



RARE RISING STARS 2019

The UK's Top Ten Black Students

rare

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Foreword

Rare Rising Stars was launched when I was still a university student and a Rare candidate. Back then it was unusual to see positive coverage of black students, or young black people in general. This made the creation of Rare Rising Stars all the more meaningful and inspiring. It provided a way to gather stories of success and excellence, and to celebrate what students had contributed to the black community.

It therefore gives me great pleasure to be working on Rare Rising Stars in its eleventh year. The mission of the awards remains the same – to showcase the brilliant achievements of black students across the U.K. Looking back to when the awards first started however, I'm happy to see that many things have changed for the better.

Since Rare Rising Stars began, we have seen increasing vibrancy within the black student community, with African and Caribbean Societies spearheading much needed work to improve access to top universities, and black students leading conversations on curriculum change and mental health provision. These student groups are meaningfully engaging with the institutions they are seeking to change, increasing the likelihood of genuine progress being made. This shift demonstrates the cumulative impact of years of black students working to elevate not just themselves, but their communities and the young people coming after them.



The stories of this year's Rare Rising Stars encapsulate this theme perfectly. Many have overcome significant challenges to secure top-quality educational opportunities. Having achieved their goals, they haven't rested on their laurels; instead they have poured effort into making the journey slightly easier for the next generation. At a time where the incredibly small number of black postgraduate students and academics is becoming an increasing concern, it is inspiring to have excellent black postgraduate students amongst our Stars. In addition, during an academic year that has seen increased calls for tailored mental health provision for ethnic minority students, including the provision of ethnic minority counsellors, we are pleased to showcase Stars who are working to address the stigma of mental health issues within the black community.

Rare Rising Stars has come together thanks to the efforts of a brilliant team of people. Thank you to our sponsors, Latham & Watkins, the University of Cambridge and the University of Oxford, for making this year's awards possible. Thank you to Timothy Adelani, Alexander Olive and Will Smith for gathering the stories of our amazing Stars. Thank you to Daniel Mokades and Maxine Monu for capturing the passion of each Star in their profiles. Our Judges, Kem Ihenacho, Sophie Chandaoka, Tia Counts, Tom Chigbo and Trevor Phillips had the unenviable task of selecting our Stars from an impressive shortlist – many thanks to them all for making the hard decisions necessary for these awards. And to Leo Hoang, this year's photographer, and Sasha Djukicin, our designer, thank you for helping us to present our Stars with the shine they deserve.

I hope you enjoy reading through the profiles of this year's Rare Rising Stars as much as I did, and that their stories leave you with renewed confidence that through our collective efforts it is possible to secure the change we wish to see.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading 'N. Kellman'.

Naomi Kellman
Senior Manager for Schools and Universities
Rare

The Stars



Whitney Goold-Walters

Biology | University of Bristol | Academics and Work Experience

Whitney grew up in a low-income household with her mother and step-father. Being raised by a single mum for the first half of her life, and then seeing her step-father work three different jobs in order to provide for the family, demonstrated to Whitney that having a strong work ethic is pivotal to achieving your goals. From a young age, her mother and step-father encouraged Whitney to make the most of her education, despite attending a school in an area where there was a severe lack of opportunities for students to take advantage of.

At secondary school in Barking and Dagenham, Whitney had a hugely supportive Biology teacher who brought the subject to life for her. The teacher helped her to set goals and see the bigger academic picture; Whitney was able to move beyond the lack of social capital she had exposure to because her teacher went out of their way to provide her with the motivation to surpass her own expectations. Despite this, there were still several teachers who were not as invested in their students' potential, nor as forthcoming with careers advice and extra help. During one parents' evening, Whitney was told by a teacher that she was 'initially perceived as the naughty kid causing trouble' as a result of her natural confidence. This reaffirmed her desire to outperform and do her best, and she resolved not to fulfil this negative stereotype.



Whitney went on to achieve the highest grades in Biology in her year group and took up an offer to study Biology at Bristol University. She has been one of two people of black heritage on her course and is currently the only female student of black heritage on the Biology course. Her social background and race came to the forefront of her identity at Bristol University as a result of its lack of diversity, motivating Whitney to get involved with the African Caribbean Society, where in her second year, she became a 'parent' to first year black students.

University has provided Whitney with a variety of opportunities. In her first year, she volunteered in Cambodia for three months as a Project Worker with Voluntary Service Overseas. She worked with the International Citizen Service and raised over £900 for charity before being placed in Cambodia. During her time abroad, Whitney was integrated with local families, giving English lessons and careers advice to young students. She established a relationship with the local university to allow pupils to take part in vocational courses to gain work experience. Whitney has also been involved with the Social Mobility Foundation (SMF) – she was able to put the leadership and careers-advice skills she gained with SMF to good use in Cambodia.

