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MCW Global Hosts 28th Edition of the Young Leaders Fellowship

July 25, 2025, New York, NY- MCW Global brought together 40 young leaders: 2 Co-Lead Mentors, 12 Mentors, and 26 Mentees representing 32 countries for the 2025 Young Leaders Fellowship [the Fellowship], held from July 14 to July 24 in the United States. This immersive program, hosted at the facilities of NYU's School of Professional Studies (SPS) in New York City and Champlain College in Burlington, Vermont, equipped mentees with the tools to lead and drive positive change in their communities across education, health, and economic security, with leadership skills serving as a cross-cutting component.

The program began with an energizing start of icebreakers and connection-building activities. Young Leaders learned about MCW Global's 25-year-long journey and received firsthand advice from the MCW Global team and Mentors on how to make the most of this experience. Young leaders also shared their aspirations to improve their communities in areas such as women's empowerment, mental health, environment, education, social justice, and youth civic engagement.

Throughout the Fellowship, mentees deepened their understanding of modern leadership through sessions on various leadership approaches, styles, and cultural perspectives. The curriculum also included sessions on gender awareness, equity and mainstreaming, self-awareness, mental health, global citizenship, and leadership reflections, covering lessons learned, personal growth, and strategies for building global networks.

"Whenever I get to spend time at the Fellowship, I'm incredibly impressed by the talent of the Young Leaders and inspired by their passion for improving their communities. Providing these young leaders with the skills, confidence, and network of like-minded community activists is the unique capability of our MCW Global team. "I'm so proud to be part of MCW Global's growing community," shared Rich Miranda, MCW Global Board of Directors.

With guidance and support of the MCW Global team members, Co-Lead Mentors, and Mentors, mentees began developing their community-focused ideas using Vision Planning, a project management tool that incorporates defining the problem, crafting a mission and strategy, identifying resources, and managing time effectively.

"It's a rare opportunity to be surrounded by such driven and diverse young leaders, each carrying a unique story of resilience, innovation, and a shared commitment to creating positive change. It was an unforgettable experience, and truly one that will stay with me for a lifetime." shared Iman Hussain, a mentee from Hong Kong.

Participant speakers (*listed in alphabetical order*) included: Ayesha Mahmud, Mentor from Bangladesh; Blend Gashi, Mentor from Kosovo; Bruno Rodrigues Lopes, Mentor from Brazil; Davi Augusto dos Santos Soares, Mentor from Brazil; Dilyorakhon Akramjonova, Mentor from Uzbekistan; Florencia Peñaflor Paran, Mentor from Peru; Hawa Kimbugwe, Mentor from Uganda; Huma Nasir, Co-Lead Mentor from India; Ibrahim Muhammad Bello, Mentor from Nigeria; Mauren Liceth Martinez Murcia, Mentor from Colombia; Ndey Amie Jobe, Mentor from the Gambia; Samiur Rahman, Co-Lead Mentor from Bangladesh; Thandi Bonno, Mentor from Botswana; and Zarrak Sattar, Mentor from Pakistan.

Other exceptional speakers (*listed in alphabetical order*) included: Angie Kamath, Dean of NYU School of Professional Studies; Anna Condoulis, MCW Global Board Member; Carley Storm, Owner of the Carley Storm Branding Co.; Dr. Charles Robbins, MCW Global Board Member; David Kochman, Chief Corporate Affairs Officer at Henry Schein; Dhurata Berisha, MCW Global Young Leaders Fellowship Program Manager; Eddie Bergman, MCW Global Co-Founder and Board President; Howard Stapler, former Vice President, Administration, Corporate Shared Services – Office of the CEO at Henry Schein, Inc.; Liz Graydon-Gannon, Co-founder of “What Better Looks Like”; Maria Jose Lovaton Espinel, MCW Global Media Coordinator; Richard Magid, President of Soundboard Consulting Group; Dr. Sasa Vann Rubino, a Postdoctoral Fellow at Stony Brook University; and Sharon Matongo, MCW Global Resource Development Associate.

“This year’s Fellowship created a powerful space where young leaders from around the world pushed their thinking and learned from diverse viewpoints. They chose connection over division, and empathy over ego. Working side by side, they developed Vision Plans to address real needs in their communities, leaving the program with stronger skills, deeper connections, and a shared commitment to making the world a little more peaceful and compassionate.” shared Dhurata Berisha, MCW Global Young Leaders Fellowship Program Manager.

One of the highlights of the Fellowship was the yearly one-minute elevator pitch competition, where mentees presented their community project ideas. The panel of esteemed judges included Dr. Charles Robbins (MCW Board Member), Chelsea Boatey (META Foundation), Jonathan Hakakian (Managing Director - SoundBoard Venture Fund), Laurette Richin (Executive Director - Long Island Bulldog Rescue), Nancy Mannebach (Investment Banking Vice President - Armory Group), and Scott Rosenberg (Miro Consulting).

The program brought together 40 Young Leaders from 32 countries, including Algeria, Argentina, Bangladesh, Botswana, Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Honduras, Hong Kong, India, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco, Nepal, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Pakistan, Palestine, Perú, Philippines, Poland, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Spain, The Gambia, Tunisia, Uganda, the United Kingdom, the United States, Uzbekistan, Venezuela and Zambia.

“One of the most powerful moments for me was witnessing the transformation in empathy, connection, and leadership growth among the mentees. They began with some anxiety, but by the end, their energy shifted into confidence as they built projects with real community impact. The same was true for our mentors, whose collective effort to create a safe and supportive space made leadership growth possible for both mentees and mentors alike.” shared Co-Lead mentor, Samiur Rahman from Bangladesh.

The in-person segment of the Fellowship concluded with the Open Doors event at NYU SPS, where guests and supporters of MCW Global gathered to celebrate the mentees' journey and hear about their vision plans. This year's recipient of the Roberta Richin Memorial Vision Plan Award was Haithem Medjmedj from Algeria, with runners-up Aisuluu from Kyrgyzstan and Ola from Poland. [Click [here](#) to watch the livestream of the 2025 Open Doors.]

Alumni from the 2025 Young Leaders Fellowship will be eligible for MCW Global's exclusive alumni programs, including [the Community Leaders in Africa Internship](#), [the Alumni Ventures Fund](#), and the newly launched [Global Ambassador Program](#). Through these opportunities, alumni continue their leadership journey while strengthening the dynamic global network co-created and led by MCW alumni.

We extend our gratitude to this year's sponsors and supporters: American Flatbread, Bagel Bob's, Hill & Bay, New York University, Starbucks, and Whole Foods for their great support.

About Us

MCW Global is a non-profit organization with a vision for communities around the world to achieve greater levels of education, improved health, and increased economic security. Our mission is to address the pressing needs of communities by empowering current leaders and preparing the leaders of tomorrow. Founded in 1999, MCW Global is based in New York with affiliates in Africa (Rwanda, Tanzania, and Zambia). MCW Global offers Young Leaders and Africa Programs. Across all our programs, we seek to act with integrity, compassion, accountability, responsibility, and excellence.

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