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ILA ANNOUNCES ITS 2023 GLOBAL LIST OF 30 UNDER 30 LITERACY LEADERS

NEWARK, Del. (January 10, 2023) — The International Literacy Association (ILA) today unveiled its 2023 class of 30 Under 30 literacy leaders, a global group representing 15 countries that includes teachers, researchers, philanthropists, advocates and activists—all of whom share ILA’s goal of literacy for every child, everywhere.

ILA’s 30 Under 30 program launched in 2015 to spotlight rising visionaries in the literacy field who are affecting positive change in their classrooms and communities. The 2023 class joins a growing cohort of education leaders. Past honorees include Akash Patel, Spanish teacher and founder of Happy World Foundation; Allister Chang, founder of Civic Suds; and Shiza Shahid, cofounder of the Malala Fund.

“Each 30 Under 30 list allows us to share the inspiring stories of educators, administrators, librarians, authors, technology experts, nonprofit leaders, business leaders and advocates impacting the quality of literacy learning across the globe,” says ILA Interim Executive Director Nicola Wedderburn. “These emerging leaders share ILA’s mission of literacy for every child, everywhere. We look forward to continuing to partner with these honorees and following their important projects and work.”

This year’s list celebrates literacy advocates such as

- **Ahmad Siyam Barakati**, 25, the deputy director of Charmaghz in Kabul, Afghanistan, who campaigned to get their mobile libraries reopened (and the female staff back to work) after the Taliban regained control of the country
- **Ashley Clerge**, 28, a humanities teacher at Hugh Roe O’Donnell Elementary School in Massachusetts, U.S., whose social justice and advocacy units work to dismantle power dynamics in traditional classrooms and help fifth graders “become more curious about themselves and their place in society”
- **Thanduxolo Mkoyi**, 29, the director of Eyentsatshane for the Little Ones Early Childhood Development Project in Cape Town, South Africa, which uses the power of play, storytelling and literacy to improve education through story clubs and playgroups

ILA’s 2023 list also includes the following individuals:

- Shayan Aqdas, 25, Graduate Student, University of Stavanger, Stavanger, Norway
- Colin Bloom, 16, Founder, Libraries for Literacy, New York, U.S. & South Africa
- Samantha Boateng, 23, Founder, Read 2 Lead, Virginia, U.S. & Ghana
- Dean Çelaj, 25, Founder, Akademi.al, Tirana, Albania
- Katlynn Dahl-Leonard, 28, Doctoral Student, University of Virginia, Virginia, U.S.
- Santasha Dhoot, 26, First-Grade Teacher, Wilburton Elementary School, Washington, U.S.

- Elizabeth Falzone, 29, Assistant Professor, Niagara University, New York, U.S.
- Valente' Gibson, 29, Fifth-Grade Teacher, Jackson Creek Elementary School, South Carolina, U.S.
- Kierstin Giunco, 27, Doctoral Student, Boston College, Massachusetts, U.S.
- Raby Gueye, 27, Founder/CEO, Teach for Senegal, Dakar, Senegal
- Ahmed Imtiaz Jami, 28, Founder, Obhizatrik Foundation, Dhaka, Bangladesh
- Haleigh Klaus-Belka, 28, Instructional Literacy Coach, Canadian Valley Technology Center, Oklahoma, U.S.
- Monicah Kyalo, 27, Technology Assistant and Program Mentor, Kenya Connect, Wamunyu, Kenya
- Hey Wing Liu, 23, Graduate Student, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Island, Hong Kong
- Dian Aprilia Manase, 26, Managing Director, Virtual Education Academy; Project Manager, Terra AI – AI4IMPACT, West Kalimantan & South Sulawesi, Indonesia
- Mohit Rauniyar, 28, Cofounder/Director, Canopy Nepal, Kathmandu, Nepal
- Elisa Rodriguez, 29, Academic Intervention Specialist in Reading, Newfield Elementary School, New York, U.S.
- Lalaine Santiago, 29, Teacher, Francisco F. Illescas Elementary School, Bulacan, Philippines
- Georgina Siaba, 29, President/Founder, The N'Takou, Asnières-sur-Seine, France & Côte d'Ivoire
- Hannah Simino, 25, Seventh-Grade Teacher, Douglas MacArthur Junior High School, Arkansas, U.S.
- Ankita Sundar, 17, Cofounder, Digital Educate, California, U.S.
- Jhaneil Oshokie Thompson, 23, Third-Grade Teacher, Crossroads Academy Charter School of Business, Florida, U.S.
- Sarai Tijerina, 26, Fifth-Grade Teacher, J. Robert Hendricks Elementary School, Arizona, U.S.
- Arpitha Vasudevamurthy, 29, Doctoral Student, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Island, Hong Kong
- Alvian Wardhana, 21, Founder, Literasi Anak Banua, South Kalimantan, Indonesia
- Kendall J. Wilson, 25, Seventh-Grade Teacher, Monroe Demonstration Academy, Oklahoma, U.S.
- Jacqueline Wunsch, 27, Doctoral Student, University of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania, U.S.

ILA's 30 Under 30 honorees are featured in the January/February/March 2023 issue of *Literacy Today*, ILA's member magazine, which published today. To view the *Literacy Today* feature and read more about the honorees' accomplishments, visit literacyworldwide.org/30under30.

About the International Literacy Association

The International Literacy Association (ILA) is a professional membership organization of literacy educators, researchers and experts spanning 112 countries. For more than 65 years, ILA has set the standard for how literacy is defined, taught and evaluated, connecting research and practice to improve the quality of literacy learning across the globe. Through its Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals, ILA provides an evidence-based benchmark for the development and evaluation of literacy professional preparation programs. ILA collaborates with partners across the world to develop, gather and disseminate high-quality resources, which include three peer-reviewed and edited journals—*The Reading Teacher*, *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* and *Reading Research Quarterly*. Learn more at literacyworldwide.org.