Whitney applied for the UKNEST and Lloyd's Register Foundation Scholarship for STEM success and academic potential in 2016. She received an interview, but was ultimately rejected. She was determined to re-apply the following year, certain that her hard work and resilience would earn her the prize. Her perseverance paid off, and in 2017 she was awarded the scholarship and became the only person of colour to receive it. The award gave her access to her first female STEM mentor, who provided essential role-modelling for Whitney. She was also given the opportunity to take the Bristol Plus Award, a programme which gives students at Bristol the chance to develop employability skills, in preparation for applying to internships and work experience placements. Most students take a year to complete this; Whitney completed the award in the span of a month, having worked hard to prepare for a range of financial work experience placements.

Last year, Whitney completed two summer internships and has since gained four graduate offers with PwC, Goldman Sachs, the Civil Service and the Bank of England. She has decided to take up her most recent graduate offer with the Bank of England in the Banking Supervision stream. Whitney's achievements are a testament to her work ethic and grit. She has been able to push through difficult financial and social barriers, while maintaining her ultimate goal of becoming the best version of herself.

Olamide Odanye

Politics and Philosophy | University of Essex | Education

Olamide has been a runner for as long as she can remember, recalling fond memories of the excitement of sports days at school in Nigeria before moving to the UK at the age of nine. A gifted sportswoman, Olamide was immediately put on the Gifted & Talented track for athletics at her new primary school. She went on to captain her secondary school athletics team, was selected for multiple school sports teams and competed successfully as a sprinter at district level, before a torn meniscus called time on her childhood athletics days. By then, Olamide had been training with the Newham & Essex Beagles, had become part of the athletics family and understood how much she had gained in discipline and academic focus, personal development and fulfilment from her sporting endeavours. Olamide had also been volunteering since the age of 14 with the borough of Newham to encourage more of her local community to get involved in sport, and realised how powerful it could be to use a personal passion to effect change.

Aged 16, Olamide read about a youth leadership programme at McKinsey. Alongside her best friend, Kike Adediji, Olamide noted that she was one of just a handful of young people from a state school to attend, and although the many privately-educated pupils on the programme were much more “normal” and down to earth than she had expected, Olamide also saw that they seemed at ease in that corporate environment, having been exposed to a similar situation before. In contrast, it was Olamide’s first time so far outside of her comfort zone, despite having volunteered with The Salvation Army, campaigned for The Samaritans, and organised volunteer groups for the Anniversary Olympic and Paralympic Games. In discussing with her friend how spontaneous their applications had been and how many young people like them would have missed out just because they were unaware of the opportunity, Olamide also realised that it was her experiences with sports that had made her comfortable embracing new and sometimes intimidating environments. Out of a desire to help other young people develop confidence and curiosity to explore beyond their local bubble, Olamide and Kike co-founded LIVE - Learn, Inspire, Visualise, Elevate.

LIVE is a mentoring project that encourages young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds to look beyond their immediate environment for positive opportunities for personal development, as well as teaching practical skills including public speaking and networking. Whilst still at school themselves, the LIVE duo began with a five-month pilot study mentoring young people aged 12-18 fortnightly in Olamide’s local area of Havering. Olamide and her co-founder planned and ran every session personally, advising other young people on potential career paths, business opportunities and better ways to harness creativity.



Since Olamide learned so much informally and as a byproduct of pursuing her passion - such as public speaking, confidence and communication skills through giving college assemblies - much of the focus during LIVE is on keeping sessions fun and informative, while demonstrating how new situations give more opportunities to learn.

Despite having less spare time since starting university, Olamide decided to keep LIVE going by running annual workshops each summer. With funding and event space from the O2 ThinkBig campaign, LIVE hosted a networking, teamwork and communication workshop in 2017, before expanding to run two skills workshops in summer 2018. Looking beyond their graduation in summer 2019, the LIVE team hopes to return to more regular projects, with longer, intensive workshops and development programmes on the horizon for the young people they support.

Olamide was appointed as a Youth Policy Representative for the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS), receiving interview and research technique training. She went on to investigate how young people learn through formal and informal channels, and to measure the effectiveness of youth clubs and extra-curricular activities in the community. Olamide has since been appointed as one of 24 young people across England by the DCMS and the British Youth Council to advise the Government on the effect their policies may have on young people in their communities. These roles have hardened Olamide’s resolve to become a policy advisor for education and youth, having seen firsthand the importance of having young people represented as part of the decision-making process for policies that affect them directly.



