

# Alumni Survey 2023

We asked our alums for updates, and ideas to mark this year's important milestone and strengthen the network for the future. 40% of alums got back to us with offers to host get-togethers in person and online and shared their professional and personal news - career

advancement and recognition, marriages and new babies and babies now teenagers. The WHT family is growing in size and reach – in their home countries, regions or internationally our alumni are dedicated to making a difference.



“I switched from a career in research to one in public service. I am now an officer in the **Indian Administrative Service (IAS)**, currently serving as the sub-divisional magistrate for development activities in an area with a population of >1 million. I have helped set up the first wastewater surveillance programme and am attempting a digital transformation of 4,500 government pre-schools to deliver interactive educational content over WhatsApp”

**Sarthak Agrawal, Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, India**  
(MPhil Economics, India, 2019)




“Being offered the chance to serve on the board of the Climate Justice Resilience Fund (CJRF) as a result of my time at Oxford has been a major achievement for me. As a grassroots development worker for the NGO Uttaran, it is an honour to be one of the few from a developing country to sit on the board of a donor organisation enabling organisations to adapt to climate change and address issues of loss and damage.”

**Zahid Shashoto, Bangladesh**  
(MSc Environmental Change & Management, Bangladesh, 2021)

Our Alum **Shabana Basij-Rasikh, (Afghanistan, MPP, 2019-2020)** kept in touch this year sharing news on the progress of the girls and inspirational plans for the future of **SOLA the School of Leadership Afghanistan** that she co-founded in Kabul and re-founded in Rwanda after fleeing the Taliban in 2021. A documentary - The Girls of Sola – daring to educate Afghanistan's Girls was made for **CBS 60 minutes** to tell this amazing story of hope to a global audience. You can watch here: <https://youtu.be/jkOODGehXvo>

Shabana was also awarded the **2023 ROLEX National Geographic Explorer of the Year Award** in recognition of her important contribution to Afghan girls' education.





“Since 2022 I have been the **Deputy Head of the Political Affairs Division of the Netherlands Permanent Mission to the United Nations**. In the last 10 years I have lived in five different countries: UK, Netherlands, Ukraine, Saudi Arabia (Yemen), and USA. In 2020 I published a book based on my PhD- *Transitional Justice in Peacebuilding Actor Contingent and Malleable-Justice*.”

**Djeyhoun Ostowar, New York, USA**

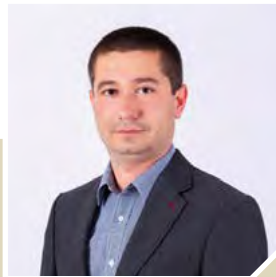
*(MPhil International Relations, Afghanistan, 2012)*



“I am a **Research Associate at the Institute of Criminology and Assistant Professor** at the University of Ljubljana. I feel most deserving of the Weidenfeld badge when interacting with professionals in my areas of expertise. I have thus been part of recent reforms setting up the probation service, redefining rape, and other sexual offenses, seeking for more consistency in sentencing and redesigning the criminal justice response to juvenile delinquency.”

**Mojca M Plesnicar Ljubljana, Slovenia**

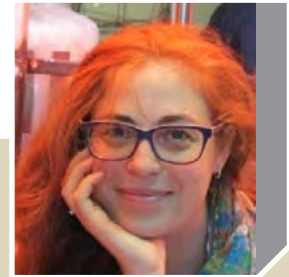
*(MSc Criminal Justice & Criminology, Slovenia, 2010)*



“Because of my work in protected areas, I was elected to the board of the **Natura 2000 Federation**, an organization that brings together the most active environmental NGOs in Romania. A year ago, I was nominated for **State Secretary for the Ministry of Environment**.”

**Andrei - Robert Ac, Oradea, Romania**

*(MSc Environmental Change & Management, Romania, 2014)*



“I work for an INGO called **IsraAID**, being promoted to the global head of our long-term programmes and missions has been exciting, enabling me to be involved much more in strategic thinking of our work and operations. We currently work in Africa, LAC, Asia, and I will soon further be taking direct oversight of our work in relation to the war in Ukraine”

**Michal Strahilevitz, Israel**

*(MSc International Human Rights Law, Israel, 2010)*

## ALUMNI IMPACT



“I am now **Associate Director** at **The Power of Nutrition**, a grant making Foundation that aims at improving nutrition outcomes among women of reproductive age and children in Asia and Africa. I oversee our programmes and partnerships in Rwanda, Ethiopia, and Indonesia.”

**Jeffrey Muhiyeni Misomali, Cambridge, UK,**  
*(MSc International Health & Tropical Medicine, Malawi, 2017)*



“In 2022 I was promoted to **Project Leader** at **Delivery Associates, Global Public Sector Consulting Firm** and started co-leading the Latin America and Caribbean region and practice. I am currently working with Bloomberg Philanthropies to replicate evidence-based policy innovations on digital transformation, childhood obesity, community-based micro-lending, and road safety across +300 cities internationally.”

