



- BIOGRAPHIES OF NON-UN SPEAKERS-
United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
Youth Forum

“Shaping tomorrow’s innovators: Leveraging science, technology, innovation and culture for today’s youth”

27 March 2013
10:00 am – 5:30 pm
United Nations Headquarters, New York



Mr. Hashem Bajwa
CEO of DE-DE

Hashem Bajwa is the CEO of DE-DE, a product development studio driven by a unique combination of engineers and marketers who are building early stage internet businesses. DE-DE, which stands for Design & Develop, is based in New York. In 2012 the DE-DE team was named one of FastCompany's "13 companies who made the world more creative". Prior to founding DE-DE, Hashem was director of digital strategy at independent creative agency Droga5, where he was part of the core team that developed the award-winning “Decode Jay-Z” campaign. Previously, he helped build digital from the ground up at Goodby, Silverstein & Partners in San Francisco. He began his career in global communications at the United Nations.



Mr. Surendran Balachandran
Campaigner, Change.org

Mr. Surendran Balachandran is a campaigner with Change.org in India and helps people start, join and win grassroots campaigns to bring about positive social change. He was previously a Board Member of the Indian Youth Climate Network and a Freelance Web Designer and for Social Media Engagement. Mr. Balachandran was also the South Asia Campaigns Coordinator at 350.org and helped to organize the 2009 International Day of Climate Action. He was educated at the Indian Law Institute and Valliammai Engineering College (India).





Ms. Dana Bazzoun

2012 UNESCO-L'Oréal Fellow

PhD Student, American University of Beirut and Purdue University

Ms. Dana Bazzoun is a PhD student in Cell and Molecular Biology at the American University of Beirut in Lebanon. She is currently a visiting scholar at Purdue University in the US. In 2012, Ms. Bazzoun was selected as a UNESCO-L'Oréal Fellow for women in science. She is part of the International Breast Cancer and Nutrition Project founded at Purdue University which aims at primary breast cancer prevention. She gained a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.), Biology, General from the American University of Beirut and a Master of Science (M.Sc.), Molecular Biology from the Lebanese American University. She recently has published a paper entitled "Modulation of Cx43 and Gap Junctional Intercellular Communication by Androstenedione in Rat Polycystic Ovary and Granulosa Cells in vitro" in the Journal of Reproduction and Infertility in December 2011 and another entitled "Polarity Proteins as Regulators of Cell Junction Complexes: Implications for Breast Cancer" in the journal of Pharmacology and Therapeutics in 2013. She has been involved in joint projects between Purdue University and the American University of Beirut and has three manuscripts in preparations in 2013.



Ms. Barbara Birungi

Manager of Hive Colab and Founder of Women in Technology in Uganda (WITU)

Ms. Barbara Birungi is a Ugandan web designer, social entrepreneur and the founder of WITU, a non profit for women in technology in Uganda. WITU seeks to address the gender technological gap through recruitment, encouragement, training, empowerment and career advancement of women in the ICT sector. She is currently the Manager of Hive Colab, a business accelerator and incubator for East African startups, and is also the In-Country Manager for Appfrica Labs in Uganda. She is also one of the organizers of the Apps4africa competition in Uganda hosted by Appfrica Labs. Barbara graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Computing from Makerere University and a Post Graduate degree in Project Management and Planning. Barbara is passionate about ICT4D and gender issues in technology. She took part in a Makerere university initiative to help rural craft making women market their produce on the internet and improve on their livelihood through counseling and encouragement and teaching practical financial saving skills.





Mr. Wael Ghonim

Internet activist and computer engineer

Mr. Wael Ghonim, a 31 year-old Egyptian, came onto the global scene during the January 25th Revolution in Egypt. Coined the “keyboard freedom fighter,” he used the power of the internet and social media to fight for social justice. Ghonim was the anonymous founder of a Facebook page called “Kullena Khaled Said” (We are all Khaled Said) which initiated the first to call for the January 25th Revolution that resulted in the toppling of the 30-year Mubarak regime. Wael is considered one of the region’s digital pioneers - launching many firsts in the tech industry including some of the region’s most important websites until he landed at Google. He served as the Regional Marketing Manager for Google in the Middle East and North Africa overseeing 18 countries when the revolution unfolded.

