

UPF-United Kingdom's 2018 UPF Youth Achievement Awards in Parliament

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Recipients of the 2018 Youth Achievement Awards with Ambassadors for Peace and UPF officials

London, United Kingdom -- Fourteen young achievers received the 2018 UPF Youth Achievement Award in a ceremony in the Houses of Parliament.

Every July, the UK chapter of UPF gives the Youth Achievement Award to young adults in recognition of their accomplishments and community efforts. For nearly a decade the awards ceremony has given these young achievers a platform on which to speak about their aspirations and their successes in the presence of their member of Parliament and fellow awardees.

Tom Brake, a member of Parliament, was the host for this year's awards ceremony, which was held on July 3 in the House of Commons under the title "Celebrating Future Leaders."

The activities recognized by this year's awards included educational outreach, new social enterprises and sharing commercial success. The awardees came from different areas of the U.K. and a variety of backgrounds, but they had in common that they overcame adversity while striving to give to others and make their social environment a better place.

The event started promptly at 6 p.m. with opening words from Tom Brake, and he swiftly moved on to presenting the awards. Each of the awardees came up and spoke about his or her efforts, background, and achievements.

Among the esteemed guests were Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown, MP -- who presented the award to one of his constituents -- and Dr. Michael Balcomb, the Europe and Middle East regional chair of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU), an organization that is affiliated with UPF.

Dr. Balcomb in his closing remarks said how spectacular it was to see all the achievements of the awardees. He said he hoped that these young people would continue to contribute to their communities and that UPF would facilitate their progress in becoming future leaders.

Many UPF Ambassadors for Peace were present, including Mr. Abdul Bassith Syed Ibrahim, who nominated one awardee; Dr. Marina Nani, the proud nominator of two awardees; Ms. Jacqueline Onalo, who nominated four of the awardees; and Ms. Elham Fardad, one of the Ambassadors for Peace who sponsored and provided the catering for the special dinner for the awardees that UPF-UK held in its London offices on July 31.

It is our experience at UPF that when young achievers meet each other and hear each other's stories, they become very inspired to meet and work together. This group is slowly developing into a group of

altruistic young people who want to impact society in a positive manner.

Feedback from the awardees and guests

"The award ceremony was a great event; each awardee delivered an engaging and informative speech. The event was an excellent way for young achievers to network and make new connections, as well as celebrating our work." – Melissa Ida Petty, awardee

"I had the privilege of attending the UPF Youth Achievement Award at the House of Commons. It was by far the most inspiring event I have ever had the pleasure of attending. The room was filled with young future leaders, each with a unique life story, and, perhaps more importantly, every young achiever had decided to dedicate their lives to serving others and creating a better future through social action. The work UPF is doing to bring about world peace and unity by providing a much needed platform for young people is more important than ever before." – Kian Bakhtiari, awardee

"It was an amazing experience, the event was truly beautiful, I am very happy that I was part of it and that I got to meet all the inspiring awardees as well as the organizers." – Noor Alrayes, awardee

"The UPF award ceremony was an absolutely amazing experience. The opportunity to gather around so many outstanding students filled me with inspiration to continue to make a difference in society. I look forward to being a part of a growing network of passionate people." – Emmanuel Akanbi, awardee

"The evening of July 3 was a celebration of multiple achievements by people who 'wanted to leave the world in a better position than when they found it.' As a recipient of the award, in addition to being thrilled and motivated to continue contributing to society and tackling humanitarian issues, I was incredibly inspired by the stories shared and challenges conquered. It was incredible to see that, in the face of multiple barriers -- whether they be social, economic or racial -- people were willing to stand up for what they believed in and were prepared to put effort and hard work into achieving their personal goals and undertaking invaluable community service. The ceremony was an unforgettable experience and a treasured opportunity that left every person inspired and ready for change, ready for action and ready for a better world." – Sanjana Poddar, awardee