Zeynab Aliyu

Law | University of Warwick | Charity and University Access

Zeynab is an East Londoner through and through, going to primary school in Dagenham and finishing her education in Ilford. After just one term as a first year student at Warwick, Zeynab decided to apply to the Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning for a research grant: she wanted to research the issues around ethnic minorities gaining varied levels of access to higher education, and to understand why the figures were particularly sparse for young black women at Russell Group universities. She was subsequently awarded £1000 and spent the next five months deep in research, working through her first summer as a student to write up her report over the following seven months.

Zeynab's finished project - *A Report Addressing the Under-Representation of Black Female Students at Russell Group Universities* - revealed that one of the biggest barriers to entry for young black girls was a lack of teacher assistance and support in applying for elite universities. To help overcome this challenge, Zeynab decided to set up the Black Girls Mentoring Project (BGMP), offering black girls aged 14-18 aiming for the top universities the opportunity to have an accomplished black female mentor aged 18-25 years old. Within twenty-four hours of launching the project on social media, she'd reached one hundred thousand readers, had 2000 retweets and received 65 applications from mentees. In total, Zeynab selected 125 girls for her first cohort of mentees, matching two pupils with each of her 62 carefully selected mentors.

The inaugural BGMP event, *The Black Girl Uni Guide*, was held in August 2017 in a youth centre in East London, giving 100 attendees the chance to hear from guest speakers, participate in practical workshops, and meet others aspiring to attend university. Zeynab created an accompanying booklet with tips to exam success, information about Russell Group universities and some personal statement examples. She also conducted a participant survey at the end of the event, which revealed that 98% of the attendees found the day very useful and felt more confident in applying to Russell Group universities.

The following summer, Zeynab hosted the second BGMP event at Barclays Investment Bank, where she had recently completed an internship. This *In The City* event was primarily focused on the professional services, including a personal branding workshop, a Q&A session with black women pursuing different career paths including Law, Banking, Technology and Journalism, and an address from the Global Head of Diversity and Inclusion at Barclays.

Zeynab recently expanded the reach of BGMP by recruiting fifteen university ambassadors, former mentees and other black female undergraduates who help to promote the programme and recruit more volunteer mentors. Zeynab has also met the Head of Widening Participation at the University of Warwick to discuss her ideas around creating an official access programme to the institution for black female pupils, presenting her extensive research as the basis for their productive initial meetings. She is currently planning how best to sustain BGMP once she has left university, to ensure that the mentoring programme will continue to function for years to come. Zeynab was recently invited to 10 Downing Street to discuss efforts to address educational inequality in the UK.



Tony Okafor

Medicine | University of Nottingham | Business, Health and Medicine

Tony's plan had always been to get into Medicine, but he just missed out on a place when his aptitude test scores fell short. Despite securing a place to study Engineering at University College Dublin, Tony was uncomfortable settling for anything but his dream career. Just two weeks into his course, following discussions with family and friends, Tony dropped out of university to retake his Leaving Certificate (A Level equivalent), in a bid to improve his grades enough to apply for Medicine.

Tony found himself far from home, taking an intensive year long course at a respected, private school, surrounded by ambitious peers. He struggled with subjects he was learning from scratch, such as Applied Mathematics and higher-level French, often feeling like the least intelligent person in the room. With hard work, Tony rose to the top of nearly all his classes, applying to UK and Irish universities with much-improved scores, and landing a place to study Medicine at Nottingham.

As a medical student with a strong grasp of engineering, Tony was keen to get involved in using AI to bring about a medical breakthrough. On a visit home to Ireland, Tony was hit with tragic news: his uncle had gone into cardiac arrest while watching the World Cup, dying in front of his family while the ambulance was still en route. No one had been able to administer effective CPR and even if there had been a defibrillator nearby, no one would have known how to use it. At the time, use and availability of drone technology was picking up, and Tony initiated a conversation with the university's aerospace engineering department about deploying drones with the regional ambulance unit to deliver defibrillators and supply live interactive monitoring of the emergency scene.

Hearing that AI Med Europe, an influential AI summit, would soon be held for medical professionals, Tony decided that he had to be there, even if it was not really intended for students. He found himself in a session where an investor challenged audience members to present their big idea that required funding. Tony put his hand up, was called up to the stage, and shakily pitched his *HorisMed* idea to policymakers, industry giants and clinical specialists from around the world to rapturous applause. Two months later, Tony was shortlisted as a top ten qualifier for the GIANT Health Event's internationally renowned Beanstalks competition. *HorisMed* was to be a drone project for ambulance services that delivered defibrillators to emergency sites in record time, but Tony ran into multiple problems with funding and regulations.