Immediately after the revolution, Wael took a sabbatical from Google and became active in Egypt’s civil society working on two main initiatives. He founded an NGO called Nabadat (Pulses in Arabic), which aims at fostering education opportunities for Egyptians through technology. Its first project, TahrirAcademy, which offers online educational videos, reached more than half a million Arabs. Wael received his Bachelor’s Degree in Computer Engineering from Cairo University and earned an MBA from the American University in Cairo. He is married with two children and resides in Cairo & Dubai. In 2011, Wael was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, and he was named one of Time 100’s most influential and received JFK Profile in Courage Award on behalf of the Egyptian people.



Mr. Marco Gomes

Founder, boo-box and Chief Marketing Officer, Grupo Forty-Two

Mr. Marco Gomes is one of the most respected Internet professionals in Brazil. He is considered a specialist in new digital tendencies. In 2007, he founded boo-box, which is a network that displays advertising for over 1,500 advertisers to 50 million people per month in Brazil using blogs, websites and social networks. Boo-box was named in the world’s top 50 most innovative companies for their pioneering social-media advertising in Latin America. Mr. Gomes studied Strategic Marketing at Stanford Graduate School of Business and was recently married.





Dr. Mandë Holford

Co-founder of WAYS (World Association of Young Scientists) Assistant Professor, Department of Chemistry, The City University of New York Hunter College and Graduate Center

Dr. Mandë Holford is an Assistant Professor in Chemistry at The City University of New York-Hunter College and Graduate Center, with a scientific appointment at the American Museum of Natural History. Her dual appointment reflects her interdisciplinary research, which combines chemistry and biology to discover, characterize, and deliver novel peptides from venomous marine snails (cones snails, terebrids, and turrids) as tools for manipulating cell signaling in the nervous system. She has received funds from the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to support her independent research. Dr. Holford received her PhD in Synthetic Protein Chemistry from The Rockefeller University. She is a member of the Educational Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees at The Rockefeller University where she advises on the University's graduate school program. Dr. Holford was a Science and Technology Policy Fellow at the American Association for the Advancement of Science and a Term Member of the Council on Foreign Relations.



Mr. Jorge Just

Interactive Telecommunications Programme, Tisch School of the Arts, New York University

Jorge spent the last few years working with UNICEF in New York and Uganda on RapidFTR--an open source mobile application that helps humanitarian workers reunite unaccompanied children with their families. The project started as his master's thesis at the Interactive Telecommunications Program at New York University where he teaches *Design For UNICEF*, and has grown into an international open-source collaboration between hundreds of volunteer coders, designers and analysts on five continents. It is currently helping refugees in Uganda, and will soon be deployed in South Sudan. Before working at UNICEF, Jorge spent time telling stories for *This American Life*, and helping record bands such as OK Go figure out compelling and creative ways to use the Internet to collaborate with their fans. This work was recognized by legendary design thinker Bill Moggridge in his book *Designing Media*, which named Jorge one of "37 significant figures in both traditional and new forms of mass communication," alongside such luminaries as the founders of Facebook, Wikipedia, the publisher of the New York Times. Follow him on twitter @jorgej.





Ms. Genevieve L'Esperance
Co-founder of GenINC, and Undergraduate Student
McGill University

Ms. Genevieve L'Esperance is a graduate student at McGill University. She became a Microsoft Certified Professional at age 15 and a Technical Specialist at 16. At the same time, she began teaching girls computer programming using Small Basic with the non-profit Teaching Kids Programming. She is a recipient of the 2011 TIAW World of Difference Award, which recognizes individuals under 25 whose efforts have advanced the economic empowerment of women locally, regionally or worldwide. Her web channel, GenINCtv, bridges the gap between the technology industry and youth and includes tech-related event coverage, interviews with prominent figures, and video blogs reviewing socially-responsible technologies. This past summer she interned with Curtis Wong, Principal Researcher at Microsoft, as well as Alyssa Goodman and Patricia Udomprasert, Harvard Professors of Astrophysics, producing content for the Worldwide Telescope and the WWT Ambassador program. Genevieve seeks to empower girls to choose careers in STEM by altering girls' perception of the technology industry.