**Antonio Beun (Kyore), Mexico City, Mexico**  
*(MPP, Argentina, 2018)*



“I moved to the Gambia to work on the **Lives and Livelihoods Fund (LLF)** project, where I am supporting the **Ministry of Agriculture’s PMU** on the **Regional Rice Value Chain Development Project**. In a country where Agriculture is one of the primary sources of livelihood, I am excited about this opportunity and the impact it will create in transforming the lives of smallholder farmers, the private sector, and the country as a whole.”

**Wilsona Jalloh, Gambia**  
*(MPP, Sierra Leone, 2021)*

“I am currently heading the Professional Development & School Improvement department at Beaconhouse School System. I am initiating a student incubator - ‘Spark Tank’ for students of class 5 and above to promote entrepreneurial skills; it will be the first of its kind in Pakistan. In 2021 I published Navigating Pakistan’s Educational Landscape-roadblocks, detours, and crossroads.”

**Scherezade Tarar, Lahore, Pakistan**  
*(MPP, Pakistan, 2018)*

Introducing  
**SPARKTANK**  
BY BEACONHOUSE  
**Pakistan's first business incubator  
for students aged 10-19 years**



“Currently, I am the **WASH Specialist for UNICEF**. I also support Disaster Risk Reduction in response to emergencies like the recent earthquake in November 2022. I am happy to say that I have also recently contributed to publications on flood risk management in Zimbabwe and a modelling study of the cost of achieving WASH services in the 46 UN designated least developed countries.”

**Abigail Tevera, Solomon Islands**  
*MSc Water Science, Policy & Management, Zimbabwe, 2017)*



“I am **Regional Head of the Mixed Migration Centre** in Eastern and Southern Africa, Egypt and Yemen and Co-Founder of the Conflict and Education Learning Laboratory. In 2020 I published a monograph *Student Migrant, Refugee or Both? Exploring refugee agency and mobility through tertiary education in Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda.*”

**Ayla Bonfiglio, Nairobi, Kenya**  
*(MSc Forced Migration, USA, 2010)*



“I am an **Innovation and Development Manager** supplying the water and sanitation services for a population over 1.1 million people in the Mexican Caribbean. I have also started up an engineering consultancy **Aleaingenieria** and I am looking for potential business partners to form a professional global network for the water-energy nexus.”

**Rodolfo Salvador, Cancun Mexico** *(MSc Water Science, Policy & Management, 2015)*



“In 2020 I founded **Shiso, an intersectional equity consulting firm**. I am honoured to work with companies and organizations internationally that seek to improve their social impact and advance human and civil rights. I’ve had the honour of speaking at the World Bank, creating frameworks and initiatives for Color of Change, contributing to a report for Google, since starting my company.”

**Aerica Shimizu Banks, New York, USA,** *(MSc Nature, Society & Environmental Policy, USA, 2013)*



“I have been back to work for the **Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF)** since late 2021 after a 9-month break due to challenges being able to acquire a valid work permit to start our own conservation venture in Namibia. Since 2020 I have been part of three scientific publications at the Cheetah Conservation Fund.”

**Carolina Torres, Namibia**  
*(MSc Biodiversity Conservation & Management, Colombia, 2017)*

# Alumni Reconnect

80 alums came together in London and Oxford to celebrate the 15th anniversary. More opportunities to connect are planned for the future in person and online. The new WHT community created via Telegram aims to make real time networking and support easier and already has 150 users and growing.

“As we look forward to the next 15 years, I am sure WHT will remain a melting pot of unwavering curiosity for understanding and innovation for life beyond Oxford—unifying bonds of friendship with mentors and peers who will be a constant source of inspiration.”

## Giri Shan Rajahram

*Head of the Department of Medicine, Queen Elizabeth II Hospital, Ministry of Health Malaysia; Consultant Infectious Diseases & General Internal Medicine Elected Fellow of the Royal College of Physician (Edinburgh) in 2023 (MSc International Health & Tropical Medicine, Malaysia, 2020)*

“Thinking back to exactly 15 years ago, when I first met George Weidenfeld at the selection for the 2008 cohort, he spoke to us about how important it is to bring different people, different minds together and give them opportunity to think together about some of the most challenging questions. And that spirit of civic commitment and entrepreneurship is worth celebrating – I have no doubt that there will be many more of us and more reasons to celebrate in years to come!”

## Cvete Koneska

*Director and Head of Advisory at Dragonfly Intelligence, Ethnic Conflict: Policymaking in Post-Conflict Macedonia & Bosnia and Herzegovina (DPhil Politics, Macedonia, 2009)*

“In 2022, as I found myself in exile in London, grieving the loss of my homeland and the restrictions imposed on Afghan women and girls, one of my peers from the scholarship was among the first to visit me, providing much-needed emotional support. These acts of solidarity and camaraderie are a testament to the lasting bonds forged through the Weidenfeld-Hoffmann Scholarship. Its impact on my life will continue for years and decades to come.”

## Shaharзад Akbar

*Executive Director, Rawadari a human rights NGO. Formerly Chairperson of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (MPhil Development Studies, Afghanistan, 2011)*