

REFUGEE ADVISORY GROUP TO THE CONSULTATIONS ON RESETTLEMENT AND COMPLEMENTARY PATHWAYS

Member Bios

REFUGEE
ADVISORY
GROUP

Consultations on
Resettlement and
Complementary
Pathways



Bahati Kanyamanza

📍 United States of America

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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. Bahati's memoir "One Day" is coming up soon.



Basma Alawee

📍 United States of America

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Basma Alawee is a refugee leader, policy strategist, and nonprofit executive with 15+ years driving refugee protection and inclusion at the local, national, and global level. She has secured commitments of over \$210 million in philanthropic support and mobilized hundreds of thousands of Americans to

welcome refugees, and has represented refugee leadership at the UNHCR Executive Committee in Geneva as the first refugee delegate in a U.S. government delegation. She currently serves as a Senior Advisor on Policy, Advocacy, and Advancement in global and national spaces, partnering with governments, multilateral institutions, and philanthropic organizations to advance protection and inclusion for displaced communities worldwide.



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

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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.



Elvis Uwimana

📍 France

[LinkedIn](#)

Elvis Uwimana is a dedicated refugee advocate, community leader, and educator. His lived experience as a refugee fuels his commitment to expanding access to education and opportunity for displaced youth. Elvis fled Burundi and has lived in Rwanda as a refugee since 2015, an experience that shaped his belief that refugees must be central to the decisions and programmes designed to support them. Today, Elvis brings experience across education, humanitarian action, youth advocacy, and complementary pathways for refugees. He is the Co-founder and Executive Director of Light4Refugee, a refugee-led organisation supporting refugee youth in Mahama Refugee Camp to access education, mentorship, and opportunities for personal and professional development. In this role, he leads a team supporting hundreds of refugee students through academic preparation, English language instruction, and leadership development, while working closely with stakeholders to help students access complementary pathway opportunities. Elvis joined Theirworld as a Global Youth Ambassador before going on to serve as Network Lead for its Climate Task Team. His work there focused on researching and shaping advocacy campaigns at the intersection of climate change and education, bringing youth perspectives to global platforms including the UN General Assembly, and G20. Elvis holds a Master's degree in Human Rights and Humanitarian Action from Sciences Po in Paris, which he pursued through the UNIV'R University Corridor programme, a complementary pathway enabling refugees to pursue higher education in France. He also holds a Bachelor's degree in Global Challenges from African Leadership University, where he studied with support from the Mastercard Foundation, and was selected for the three-month online Refugee Studies Centre's Pathways Course at the University of Oxford in 2023, studying refugee and migration studies. Elvis is active in international advocacy on refugee education and youth participation, including as a panellist at the Theirworld Young Leaders in Education Summit in Nairobi in 2025. As a member of the Refugee Advisory Group, he hopes to bring his lived experience and refugee-led perspective to

discussions on resettlement and complementary pathways.



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.



Jîn Dawod

📍 Türkiye

[LinkedIn](#)

Jîn Dawod is a Syrian refugee leader and Founder & CEO of Peace Therapist, a refugee-led and women-led social enterprise advancing culturally sensitive mental health and psychosocial support for communities affected by conflict, displacement, and crisis. Through Peace Therapist, she has built a multilingual network of 150+ mental health professionals and reached over 80,000 people across 26 countries, including refugees, returnees, stateless communities, humanitarian workers, and host populations. Her work connects mental health with peacebuilding, social cohesion, responsible technology, and humanitarian policy. Jîn contributes to international discussions on refugee leadership, meaningful participation, durable solutions, mental health, and peacebuilding, while building cross-sector partnerships with humanitarian organizations, public institutions, universities, and global networks. Her leadership has been recognized through the UNHCR Nansen Refugee Award – Europe, the UN SDG Action Award, and Forbes 30 Under 30. Her vision is to make healing a foundation of sustainable peace, guided by one belief: there can be no lasting peace without inner peace.