Quickly turning his attention to using smartphones to democratise access to top health services, Tony created *Horus*, a digital health venture designed to help people take control of their healthcare.



He was invited to an MIT hackathon this year, pitching his idea for a decentralised platform where individuals could interact with healthcare services around the nation in minutes, rather than waiting months to see a specialist. Tony's hackathon team performed well, reaching the semi-final of the 2019 Mayor of London Entrepreneurship competition. Backed by institutions like IngenuityLab, the University of Nottingham and the East Midland Academic Health Science Network, the team's minimum viable product is now in extensive pre-launch testing and consultation with medical professionals.

Alongside his studies, Tony contributed to an international qualitative surgical study which aimed to improve brain surgery outcomes in children. He conducted complex data analyses in brain tumour outcomes and different symptomatic presentations, and his work was published in The International Brain Tumour Alliance's magazine *Brain Tumours*. The project has since been presented at international conferences, and the manuscript is awaiting publication in an academic journal.

Tony also ran a campaign for the incorporation of virtual 3D anatomy teaching into the School of Medicine's curriculum. This campaign was successful, and Tony was awarded his university's 'Silver Student Award' and 'Best Campaign/Project 2017'. Tony also volunteers with Heart Start, a programme that teaches CPR and life-saving skills to young and at-risk children.



Olamide Duyile

Economic History | London School of Economics | Charity, Community Activism and Fashion

Olamide was nine years old the first time she lost someone to knife crime. She was ten when she and her family were moved into witness protection. By the age of thirteen, both argumentative and confrontational by her own admission, Olamide had been suspended twice from her school in Hackney, and was facing a permanent exclusion. When her mother was suddenly hospitalised with a blood clot in the brain, Olamide was forced to stop and examine the direction her life was taking. As one of the older siblings in her household, it now fell to Olamide to take responsibility for the wellbeing of her mum and younger siblings. Olamide not only got herself back on track with improving her behaviour, but went on to achieve the highest GCSE grades at her school, winning a full academic scholarship to a top London private school in the process.

Even before acing her GCSEs, Olamide recognised that having too much unoccupied time outside of school could land her back in trouble. She signed herself up to a local summer programme with the Robert Levy Foundation, a charity named in memory of a promising young man who had lost his life to knife crime in Hackney. While London hosted the Olympics, Olamide was able to spend her summer on the Foundation's month-long fashion course, making a single, exquisite garment and showcasing it to her peers as part of the end of course show. Surprised by well how her work was received, Olamide decided to share what she had made on Facebook. The response was overwhelmingly positive, so Olamide decided to set up her own fashion business that summer, *The Voice of Fashion*. She maintained the business throughout her GCSEs and right up to Year 13, by which time *The Voice of Fashion* had racked up over one thousand likes on Facebook and had been supported by singer Justine Skye.

By the summer of 2018, Olamide had grown increasingly frustrated with the number of homicides taking young lives in Hackney, whilst simultaneously hearing about the budget cuts to the education and youth services sector, which she knew would disproportionately affect state school pupils in areas like hers. From her own experience at both state and private schools, Olamide already knew of the lack of opportunity and exposure to positive examples that exists for pupils in underfunded schools. To help redress the balance, she founded *#MadeInHackney*.

#MadeInHackney aims to help bridge the knowledge gap between less well-resourced state schools and private schools by offering, free of charge, exposure to relatable, positive role models and personal development opportunities. Olamide gives assemblies where she shares her life story, highlighting her successes, and honestly addressing her struggles. She encourages students to recognise and own their shortcomings, and to learn how to use those challenges to their advantage rather than as an excuse. Olamide shares knowledge of the elite programmes that she has had the chance to be a part of at institutions like Harvard, Oxford and Cambridge and at BCG on Rare's Consult programme, showing students how to access those same opportunities. She also offers smaller coaching sessions centred around practical skills and advice, such as personal statement workshops. Since launching *#MadeInHackney*, Olamide has spoken to over 1000 students and aims to speak at every school in the London Borough of Hackney by the end of 2019. Her hope is that all students in Hackney can find something beyond their everyday circumstances to aspire to.



