

## The King County Immigrant & Refugee Commission

---

### Andrew Kritovich, Ukrainian Community Center of Washington



Andrew was born in Lviv, Ukraine and came to the USA as a refugee in 1999 together with his family. He holds a Master degree in Counseling Psychology from Northwest University.

Andrew has more than 25 years of experience working in a variety of settings focusing on counseling, client advocacy and community empowerment for refugees, immigrants, minority populations, inmates of the penitentiary system, individuals without permanent housing, victims of domestic violence, people struggling with substance abuse, and other vulnerable populations. Currently, he holds a position of Deputy Executive director at Ukrainian Community Center of Washington.

Working for many years with clients of different ethnic, religious and racial backgrounds, Andrew has developed a sensitive multicultural approach in addressing needs of refugee and immigrant communities. He is fluent in Ukrainian, Russian and English.

---

### Fo-Ching Lu, SYL Foundation



Fo-Ching Lu is President of SYL Foundation, a nonprofit organization she formed in 2008 that combines compassion and philanthropy with strategic grant-making to advance quality health care and education for all. The Foundation prioritizes funding for immigrant and refugee-serving organizations and operates the Lotus Scholarship program supporting immigrant and refugee students through college. Prior to SYL Foundation, Fo-Ching was Intellectual Property Counsel for the French luxury company, Chanel, first in New York City, and then in Geneva, Switzerland, where she established a new in-house legal department. Fo-Ching began her career with Greenberg Traurig LLP's Intellectual Property group and worked for nonprofits in New York City. She has served as Vice President and board member of the Asian Bar Association of

Washington (ABAW) and helps to lead a Seattle-area funder collaborative around immigrant and refugee issues. Fo-Ching immigrated to the U.S. as a child and remains active in the local Buddhist community within which she was raised.

### **Hamdi Mohamed, Office of Congresswoman Jayapal**



Hamdi was born the youngest of ten siblings in Mogadishu Somalia. A year later, she fled Somalia with her family as the civil war broke. She came to America when she was three years old. Today, Mohamed is a graduate of the University of Washington with a degree in Law, Societies, and Justice. She splits her work between Congresswoman Jayapal's district office and campaign office. In the district office, Mohamed is the Manager of Constituent Services where she helps people navigate the everyday impacts of public policy and addresses constituents' issues relating to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Department of State. She is often writing letters of Stay of Removal for those

facing deportation and request expedited adjudications on immigration applications. Part of her job is educating and acting as a conduit between citizens and federal agencies. She is also Congresswoman Jayapal's Campaign Manager and is responsible for overseeing all aspect of the campaign, the management of staff, the coordination and implementation of all fundraising operations. She also worked for the Refugee Women Alliance where she helped prepare low-income residents for job search and employment attainment. In 2012, Mohamed worked with CARE International in Hargeisa, where she researched and wrote interest-stories on discrimination and food security crisis and assisted with the global 'Do No Harm' training that helps prevent NGOs from causing unintentional harm through their humanitarian interventions and peace operations.

---

### **Issa Ndiaye, West African Community Council**



Issa's professional career and personal life have been focused on education, leadership, and public service. Issa is one of the co-founders and Executive Director of the West African Community Council (WACC). As a dedicated public servant, advocate, and leader, Issa co-founded the WACC, a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide social services and immigration assistance to the West African, immigrant, and refugee communities. As a fluent speaker of French, Wolof, and English, he has personally served hundreds of immigrants, refugees, and asylees apply for visas, green cards, work permits, and naturalization with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

As an immigrant having grown up in Senegal, West Africa and later immigrating to the United States, Issa believes that success is not solely measured financially, but also through relentlessly giving a helping hand to others -- family members, friends, neighbors and community members -- so they, too, can achieve similar educational and/or professional momentum. Issa first received his Associates degree from North Seattle Community College. He then went on to receive his Bachelor of Science in Economics from the University of Puget Sound. He later received his Master's in Public Administration from the University of Washington. He had served for nine years as Senior Management Analyst at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs – Office of Inspector General. In the many years that he has lived in Washington State, Issa has built a home and support system here and is dedicated to serving the immigrant and refugee communities in King County.

### **Lalita Uppala, India Association of Western Washington**



Lalita is a resident of Bellevue WA is an immigrant of India. Ms. Uppala serves as Interim President and Director, Community Program for the India Association of Western Washington ([www.iaww.org](http://www.iaww.org)), CAPAA Commissioner (Washington State Commission on Asian and Pacific American Affairs) and a trustee for the King County Library System. Ms. Uppala has been a passionate advocate for the community for over fifteen years working on a wide range of issues from youth and women empowerment to addressing isolation among seniors, driving civic engagement and organizing community conversations. She strives each day to find innovative ways to engage and include under-represented communities and has centered her efforts on equity and social justice.