Khatira Abdul Samad

📍 Pakistan

Khatira Abdul Samad is an Afghan refugee, a refugee rights advocate and a social entrepreneur based in Pakistan. She is the founder of Ameen Foundation for Refugees (AFRe), a refugee-led initiative working with refugees, internally displaced people and other marginalised communities on education, livelihoods, health, protection and women's rights. Through AFRe, Khatira has developed community-based education initiatives, including mobile and pop-up classrooms for children and girls who are unable to access formal education. She has also led programmes on menstrual health, sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence, mental health and wellbeing, digital literacy and livelihood skills. In 2025, AFRe received funding through the HIVE Community Innovation Lab, allowing her to expand its community education work to children from a flood-displaced community and provide a wider range of support and activities. Khatira has also worked directly with Afghan refugees and asylum seekers, helping them navigate protection services, education and skills opportunities, and information related to resettlement and complementary pathways. Her work has included raising awareness of labour mobility and education pathways, supporting refugees with language learning, and connecting them with vocational and education opportunities. Beyond her community work, Khatira has contributed to international discussions on refugee rights, education in emergencies, economic inclusion and climate displacement. She has participated in the Global Refugee Forum, spoken at the ECW High-Level Financing Conference, and represented Afghanistan as an International Youth Climate Delegate at COP28. She has also served with the Refugee Education Council Canada, INEE, and the UNESCO SDG4 Youth & Student Network. Her work has been recognised through the UNESCO Education 2030 Featured Story, the Peter Drucker Purpose Summit Audience Award, and the Ember Caring for the Carers Award for community-led mental health and wellbeing work.



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.



Nigina Abdul Moqim

📍 United States of America

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Nigina Abdul Moqim is a refugee leader and humanitarian practitioner with more than 15 years of experience advancing refugee protection, integration, and meaningful participation across Afghanistan, Europe, and the United States. Her perspective is shaped by lived experience of forced displacement across different stages of her life and by a career dedicated to translating humanitarian policy into practical solutions for displaced communities. Nigina began her education in a refugee camp after fleeing Afghanistan as a child and later became a refugee youth advocate, representing refugee perspectives in international policy discussions, including at the UNHCR NGO Consultations in Geneva. She subsequently worked with UNHCR in Afghanistan during periods of humanitarian emergency and large-scale displacement. Following the events of 2021, she experienced displacement again and rebuilt her life with her family in the United States. Today, Nigina serves as Program Manager for Family Wellness & Integration at HIAS, where she leads national initiatives and supports refugee-serving organizations across the United States on integration, family well-being, culturally responsive practice, protection, and community-based approaches. She also contributes to HIAS's work on Third Country Solutions, including organizational learning and dialogue on community sponsorship, labour and education pathways, family reunification, and other complementary pathways. Her work is grounded in a commitment to connecting lived experience with policy and practice and ensuring that refugees are meaningfully engaged in shaping the systems and solutions that affect their lives. Nigina holds a Master of International Affairs from the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva and a Bachelor of Law.



Rooan Al Kalmashi

📍 Australia

Rooan Al Kalmashi is a lawyer, policy professional and a human rights advocate with international experience through Settlement Services International's (SSI) ECOSOC status with the United Nations. She has represented Australian civil society at multilateral forums in New York, Geneva, and across the Asia-Pacific, including the Global Refugee Forum, UNHCR Global Consultations with Refugees and the

Commission on the Status of Women. Rooan is a strong advocate for the protection of ethno-religious minority communities in the Middle East, including historically and presently persecuted groups. Her interest areas are refugee protection, counterterrorism, peace and security, and the crosscutting issues that connect these fields. Over the last five years, Rooan's work has focused on humanitarian aid delivery in fragile conflict zones as well as supporting regional dialogue on protection, durable solutions and complementary pathways. She has supported emergency humanitarian responses in Afghanistan and worked with on the ground organisations and regional networks like the Asia Pacific Network for Refugees and the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network. Rooan has been recognised as Third Sector's 2023 Young Leader of the Year and on YAIA's 2026 list of Young Women to Watch in International Affairs. Rooan currently works as an Associate at the New South Wales Cabinet Office and holds a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Technology Sydney.



