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MCW Global Hosts 29th Edition of the Young Leaders Fellowship

July 30, 2026, New York, NY- MCW Global brought together 43 young leaders: 2 Co-Lead Mentors, 13 Mentors, and 28 Mentees, representing 31 countries for the 2026 Young Leaders Fellowship [the Fellowship], held from July 21 to July 30 in the United States.

Offering a rich and immersive experience, the Fellowship, hosted at the facilities of New York University's (NYU) 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 being a cross-cutting component.

The program began at NYU with introductions, group-bonding activities, and the first opportunities for participants to connect. The Young Leaders then traveled to Burlington, where, over the following days, they deepened their understanding of modern leadership through sessions exploring diverse leadership approaches, styles, and cultural perspectives. The program covered sustainability through a global citizenship lens, mental health, navigating identity in a complex world, leading in a divided world, self-awareness, discovering and aligning with one's core values, growth mindset, emotional intelligence, and public speaking. Cultural exchange activities complemented these sessions, giving participants opportunities to reflect on lessons learned and personal growth while developing strategies to build and sustain global networks.

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

"It is an absolute must for the young leaders of today to be a part of this program. MCW Global ensures you are not only going beyond your means and learning the culture of the world but equipping learners with transferable business skills in project management. For me, this program was nothing short of amazing. I arrived at a safe space to voice the concerns of my community and left with a plan to implement the solution," shared Nyree Crowell, a mentee from the U.S.

For Giselle Camps Bondia, a Mentor from Spain, returning to the Fellowship as a Mentor this year has been a true full-circle moment.

"Two years ago, I joined the program as a mentee eager to learn, and this year I had the privilege of supporting a new generation of Young Leaders as they developed their own visions for change. Watching my mentees grow in confidence, challenge themselves, and build meaningful connections reminded me why this community is so special. It never ceases to amaze me that, despite coming from different corners

of the world, we share so many values and a common determination to create a better future. I feel incredibly fortunate to have witnessed the passion, resilience, and growth of this year's cohort.” Giselle Camps Bondia shared.

Reflecting on the connections and shared experiences throughout the Fellowship, Zarrak Sattar, Co-Lead Mentor from Pakistan, said:

“It was truly inspiring to witness the genuine connections that developed between Mentors and Mentees throughout the Fellowship. Despite coming from diverse backgrounds and cultures, we discovered that many of the challenges we face are remarkably similar and deeply interconnected. The experience gave us a profound understanding of what it truly means to be global citizens.”

The Fellowship also provided participants with opportunities to engage directly with accomplished leaders and learn from their experiences.

“Every year we think it’s the best cohort of young people. And that was again true this year. They were amazing. They seemed to become a team so easily and really coalesced together, which was really nice. It was the first time that we had almost all of the board there at the same time, which I don’t remember us ever being able to have before. And so, as the chair of the Young Leaders Program Committee, I was proud, and I think it’s important for the board to see what really happens, because that’s what this is all about. This is our future, and the energy was just so positive,” shared Dr. Charles Robbins.

For Dhurata Berisha, MCW Global Young Leaders Fellowship Program Manager, who has managed the Fellowship for the past six years, this year’s program was a particularly meaningful one.

“The Fellowship brought together young leaders with different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives, but what stood out was how quickly they found common ground. Over the course of the program, they challenged one another, learned from each other, and built a genuine sense of community. It was inspiring to see them leave not only with new leadership skills and ideas, but with a stronger belief in what they could accomplish together and in their own communities,” shared Berisha.

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. [Click [here](#) to watch the livestream recording of the 2026 Open Doors.]

Mentors and Co-Lead Mentor Speakers (*listed in alphabetical order*) included: **Giselle Camps Bondia**, Mentor from Spain; **Mustain Karim Chowdhury**, Mentor from Bangladesh; **Thandi Bonno**, Mentor from Botswana; **Youssef Ben Ameer**, Mentor from Tunisia; **Arely Abigail Jimenez Moreno**, Mentor from Mexico; **Karen Nabwire Kilwake**, Mentor from Kenya; **Bruno Rodrigues Lopes**, Mentor from Brazil; **Mauren Liceth Martinez Murcia**, Mentor from Colombia; **Huma Nasir**, Co-Lead Mentor from India; **Haithem Medjmedj**, Mentor from Algeria; **Ibrahim Muhammad Bello**, Mentor from Nigeria; **Kristina Pavloski**, Mentor from North Macedonia; **Rita Selimi**, Mentor from Kosovo; **Davi Augusto dos Santos Soares**, Mentor from Brazil; and **Zarrak Sattar**, Co-Lead Mentor from Pakistan.

The 31 participating countries in the 2026 Fellowship (*listed in alphabetical order*) are: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Colombia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Kosovo, Mexico, Mongolia, North Macedonia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palestine, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Thailand, Tunisia, U.S., and Uzbekistan.

Alumni from the 2026 Young Leaders Fellowship will be eligible for MCW Global's exclusive alumni programs, funding, and mentoring opportunities. Through these opportunities, alumni continue their leadership journey while strengthening the dynamic global network co-created and led by MCW alumni.

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 communities' pressing needs by empowering current leaders and readying leaders of tomorrow. Founded in 1999, MCW Global is based in New York and offers Young Leaders and Africa Programs. Across all our programs, we seek to act with integrity, compassion, accountability, responsibility, and excellence. www.mcwglobal.org | [@mcwglobal](https://www.instagram.com/mcwglobal)