Hlanganiso Matangaidze

Economics and Finance | University of Sussex | Social Entrepreneurship

Hlanganiso was born in Zimbabwe, and came to the UK with his family at the age of five. At fourteen, Hlanganiso started his first business as an in-house personal tutor. He worked with his classmates and peers in Biology, Chemistry and Physics, acing GCSE past papers ahead of class and teaching three or four students each week. In Year 10, Hlanganiso and his friends started a wristband customisation service with their pocket money, selling personalised emergency contact information wristbands to Duke of Edinburgh expedition students to wear in case they became lost. These two early ventures had him hooked on entrepreneurship.

As a fresher at Sussex university, Hlanganiso began to reflect on the differences in infrastructure between the UK and Zimbabwe, in particular noticing the problem of frequent power outages in the latter. After conducting his own research, he found that 67% of the Zimbabwean population and 88% of Malawi's population have no access to the electricity grid, a figure that contributes significantly to the 1.2 billion people globally who have no reliable source of electricity. Discovering that the university's innovation centre ran an annual enterprise competition, StartUp Sussex, Hlanganiso founded and entered his new *RED* initiative, pitching his idea to build low-cost, vertical wind turbines and distribute them across rural Zimbabwe and Malawi. *RED* was one of ten StartUp Sussex finalists chosen by judges and fellow students from the 39 teams in the competition, with Hlanganiso's as the only first year student project to be picked to receive a £500 Santander Entrepreneurship Award and an 8-week intensive mentoring course at the Sussex Innovation Centre.

Hlanganiso went door-to-door to sign up his first customers in Zimbabwe, sourcing funding from British angel investor Damien Tanner, and starting funding conversations with Strive Masiyiwa, one of Zimbabwe's wealthiest men. The pilot scheme produced wind turbines made from recycled parts like discarded washing machine motors, but struggled to produce sufficient electricity during initial testing due to a lack of high, constant winds. Undaunted, Hlanganiso and his growing team turned their attention from wind to more reliable solar energy, and registered the RED GROUP - Renewable Energy Development International Power Solutions - as a private limited company in May 2018. In the same month, RED came second out of 500 initiatives in the Sussex Innovation Centre Social Impact prize, being recognized for an exceptional contribution to sustainable development.



RED provides a distribution service for solar energy systems to power basic household appliances, with the objective of bringing clean, affordable, renewable energy to rural areas and communities. Hlanganiso brought on two fellow student co-founders in October 2018, using his StartUp Sussex support, office space and winnings to conduct more research, develop his business further and build self-contained electric grid systems for solar energy. Starting with 12 of its first 40 solar kits in rural households in Zimbabwe in summer 2018, *RED*'s pilot scheme has reached 80 households at the time of writing, and aims to distribute a reliable solar energy source to 2,400 people over the next phase. RED users pay in small increments of approximately 36p per day under a credit finance system until they own the system themselves, bypassing the outage and blackout-prone National Grid of Zimbabwe altogether.

So far, Hlanganiso and his team have received £8,000 of funding for *RED*, and have reached the final round in the Young Start Up Talent competition. They have also made it into the top five of the Lead2030 Challenge, which supports youth-led innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals. Hlanganiso is also President of the Investment and Trading Society and volunteers with Oxford Entrepreneurs.



Hayley Mulenda

Sociology with Social Policy | University of Kent | Mental Health Awareness

Hayley was brought up in Newham in a single parent household and went to school in her East London neighbourhood, believing she would become either a lawyer or a teacher because of her love for talking to people. When a motivational speaker - soon to become her mentor - visited Hayley's school, she realised what she wanted to do: motivate young people going through similar experiences to herself. Hayley had been badly bullied at school, but chose to find a positive way out through sharing her story in speeches, blogs and videos, reassuring others on how to find inspiration, enjoy their youth, and be a success. Hayley registered her motivational speaking company *Inside A Dream* on her 18th birthday, as a present to herself.

After secondary school, Hayley started at the University of Sussex in 2016, but struggled with the transition to university life and an environment that lacked the ethnic diversity she was accustomed to as a Londoner. Hayley's ensuing difficulties and suicidal thoughts culminated in an attempt to end her life. Once physically recovered, Hayley decided to take time out from university to build her personal understanding, find ways to manage her depression and anxiety, and help others who might find themselves in a similar situation. Hayley decided to look into how to run mental health and personal development workshops. Using her own pain to fuel her purpose, Hayley began to research how to make people comfortable about talking about mental health, especially in the black community.