---

### **Medard Ngueita, World Relief**



Born and raised in Chad, Medard moved to the US in 2006. He worked in the corporate world right after coming to the United States and joined the World Relief team in 2012. Medard loves to serve in particular the immigrants and the refugees. He is an advocate, inspiration and motivation to the refugee and immigrant community. Medard worked with Refugee State Coordinator and others to organize the Refugee Housing Summit to address refugees housing crisis. Medard holds a Bachelor's degree in Human Geography from the University of Ngaoundere in Cameroon and a Certificate in High Performance Leadership from Cornell University. As Resettlement Manager at World Relief. Medard oversees the initial programs of refugees and asylees placement, supports the casework team, and addresses refugees' and immigrants' needs in the community. Medard is currently pursuing a Master in International Community Development at Northwest University.

---

### **Miguel Angel Duncan-Galvez Bravo, YWCA Seattle, King County, Snohomish County**



Miguel Angel Duncan-Galvez Bravo was born in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico in 1988. At the age of 2, he and his family migrated to Southern California where he began his journey. As a youth, Miguel was admitted into Future Leaders of America and the Young Senators programs. While a Young Senator, he was elected Minority leaders. While in the program, he was recognized by Senator Richard Alarcon and his city's councilmember for his work with the community. After completing his high school degree from San Fernando Math/ Science/ Technology High School, Miguel enrolled into California State University Northridge as a Project Grad Scholar and majored in Political Science. In 2012, Miguel was granted DACA and continued to pursue his academic dreams. He was accepted into Hawaii Pacific University's Diplomacy and Military Studies Master's

program, being the first undocumented student in the program's history. He earned the Holomua Scholarship and was recognized with HPU's Master of Diplomacy and Military Services' Perseverance in the Face of Adversity Award. He has worked on state-wide campaigns in 2013, helping in the legalization of same-sex marriage in Hawaii; contracted through Human Rights Campaign (HRC) and ACLU Hawaii.

---

### **Minal Kode Ghassemieh, Immigration Attorney**



Minal is a mom, immigration attorney, and community organizer dedicated to serving immigrants and refugees. The daughter of a first generation immigrant from India, Minal feels privileged to have been born and raised in Washington State and has learned to leverage that privilege for public service. She earned her Bachelors Degree in Business Administration from the University of Washington and her Juris Doctor from Gonzaga University School of Law. Minal is a childhood survivor of domestic violence, which triggered her involvement in the antiviolence movement. She served as Board Chair of API Chaya, a local non-profit providing culturally relevant support and services to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking. For the last 10 years, Minal has focused her immigration practice on family based immigration and humanitarian relief. Minal has joined the effort to resist discriminatory immigration policies and provide increased support and representation to the immigrant and refugee community. Minal provides pro bono legal counsel to women who fear calling the police or attending their protection order hearings out of fear of detention and deportation. She also joins her colleagues in assisting low-income individuals and families prepare applications for naturalization. At this very unfortunate time in our nation's history, Minal believes in the power of community to stand with and protect immigrants and refugees.

---

### **Mohamed Bakr, Muslim Community and Neighborhood Association**



Mohamed Bakr is an Eastside resident and a first generation immigrant from Sudan. Mohamed is an Advocate for underrepresented and marginalized communities, passionate about community engagement, equity in education, empowering immigrants and social justice. He is a technical professional skilled in digital marketing for non-profit organizations. In addition, he is a trainer in Islamic culture, cultural competency and Islamophobia for law enforcement agencies, school districts and nonprofit organizations.

Mohamed is a member of BDAN (Bellevue Diversity Advisory Network) in the City of Bellevue. Mohammed is a founder of the MCNA (Muslim Community & Neighborhood Association). MCNA reached more than 6000 Muslims and Non Muslims in community engagement activities in 2 year period. Mohamed is a founder of the Immigrant PTA (The first PTA in the US, to directly offer support and education for Immigrant families and students), and the "Muslim Parent group" in the Eastside school districts. He is also working on establishing a certificate of "Adaptive Leadership for Muslims".

Mohamed holds a BSC in Computer Engineering and MBA in Marketing. He is certified in CERT/FEMA TOT and CPR/First Aid/EAD trainer.

### **Mohammad Jan Ofuq, International Rescue Committee**



Mohammad Jan Ofuq was born in Afghanistan and was a refugee for about 19 years living outside Afghanistan. He returned back to his country in 2004, completed Bachelors of LAW at Balkh University school of law in 2008. He worked with US department of State's rule of law projects and GIZ German International Cooperation Agency for 7 years, managing corporation of police-prosecutors training in Afghanistan. He participated in Youth International Conferences and Trainings in India, Sri Lanka, UAE, Thailand, Italy, Germany, Portugal, Sierra Leone and Thailand.