"The Youth Achievement Awards ceremony was a great event, not only for being hosted at the Houses of Parliament but, most importantly, for allowing young leaders to share their stories, inspiring the audience. Personally, networking with the attendees and fellow awardees was incredibly motivating, and there are no words to thank enough the UPF for such an opportunity." – Maria Chiara Franco, awardee

"On July 31, I had the pleasure of attending the UPF dinner at its headquarters in Lancaster Gate. This was a follow-up to the Youth Achievement Award held at the House of Parliament, which celebrated young people serving their respective communities and working toward world peace. The award ceremony was filled with inspirational people and stories; however, I would argue that the UPF dinner was even more impressive -- mainly because it gave us an opportunity to talk, socialize and listen to each other in a much friendlier environment. During the evening, I got to know many of the young achievers and understand their passions. I'm confident many of the conversations started that night will actually lead to social action. The night was also an opportunity to meet the amazing people who make UPF possible; the interaction of young talent and experienced wisdom made it a special night. That's without mentioning the refreshing 'mocktails' and delicious Persian food. Many of the young achievers also got the chance to discuss what they're up to and the type of help they require, creating a culture of generosity and peer-to-peer support. Overall it was a fantastic event which sparked the fire needed to work collectively and create a better world for all." – Kian Bakhtiari, awardee



"I am most inspired by hearing about not only my constituent's work but other young people here. I am very touched and inspired, and I want to, first of all, thank UPF, without whom I would not have known about the work of these young people. Thank you, and please continue to do your work." – Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP

"At the dinner of Young Achievers on July 31, I felt like these are the kind of young people with whom I want to spend more time. They possess the remarkable combination of competence, commitment and a generous spirit of volunteering! Here is a group of young, idealistic people." – Matthew Huish, UK national leader of FFWPU

"I have always believed that educating and supporting our youth are the best way to invest in a

prosperous future for our world and that today's youth are the leaders of tomorrow, as fulfilling youth's potential is the key to our nation's happiness. Universal Peace Federation supports youth to succeed with capability, personal integrity, and positive energy, with the vision of influencing other youth around them. Today the youth experience significant challenges around them, so we have to help them inspire and develop disadvantaged young people across the UK to broaden their horizons and capture opportunities well beyond their aspirations. We aim to build leadership skills and motivate youth to fulfill their true career potential, consequentially maximizing their full contributions to their society and community. World Humanitarian Drive is proud to be in partnership with the Universal Peace Federation. UPF organized one such event in the UK's Houses of Parliament, House of Commons, Westminster. I, Abdul Basit Syed, founder-chairman of World Humanitarian Drive, nominated Noor Alrayes for the Youth Achievement Award for her positive contributions to cyber-security and her hard work to make the Internet a safer place for us to interact and communicate. I was delighted and pleased to encourage youth like her receiving the Youth Achievement Award from various places around the UK. I believe we cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future." – Abdul Basit Syed, founder-chairman of World Humanitarian Drive and a UPF Ambassador for Peace

The 2018 Youth Achievement Award recipients

	<p>Abigail led a high-school children's workshop when she was 18. She led a youth team and a group of 8-to-11-year-olds at a community summer camp. At age 16, she volunteered at a preparatory school for three months once a week to help with after-school club. At age 17, she volunteered for a service project in Slovakia to clear out a river overgrown with weeds. At age 19, she volunteered for service projects in Bratislava, Slovakia's capital, such as giving presentations in a local school and helping in a mentally handicapped all-boys orphanage.</p>
	<p>Anu launched an educational outreach program called The Sassy Scholar (TSS), which inspires young women to raise their academic aspirations. She intends to earn a master's degree this year at University of Oxford and expand TSS into her university. In 2015, in response to a street-child epidemic in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Anu fundraised for a shelter in Kinshasa. As a youth mentor, Anu supported refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. Earlier this year, Anu volunteered at the Institutional Sexual Harassment Conference held at the headquarters of The Telegraph newspaper.</p>
	<p>Ben is the founder and CEO of Influencer, one of the UK's largest influencer marketing companies, after creating his first business, Breeze, at age 15. Ben has led Influencer to become an industry leading business in marketing's hottest sector. In September 2016, Ben won a £50,000 Business Prize Fund in Kent Young Start Up Talent. He raised £151,000 in 48 hours in his first round on Crowdcube and just over £500,000 in his second round with Investors earlier this year. In 2018, he has established a reputation as one of the UK's leading figures in influencer marketing. In May 2018, Ben was also the keynote speaker at the Business Show exhibition in London.</p>