Hayley went on to write a book - *The ABCs To Student Success* - inspired by her own experiences in both secondary school and higher education. In it, Hayley gives tips on how to stay mentally healthy, how to enjoy being young without racing towards challenging adult situations and how to handle racism and loneliness at university, among other important topics. Hayley reached out to every university African-Caribbean Society she knew of, offering to share her experiences through keynote speeches and mental health workshops. In her first year, she managed to speak at sixteen UK universities, reaching hundreds of students with her message on the importance of maintaining mental wellbeing. Since becoming a student again herself, Hayley juggles her studies and speaking engagements whilst running *Building You* masterclasses which are personal development masterclasses for ethnic minority millennials. What Hayley had started as a small weekly masterclass in 2017 has now evolved into a monthly London meetup, where diverse and influential guest speakers from vloggers to entrepreneurs are invited to inspire, motivate and teach young people up-to-date, transferable life skills such as managing personal finances and personal digital branding.

Recognising that mental health remains a taboo topic in many African countries, Hayley has made significant efforts to carry her story abroad. She visited Uganda on a speaking tour of elite schools, appearing on Ugandan news and television to highlight mental health awareness and its challenges. She has also been invited to speak to inner-city youngsters in New York City, and counts J.P. Morgan and PwC among her corporate clients. Hayley has reached over 40,000 people in her speaking engagements and workshops across the world, including 15,000 people at SSE Wembley Arena for WE Day. Hayley's book saw her recognised as Best Author/Writer in the Best of Congo Awards 2018, and she is The Millenials Club's Female Entrepreneur of the Year for 2019.



Warren A. Stanislaus

DPhil Japanese History | University of Oxford | Academia and Cultural Exchange

Initially, Warren was not particularly engaged with education at his local South-East London school, finding it more of a grind than anything else. Things changed when he heard a talk on gap years and the opportunity to spend time abroad. What started as a youthful interest in Japanese pop culture led to Warren pursuing a gap year volunteer placement in the Aichi Prefecture, Japan, where he split his time between working in a kindergarten and a care home.

Warren's Japanese was very basic at the time; he recalls trying to ask a passer-by where the closest post office was, only to see them flee in confusion. His improvement after only half a year of immersion in Japanese language and culture was so great that Warren was able to pursue his undergraduate studies at ICU, a liberal arts university in Tokyo in 2007, followed by his decision to study for an MPhil in Japanese Studies at the University of Oxford.

Returning to Tokyo after completing his Master's degree, Warren took a role at the British Council in Japan in 2013, visiting Japanese universities to encourage UK-Japan student exchanges and providing consultancy on international exchange programmes. Next, Warren joined the Asia Pacific Initiative, a widely respected think tank where he spent two and a half years as a project manager and Executive Assistant to the Chairman, Dr Yoichi Funabashi. Warren ran international seminars, programmes and events attended by international leaders in various fields, and wrote articles on behalf of Dr. Funabashi on Japanese socio-politico-economic issues, Asia-Pacific regional security and global governance for publications such as *The New York Times*, the *Financial Times* and *The Washington Post*. Most significantly, Warren led an international research project on Japan's soft power in the 21st century that produced the book, "Reinventing Japan: New Directions in Global Leadership," published in both Japanese and English.





Warren is the Founder and President of the official Oxford Alumni Club of Japan, now the largest UK university network in Japan with over five hundred members. He established a new Oxford-Japan Academia-Industry initiative to create fully paid internships and work placements in Japan for Oxford students, negotiating formal agreements with international companies including SoftBank Group, Recruit Holdings, Oliver Wyman, PWC and AXA Direct to offer over twenty-five positions per year. This project also received backing from the Japanese Embassy in the UK as an official event of the UK-Japan Season of Culture. Warren has begun to collaborate with representatives at other prestigious institutions such as the University of Cambridge to connect their students with Japanese firms.

Now into the second year of his doctorate at Oxford, Warren has already received over ten scholarships and awards, including the invitation to move from St Antony's College to Pembroke College to become a Tanaka Graduate Scholar. He has also secured several academic posts in Japan, as a Visiting Researcher in the Soft Power Programme at the Centre for Rule Making Studies at Tama University, part-time lecturer in the Global and Liberal Arts programme at Rikkyo University, and part-time lecturer in the Department of International Studies at Meiji Gakuin University. Warren was recently awarded a place on the UK Department for Education-funded scholarship *Study China Programme* to complete an intensive language and cultural immersion course at East China Normal University, Shanghai, during the summer of 2019.

Warren is the first British student of African-Caribbean descent to have obtained an advanced postgraduate research degree in Japanese Studies in the UK, and the first to be enrolled on a doctoral programme with a focus on Japan.