He had to leave his home country and was resettled in Seattle area in 2016, He started working with IRC International Rescue Committee as Refugee Resettlement Case-Worker in July 2016. He is currently completing his Masters of Law LLM degree at Seattle University and will sit for the Bar Exam in July 2019. He is currently an Immigration Case-Worker at the International Rescue Committee providing Immigration services to Refugees and immigrants from different countries. He is married and has two sons and a daughter. He speaks FARSI, PASHTO, English, Urdu and is working on his Arabic.

---

### **Monserrat Padilla, Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network**



Monserrat Padilla has been organizing LGBTQ, immigrant and communities of color on the ground for over 10 years to build collective movement power. She was a co-founder of the Washington Dream Coalition and has led national & statewide campaigns, including the victory on the Washington State Dream Act to expand eligibility for state aid in higher education.

Monserrat worked as a the National Program Coordinator for the Queer Undocumented Immigrant Project, a program of United We Dream, where she worked across the country building a national network of LGBTQ immigrant community leaders, advocates and organizers to develop policies and advocate addressing the needs of LGBTQ immigrant communities.

Monserrat was born in Tonalá, Jalisco, Mexico. At the age of 2 she migrated to the U.S. with her mother and two older siblings. She grew up in East Los Angeles, CA where she became part of the 11 million undocumented families living in the U.S. At the age of 15 she moved to Seattle, Washington, graduating from Chief Sealth International High School in 2010 and attending the University of Washington in Seattle.

## **Nimco Bulale, OneAmerica**



Nimco Bulale is an Education Program Manager at OneAmerica. She has extensive experience working with community-based organizations and coalitions that work to strengthen the voices of disenfranchised communities to promote a more just society. Nimco was born in Mogadishu, Somalia and raised in Seattle. Nimco is fluent in Somali and proficient in Spanish. She received her Master's in Public Administration with a focus on nonprofit leadership and local government administration from Seattle University. Previously, Nimco attended the University of Washington where she earned her Bachelor of Arts in International Studies with a focus on foreign policy, diplomacy, peace and security. Nimco volunteers with various community-based organizations and coalitions that work to strengthen the voices of disenfranchised communities to promote a more just society. She is a Board Member of the Southeast Seattle Education Coalition and is a Brainerd Fellow with Social Venture Partners. She also serves on the "Our Best" Advisory Council, the City of Seattle's first ever initiative specifically aimed at expanding opportunity and improving life outcomes for young black men and boys in education, health, employment, safety and positive connections to caring adults.

Nimco is passionate about closing the achievement gap in education, empowering refugee and immigrant communities, and breaking down the systemic barriers to opportunity. Moreover, Nimco is committed to working to address the root causes of injustice, building power, and creating equitable change in her community. During her free time Nimco enjoys traveling, discovering new coffee shops, spending time with her family, as well as enjoying Seattle's impressive selection of restaurants.

---

## **Senayet Negusse, Puget Sound Education Service District (PSESD)**



Senayet Negusse is an educator, advocate and Dual Language Coach serving immigrant and refugee communities across King and Pierce County. As the daughter of Ethiopian Refugees, Senayet witnessed the struggles her parents encountered, as they did their best to raise their children in a world with which they were unfamiliar. It was her parents' strength that inspired Senayet to serve alongside and advocate for historically underserved communities. Senayet's personal experiences as a bicultural and bilingual student encouraged her to pursue a double degree in Speech & Hearing Sciences and Early Childhood and Family Studies from the University of Washington. Her experience as a first-generation college student revealed the injustices that occur in educational institutions and led her to complete her Master's in Education Policy and Leadership from the University of Washington.

As a master's Student, Senayet collaborated with the United Way of King County to research the impact of ethnic-based youth programming on academic outcomes. Currently, she works for the Puget Sound Education Service District (PSESD) as an Early Learning Coach. As a Coach, Senayet provides differentiated, equity-based coaching and training to Head Start and ECEAP teachers around effective supports for Dual Language Learners

and their families. In her spare time, she serves as the Assistant Coordinator for the East African Senior Meal Program, volunteers with One America as a Community Language Organizer and serves as a board member for the Seattle Neighborhood Group. Her passion lies in improving the public-school experience at all levels for historically underrepresented students and their families through the implementation of culturally responsive instruction, effective professional development and connecting community needs with school services by collaborating with trusted ethnic based community organizations. Through this commission, Senayet hopes to empower and work alongside immigrants, refugees and allies to create a lasting and meaningful change in which immigrant and refugee groups are protected and able to thrive.