Ms. Jessica Lawrence
Executive Director, New York Tech Meet Up

Ms. Jessica Lawrence is the Executive Director of NY Tech Meetup (NYTM), the largest Meetup in the world and a 31,000-member non-profit organization supporting New York's growing technology community. Until January 2011, Jessica was the CEO of Girl Scouts of San Gorgonio Council in Southern California. In 2010, Jessica was one of only 15 women selected to participate in Seth Godin's Female Entrepreneur MBA (FeMBA). Jessica's writing has been featured on Forbes.com, The Next Web, The Daily Muse and in a weekly column in The Press-Enterprise. She also speaks frequently on technology startups, the New York technology community, women in tech, organizational development, and non-profit management.



Mr. Matt Mahan
President and CEO of Causes.com

Mr. Matt Mahan is responsible for the strategic and operational leadership of Causes.com, guiding the company toward its vision of creating the world's largest platform for social change. He previously managed business development at Causes, creating new revenue products and overseeing thousands of corporate and nonprofit relationships. Before working in tech, Matt taught in San Jose, CA through Teach for America and, prior to that, supported economic development work in Bolivia through Harvard's Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Fellowship. Matt graduated from Harvard College and is a native of Watsonville, California. He is very proud of Watsonville's world-class strawberries.





Ms. Stacy Martinet
Chief Marketing Officer, Mashable.com

Ms. Stacy Martinet is the Chief Marketing Officer for Mashable where she oversees marketing, communications and events. Since joining Mashable in December 2010, Stacy has helped push Mashable forward strategically, led external and internal communications and grown Mashable's brand through marketing and events. Before joining Mashable, she spent several years in corporate communications and digital marketing at The New York Times where she worked on social media strategy, digital communications and public relations, and served as a spokeswoman for nytimes.com. She was named by PR Week's 40 under 40 List of Rising Stars. She is on the board of directors for New York Women in Communications. Stacy received a B.S. in Mass Communication from Towson University. She is originally from Maryland and resides in New York City.



Ms. Zeenat Rahman
Special Adviser for Global Youth Issues
U.S. State Department

Ms. Zeenat Rahman serves as Secretary of State John Kerry's Special Adviser on Global Youth Issues and Director of the Office of Global Youth Issues (J/GYI). Under her leadership, the office operates as a nexus between policy and practice, incorporating youth voices into critical debates that help shape global affairs. Through a variety of mechanisms, including private sector partnerships, and cooperation with an extensive network of over 50 Youth Councils worldwide, the office amplifies youth issues and supports youth-driven solutions to many of the world's most pressing problems. Prior to this appointment, Special Adviser Rahman served as Acting Director of the Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships at the United States Agency for International Development. Prior to her government service, she was Director of Policy at the Interfaith Youth Core, where she worked closely with the White House and various federal agencies in order to advance programs related to youth, religious identity, interreligious engagement and interfaith service. Special Adviser Rahman is a term member of the Council on Foreign Relations, a member of the British Council's Transatlantic Network 2020, and a Truman National Security Fellow. She received a Master's degree in Middle East studies from the University of Chicago, where her thesis work focused on youth religious identity in the 21st century. She received a BA in psychology from the University of Illinois.



Ms. Adora Svitak

Author, Teacher, Speaker and Activist,
World Food Programme youth representative

From a very young age Adora has been championing literacy, giving voice to youth empowerment and raising awareness about world hunger. She has published three books since age 7. Hoping to instill her love of learning in other children, she has taught more than 500 schools/classrooms around the world. At 12, she delivered the speech "What Adults Can Learn from Kids" at the TED conference. The speech has been viewed more than 3 million times and has been adopted in various textbooks around the world. Since 2010, she has organized the largest youth-run TEDx conference for three years. She writes for Huffington Post, Mashable and various publications on education and youth culture. She has been a UN World Food Program youth representative since 2010.



Mr. Philip Thigo

Founder, INFONET

Mr. Philip Thigo is a technology and development strategist. He is the Executive Director of the Social Development Network (SODNET), a Kenyan NGO dedicated to fighting the causes and consequences of poverty and disempowerment, and the Founder of INFONET. SODNET uses data to improve the lives of ordinary citizens through its INFONET programme. The programme aims to provide a proactive platform for local communities to engage in knowledge production and exchange ideas, promote alternative practices, and to voice concerns. It uses technology, open data and citizen empowerment to achieve social change.