Abigail Rosselli, 19

Anuluwapo Oladapo, 22

Benedict Jeffries, 22



Brian Marcus McAuslan, 20

Brian grew up in a deprived part of London and is the first person in his family to have attended university, currently studying history at King's College London. His story is one of adversity and challenge coupled with ambition, drive and determination to achieve the life outcome he desired. Brian knows very well the multiple challenges that all young people from deprived backgrounds experience and brings intelligence and insight into solving the common problems that the Migrant Leaders charity wishes to address. Spurred on by his own experiences, Brian works in widening participation at King's College London, helping to develop and deliver projects which support young people from underrepresented backgrounds to access university. His absolute belief in the importance of social mobility in Britain is testament to the many values he has in common with the Migrant Leaders charity and our determination to work together to develop for the future generations a Britain we can all be proud of.



David Stout, 22

David volunteered at the St. John's Ambulance organization since age 15, providing and teaching first aid to young teenagers. He led teams, emceed and coordinated sports for high-school children in the UK and Germany. Several times he has led teams at a community summer camp. In Slovakia, he volunteered to give cultural education presentations in a local school. While David was in Austria for three days with two friends, with the drive to help the community and to volunteer, with nothing but a sleeping bag and 40€, he ended up supporting a local school through providing personal life-guidance presentations to two high-school classes. He also joined the local church music group to help them practice for an upcoming showcase. It was a very rewarding experience.



Emmanuel Akanbi, 21

Emmanuel founded a Saturday school at his church called Redeemed Learning to provide additional education for students. He also helped to start an investment fund society at his university, recruiting students to support with fundraising. He and his team also incorporated an educational framework to the society to provide lectures for postgraduate finance students. He is the founder of Trintel, which provides financial education for students who are looking to get into the world of finance. Trintel has formed partnerships with major institutions.



Kaisie Diggins, 25

At age 10 Kaisie was diagnosed with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). He lived in Germany and mastered the English language at age 14 while he was looking after mentally ill friends. At age 24 he was diagnosed with epilepsy after having two seizures. He has now set up a fulltime valeting business and aims to help others who have struggled with the same things to become successful.



Kian Bakhtiari, 26

Head of strategy at Fortysix, a company that created a new, inclusive recruitment model to attract more diverse talent, he also invented Striipes, an online platform that allows 16-24s to share ideas with brands and have their voices heard. He conducted pro bono work at Care4Calais, a charity that provides direct aid to refugees living in the worst conditions across northern France. He was also a Persian and Kurdish interpreter for Afghan, Iranian, Syrian and Iraqi refugees and also worked to raise awareness about refugee charities. He is an ambassador for One Young World, the pre-eminent global forum for young leaders, where he was the marketing lead for the Eliminating Domestic Abuse working group. He also helped to create and promote the Eliminating Domestic Abuse Guidebook, which been adopted by some of the world's biggest organizations.



Maria Chiara Franco, 23

Maria Chiara organized the first Business Society Conference, hosting guest speakers at her university. She stepped it up by organizing events hosting guest speakers on a more regular basis. She also led the organization of the biggest conference at the University of Roehampton to date: "How Failure Leads to Success." She has now founded UnicTalks to keep bringing guest speakers to educational bodies with the aim of inspiring students and enriching their learning experience.



Melissa Ida Petty, 22

Since the age of 9 Melissa has been a volunteering member for the Mama Melissa Foundation, which raises funds for the Mbeere Community Education Development Project, located in Kenya. She has fundraised for the A.I.C. Kangeta Primary School in Embu, Kenya, to build a new classroom for children with disabilities. In July 2017, she became the Face of Kenya UK 2017, after her significant efforts were rightfully noticed. Melissa also regularly collects ballet supplies (ballet shoes, leotards, tights and cardigans) from the dance schools she has attended and donates them to Anno's Africa, a UK-based children's arts charity running educational arts projects for children living in slum conditions in Kenya.