Sagalee Omer

📍 Australia

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Sagalee Omer is the Founder and Director of Shooters Shoot, an Australian youth organisation that uses sport, culture and storytelling to create belonging and improve wellbeing for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. He is also the founder of Locationest, a storytelling platform that centres community voices and lived experience. Sagalee serves on UNHCR's Refugee Advisory Group and contributed to the 2025 CRCP, where he spoke about refugee resilience and integration through arts and sport. His work focuses on youth engagement, post-arrival integration, mental health, community-led solutions and creating opportunities for young people to lead. Sagalee advocates for refugees and young people to be recognised not simply as participants in programs, but as experts and partners in shaping the systems and communities that affect them.



Saina Avesta

📍 Australia

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Saina Avesta is a proud trans woman and former refugee from Iran. She is a refugee community leader, human rights advocate and independent consultant specialising in trauma-informed and inclusive systems and practice in protection, resettlement and settlement contexts. At the age of 18, Saina fled Iran due to persecution based on her gender identity and sought protection in Türkiye in 2015. She spent almost seven years in displacement. During this time, she became a trusted peer leader and advocate within the queer refugee community in Türkiye. In June 2021, she was resettled in Australia through UNHCR. Saina is the Founder and Community Leader of the Persian Queer Network (PQN), a refugee-led initiative supporting Persian-speaking LGBTIQ+.

refugees and asylum seekers across Australia, Türkiye and other countries. Through PQN, she works closely with queer refugees through advocacy, peer consultation and community capacity-building. Through her independent consultancy, Avesta Advisory, Saina works with organisations, service providers, government bodies and institutions to strengthen trauma-informed, inclusive and culturally responsive systems and practice in refugee and multicultural contexts. Saina currently works as a Refugee Community Specialist for the Witness to War and Violence national initiative at STARTTS, a specialist refugee trauma recovery organisation based in Sydney, Australia. In 2025, Saina participated as a delegate with the Forcibly Displaced People Network (FDPN) at the GRF Progress Review in Geneva, contributing to discussions on meaningful refugee participation and the protection of LGBTIQ+ refugees, and delivering a plenary statement on behalf of FDPN. She brings more than ten years of lived and professional experience across refugee contexts in different countries. Her professional background includes refugee settlement, community leadership, program coordination, trauma recovery, workforce development and education.



Salah Jawish

📍 Canada

Salah Jawish is a refugee rights and community development practitioner with a decade of experience working with refugee and displaced communities in Egypt. His work has focused on legal aid, protection, advocacy, and community-based support, alongside leadership and program management. Salah is a co-founder of Tafawol Association for Special Needs and Development in Egypt, a Refugee-Led organization (RLO), where he currently serves as Deputy Chair of the Board and a member of the Steering Committee. He has served as Head of the Legal Aid Program and Head of the Psychosocial Support Program, and as Chair of the Referral and Durable Solutions Committee. He is also a Refugee Legal Fellow with PILnet and a co-founder of the United Refugee Network in Egypt. His work is grounded in a commitment to access to justice, meaningful refugee participation, and community-led protection. Drawing on his professional and lived experience of displacement, Salah serves as a Refugee Advisor to the Refugee Advisory Group to the CRCP, bringing refugee perspectives and lived experience to global discussions on resettlement, complementary pathways, and durable solutions.



Yusra Herzi

📍 Canada

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Yusra Herzi is an International Human Rights Lawyer and currently a Program Officer for Forced Displacement at PILnet, where she works to expand access to justice for refugees, stateless people, and forcibly displaced communities globally. Originally from Somalia and now resettled

in Canada, Yusra brings both lived and professional experience to her work in refugee rights. With over six years of experience in labour and international human rights law, she has led strategic litigation and advocacy initiatives that have strengthened refugee labour rights and legal protections across Southeast Asia. Yusra holds a Bachelor of Laws (Hons) and a Master of Arts in Strategic and Defence Studies, with a focus on transitional justice and post-conflict peacebuilding. She is co-author, with Emily E. Arnold-Fernández, of the book *Refugees at Work: Rights and Realities under International Law*.

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You may contact the Refugee Advisory Group to the CRCP at refugeeadvisorygroup@unhcr.org.