Meg Zeenat Wamithi

Philosophy, Politics and Economics BA | King's College London | Social Entrepreneurship, Health and Student Politics

Meg is a powerful advocate for the importance of tackling mental health, especially among young people, and she draws on her own experiences to inform others. Originally from Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, she grew up and went to school in the local area. Her family was the only black family in the street, making it difficult for Meg to find positive role models who shared her background, especially as many of her peers were being suspended or expelled for their behaviour in school. At thirteen, Meg was diagnosed with a variety of mental illnesses including anorexia, anxiety and depression, and had to struggle to manage her symptoms alongside her schoolwork. The last couple of years at school were particularly difficult for Meg, but she passed her A levels with some of the best results in her year, even after her school went into special measures.

By 2017, however, Meg had relapsed with depression and anxiety. On her 20th birthday, Meg attempted to take her own life and was rushed to hospital. Even at that crisis point, Meg did not feel that she received the necessary support. This was a situation that Meg was determined not to see repeated, and in March 2018, she decided to launch *My Mind Matters Too*.

My Mind Matters Too is a student-led mental health consultancy with one aim: putting young people's voices at the centre of discussions around their mental health. Over this last year, *My Mind Matters Too* has successfully held a number of workshops, a roundtable discussion at the House of Commons, five mental health panel events and more than fifty drop-in sessions for students who need support with managing their own mental health. This year, *My Mind Matters Too* led King's College London's first ever mental health and wellbeing festival, called *Rise*. The consultancy has also started a discussion series called *Stripped Back* with a live audience, which is about to run a UK tour.

Meg is now a special adviser to KCL, helping to improve the mental health support system of her university. She is also working with two hospitals, one in South London and one in Liverpool, looking at how to make the transition from the youth service to adult services easier for patients, including advising on how students can make the transition between a home and university GP to ensure a continuity of care and service, and she is set to expand her reach to several other universities and schools across London in the rest of the year to come.

Most recently, Meg was a keynote speaker at the Conservative Party Conference on a panel with the Minister of Education, and a keynote speaker at the All-Party Parliamentary Group university meeting about student mental health and wellbeing. Meg also appeared on Channel 5 in a programme dedicated to university mental health day.





Meg has been nominated for several awards in 2019 and will join the delivery team at One Young World in London to head up discussions about mental health and wellbeing. Meg and her *My Mind Matters Too* team will hold their first conference on World Mental Health Day in October 2019, and she is also working on a book which she hopes to publish in the following year. Meg's work led to her being headhunted to support Mental Health UK launch a new programme commissioned by Lloyds Bank to support building resilience in young people.

Meg hopes to have a future career in politics and is committed to ensuring that young people's voices are heard, but most importantly that they matter too.

Dr Chuor de Garang Alier

MSc Clinical Embryology | University of Oxford | Medicine

Chuor was born in 1984 in Bor Town, Sudan, just a few months after the start of the Sudanese civil war.

In 1991, Chuor's father, Mr Garang Alier Chuor, left his home village to join the liberation struggle and took his young son with him. A few months later, famine engulfed Chuor's home district and the civilian population there became victimised by intensifying political divisions. Chuor had had a narrow escape.

Between 1991-1999, Chuor and his family moved between internally displaced people's (IDP) camps, including Mangalore Displaced People's Camp. Schooling was frequently interrupted and Chuor had to repeatedly start his studies from scratch, often under the shade of a tree until 'proper' grass-thatched classrooms could be built. This perpetual displacement led Chuor's family to Uganda in 1995, as the Sudanese government forces made progress against the liberation movement. Chuor was eventually forced to return to Southern Sudan because of the rebellion in northern Uganda led by Joseph Konyi. The brutality of the Ugandan rebellion meant that life in the IDP camps and liberated areas of Southern Sudan was safer.

After reaching the last year of Kendiri Primary School, Chuor could not progress to secondary school because of the lack of educational provision in the liberated areas. At fifteen, Chuor asked permission from his father to go to Uganda alone to receive his education. His father agreed, and Chuor's course was set. He recalls the privilege he felt at riding his bicycle back into Southern Sudan for holidays; people often walked for days to obtain food rations or visit relatives.

Father Bilbao Memorial Primary School accepted Chuor as a candidate in his primary leaving examinations later that year, in 1999. He was one of the three boys—all refugees from Southern Sudan—who achieved a Division One qualification in his school; he also ranked in the top five within the district. Subsequently, the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) offered Chuor a scholarship for his first year of secondary education, through the help of his mathematics and science teachers, Mr Vorodri Perteus and Mr Tako Edward. He completed his first year of secondary school at Bishop Asili Memorial Secondary School in Moyo District, but his scholarship was subsequently revoked because, despite his circumstances, Chuor was not a legally registered refugee in Uganda. That seemed like the end of the road for his education.

