee-led initiatives, developed market strategies and coordinated international events. He graduated with a master's degree in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies from the University of Oxford, class of 2022.

Najia Sherzad Hoshmand

 **United States of America**

A dynamic leader from Afghanistan, Najia brings extensive experience in business, finance and community leadership. She is the Founder and President of the Afghanistan American Community Center, a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting and uplifting the Afghan community. In addition, she serves as the Director of Refugee Resettlement with Patchwork Indy and as a Community Liaison with Welcome Corps, having mobilized over 300 sponsors and facilitated the resettlement of more than 360 refugees from Afghanistan and other parts of the world. Before these roles, Najia worked at the City of Indianapolis/Marion County Treasurer's Office for three years. In Afghanistan, she worked with international organizations and government agencies, including the United Nations, where she contributed to rebuilding her homeland alongside the Afghan government and U.S. mission. She also served as Bank Manager for the U.S. and other international military forces for 12 years. Najia is also serving on the board of Nationalities Council of Indiana and on the International Advisory board for Financial Center Credit Union. A strong advocate for women's rights, she has been involved in numerous women empowerment programmes, both government and NGO-led, in Afghanistan. Notably, she made history as the first woman appointed to an executive role at the one of the national banks in Afghanistan, overseeing the country's largest national bank from 2015 to 2017. Fluent in five languages, Najia is passionate about becoming an author and taking up tennis. She is married with four children. Najia holds a Bachelor's in Business from Delhi University, an MBA from Dunya University in Kabul, and a Second MBA from the Kelley School of Business at IUPUI in Indianapolis. She is also a graduate of the James T. Morris Global Leadership Programme by the International Center. Najia's leadership has been recognized with the Indianapolis Mayor's Community Service Award, and she was a top finalist for the Global Impression Award 2024. In 2021, she volunteered at Camp Atterbury, where she served as a representative for 280 Afghan women and children for three months before they were resettled in Indianapolis with her family. Through her vast network and leadership, Najia is advancing the Afghan community in Indiana, empowering others and positioning it for future success.

Sagalee Omer

 **Australia**

Sagalee Omer is a youth leader, social entrepreneur and storyteller based in Melbourne, Australia. After his father was resettled, Sagalee went through family reunification to join him in Australia.

Drawing from lived experience of forced displacement, he is committed to creating pathways for refugee and migrant communities to thrive. He is the founder and director of Shooters Shoot, a youth-led, not-for-profit using basketball to raise funds and awareness for community causes. Since 2021, it has raised over \$100,000, provided 100+ free therapy sessions, donated 150+ bikes, and delivered wellbeing programs to more than 1,000 young people. Sagalee also founded Locationest, a storytelling platform sharing voices of everyday people through photography, filmmaking, and writing, with partnerships including World Vision, Movember, and local councils. He has presented on national and international stages, including the 2025 CRCP in Geneva.

Sara Kuwatly

 **Canada**

Sara Kuwatly, a former refugee from Syria, was resettled in Canada in 2016 through the Student Refugee Program (SRP) facilitated by World University Service of Canada (WUSC). Sara fled to Lebanon in 2013 where she lived for three years before starting a new chapter in Canada. Sara earned her Bachelor's degree in Molecular Biology and Genetics from the University of Guelph, where she played a vital role in refugee support. She served as the chair of the WUSC Local Committee and later as the SRP coordinator. Currently, Sara works as a programme officer with the SRP Student Selection and Support team at WUSC and volunteers as an Arabic-English translator for LGBTQ+ refugees. She is also pursuing a Graduate Diploma in Migration and Diaspora Studies at Carleton University furthering her expertise and dedication to refugee issues.

Suzan Husseini

 **Japan**

Suzan Husseini is originally from Syria and travelled to Japan on an education pathway. Suzan currently is a PhD student in international relations at Waseda University's Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies pursuing the topic of complementary pathways to admission. She holds a master's degree in the same field from Waseda University and a bachelor's degree in English Translation from the University of Aleppo in Syria. Suzan is a co-delegate of EmPATHy, a youth organization founded in November 2022 to raise awareness in Japan about the hardships of refugees and to provide assistance to both newcomers and existing forcibly displaced persons. She is also a representative of Japan Bridge / Rebuilding Hope, a Syrian group that has joined forces with several NGOs to launch a fundraising campaign to assist families affected by the earthquake that struck northern Syria and southern Türkiye on February 6, 2023. Suzan has over three years of experience in Türkiye working with international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) such as Qatar Red Crescent and Global Communities. In addition, she has nine years of experience as a translator in Syria and Türkiye, five years of experience working at the British Council in Japan and is currently a project officer at Pathways Japan. Suzan values the human right to education, sustainable development goals, and advocacy for refugee protection. She provides education consultation to support students in Japan on their journey. Suzan has good

problem-solving skills and a calm personality. In 2023, she participated in the second Global Refugee Forum 2023 as a co-delegate of EmPATHy, and CRCP 2024 as a member of Pathways Japan.

Yusra Herzi

 **Canada**

Yusra Herzi is a former Somali refugee, who moved to Canada through Group of 5 sponsorship. She is a Programme Officer in Forced Displacement at PILnet, where she advances access to justice for refugees, stateless people, and displaced communities globally. She has led strategic litigation and advocacy initiatives that strengthened refugee work rights and protections across Southeast Asia during her time with Asylum Access Malaysia. Yusra holds a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) and a master's degree in Strategic and Defence Studies, specializing in Transitional Justice and Post-Conflict Reconstruction. In her current role, she partners with civil society and pro bono legal networks to expand legal pathways and strengthen protection frameworks for the forcibly displaced communities globally.

Vivian Shaima

 **Jordan**

Vivian is a courageous advocate for refugee rights, a social worker, and an educator. Her lived experience as a refugee fuels her dedication to advocating for marginalized communities. She is committed to reducing social injustice and driving community change. Vivian lived in Iraq until 2014 when ISIS forced her family to flee. They became internally displaced before fleeing to Jordan in search of safety. Today, Vivian brings experience across several key areas, focusing on advocacy, education in emergencies, teaching, youth skills, digital learning, mental health and psychosocial support, and complementary pathways for refugees. Currently, Vivian is a refugee guidance counsellor for a refugee-led programme of complementary pathways in Jordan with the World University Service of Canada (WUSC), supported by UNHCR. In this role, she conducts sessions and offers individual support to help refugees access higher education, labour market and family reunification opportunities outside Jordan. She also serves as an educator at Amala, leading the first internationally accredited secondary diploma for global refugees in Jordan. Vivian is also a member of the Canadian Refugee Education Council, an advisory body that provides strategic advice to Global Affairs Canada, hosted by World Vision Canada, working to increase access to quality education for displaced children and youth in refugee communities.

Zaid Hussin M. Toyub

 **Philippines**

Zaid is a Rohingya refugee currently residing in the Philippines, pursuing a Bachelor of Science

in Information Technology at Columban College. Born in Myanmar and displaced to Malaysia, he has lived in protracted displacement for over a decade before being moving to the Philippines through an education pathway. He has actively served refugee communities as a community development officer, interpreter and English teacher volunteer. He has worked with refugee-led and international organizations including the Johor Outreach Community Centre, CSB Rohingya Learning Centre, and participated in initiatives supported by UNHCR and UNICEF. Zaid is passionate about refugee education, youth empowerment and inclusive digital solutions. His lived experience and leadership in grassroots programmes inform his advocacy for more equitable and accessible resettlement and complementary pathway policies. As a member of the Refugee Advisory Group to the CRCP, he is committed to amplifying refugee voices and driving community-informed change.