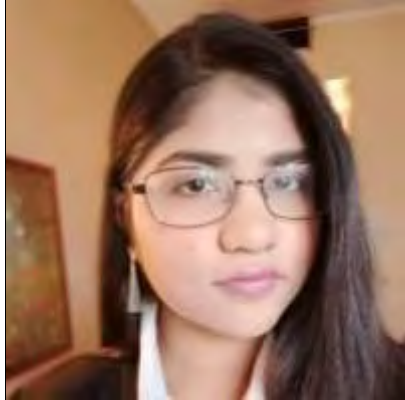
Noor Alrayes, 27

Noor's main contribution is preventing cyber-crime and building a cyber-security consultancy that provides security solutions. Her aim is to make cyber-security accessible to everyone and to spread awareness and knowledge on how to protect oneself against cyber-crime. She has offered technical help at different events at university in Saudi Arabia and produced creative videos for university ceremonies. She has volunteered in Saudi Arabia with an organization that honors influential women. She also has provided warm clothing, blankets, gloves, etc., to needy people in wintertime in Saudi Arabia.



Princess Bright, 22

Princess provides free math tutoring through the Bright Futurez Ltd. Organization to encourage young children. She was elected Young Leader of Havering 2013-15, campaigning against gun and knife crime and antisocial behavior, and increasing youth participation in local politics and social activism. She sat on the Police Consultative Committee as an intermediary between the youth and the police on issues affecting young people and the elderly. She works to empower women as a motivational speaker. She was elected as the youngest local labor councilor, due to her level of involvement in the community. Since the age of 8, she was helping when her mum was a councilor and Princess was campaigning alongside her.



Sanjana Poddar, 16

Sanjana is the president of her school's student goals and implementations committee, and leads Saturday school programs. She organized the Color Blast, celebrating cultural diversity and the Hindu festival of color Holi, and raised £334 to assist charitable missions in Africa. She is the chair of the National Honor Society Lecture Series Committee and a member of the Debating Society, where she works with students, lecturers and professors to organize talks about a variety of topics. She also led the Brown Paper Packages library event at school, which wrapped books in brown paper to conceal their identity, encouraging students to not "judge a book by its cover." She volunteered at Oxfam and the Wimbledon Library during the summer holidays, and was recognized as the Young Volunteer of the Year (2017) by Merton Council for her assistance with the Big Friendly Summer Reading Challenge.



Taban Shoresh

Taban was a child genocide survivor in northern Iraq in the 1980s, and she was a political prisoner when she was just 4. She and her family escaped a plot by Saddam Hussein to bury them alive in a mass grave. Eventually, they were rescued by Amnesty International and given the opportunity to start a new life in the UK. Many years later, while working in London, she gave up her successful career and returned to Kurdistan to join the relief effort. She knew she had to do more to help. After months of planning, she finally launched the Lotus Flower non-profit in March 2016. This organization strives to give vulnerable female ISIS survivors the opportunity to rebuild their lives. Many have come through unimaginable ordeals, involving imprisonment, abuse and rape. Thousands were sold as sex slaves before escaping, and most have lost loved ones and are now single-handedly supporting their families. Despite all that these women and girls have been through, Lotus Flower sees them as powerful drivers of change, and believes that with the right tools, they can thrive. Accordingly, 2017 saw Lotus Flower introduce six pilot projects at the Rwanga Community Camp in Iraq, where around 20,000 displaced people have been rehomed so far. In 2017, Lotus Flower impacted positively the lives of nearly 2,000 vulnerable women and girls directly in the camp. Her work has seen her nominated for major awards – such as Red magazine's "Woman of the Year" in 2016 and Hearst's Bravest award. She is also a One Young World ambassador and regularly speaks at key global events.