By chance, an American nurse called Mary Hippe, who worked for the American Refugee Committee (ARC) in Chuor's IDP camp in Southern Sudan was shown his school results. She also learned that without a scholarship, Chuor would not be able to continue with his education. Moved by his circumstances, Mary offered to pay for the rest of his secondary school education herself. With Mary's support, as well as the help of Father George Ezitral, the then Moyo District Education Officer, Chuor transferred to a better school, St. Joseph's College Ombaci, Arua District in 2001. He ended up achieving eight distinctions and two credit passes, and was among the top candidates in Northern Uganda in 2004.

Due to his outstanding academic achievements, Chuor was mentioned in the local newspapers and the British Council Resource Centre, based at St. Lawrence High School, Kampala, awarded him a scholarship. Chuor dreamed of becoming a medical doctor despite not having had many role models to emulate in the IDP camps. The doctors there were mostly health assistants who had been given very basic medical training, enough to administer basic care but little more. Few had even finished primary school due to a lack of opportunities and resources.





Chuor completed his A levels in Merryland High School in Entebbe before gaining admission to The University of Dar es Salaam Medical School, now renamed Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences. As the peace accord had been signed between the Sudanese government and the liberation movement forces in the South of Sudan, humanitarian support was now refocused on the repatriation of refugees from Uganda to South Sudan; there was no longer a focus on scholarships for refugee students. This was yet another financial hurdle to overcome, but with the financial aid of generous acquaintances and relatives, Chuor persevered and eventually completed medical school in Tanzania. He also took up an opportunity to be part of a group of medical doctors who were awarded a scholarship by the Ministry of Health, Republic of South Sudan, in partnership with the United Nations Population Fund. This allowed Chuor to specialise as an obstetrician and gynaecologist, with the aim of reducing the maternal mortality rate in South Sudan. Chuor has recently been asked by the Ministry of Health to work at the State Hospital in his hometown of Bor. When he returns, it will be the first time he has been back since 1991.

Having practiced as an obstetrician and gynaecologist, the issue of infertility and the stigma attached to it has led Chuor to focus on assisted conception. He believes that no man or woman should feel less of a human being based on their inability to conceive a child when they desire to have one. The University of Oxford not only offered him a place on the course of Master of Science in Clinical Embryology at the Nuffield Department of Women's and Reproductive Health, but they have also paid part of his tuition fees, with the Chevening Scholarship covering the rest.

Chuor hopes that when he eventually returns home after more than twenty-eight years away, the situation in Bor will have improved. He wants to share his story with the hope that those fellow South Sudanese in the same IDP camps inside South Sudan, refugee camps in Uganda, and all over the region, can see that they too can get to Oxford, even if it means waiting for twenty-eight years or more.

“I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear.”

Nelson Mandela

Catching Up with Andrew Ologunebi



I can't believe it's been a year since the last Rare Rising Stars! I still remember the entire process very clearly. When my friend Angelica told me that she was nominating me, my initial response was "I won't get it, it's not really for someone like me". And I guess that's half of the battle in most of our approaches to what we do - imagining that most things are not for us either because they take us out of our comfort zone, or because we have never seen someone like ourselves thrive in them before. I've been used to simply quietly working away at solving various problems that connected with me without really reflecting on how many challenges and opportunities I had inadvertently exposed myself to over the years. Convinced it was worth a try, I told Angelica she could send in the nomination.

The following weeks were just absolutely unbelievable; speaking to Will and being shortlisted. It was already beyond belief that I made the top 10. I mean, the top 10 black students in the UK for Rare Rising Stars 2018 – it was ridiculous! But to also be first on the list was a completely humbling experience. I remember looking around the room at all the other Stars, seeing some familiar faces and feeling like I was surrounded by a cohort of not just future leaders but current leaders, devoted to challenging narratives and making a difference in the world at large. It was an inspiring moment and I felt like it woke me up to the difference we could make as a collective. I was at the event with my extremely proud parents and my uncle. My mum was overjoyed, saying her usual "I've always known you were going to do great things and you're just getting started".

I graduated shortly after the awards ceremony with a 1st class degree and joined Salesforce, a leading enterprise tech firm and one of the early pioneers of CRM and SaaS. I currently work as an Experience Design Consultant delivering 'transformation and innovation' technology services to FTSE 500 Companies. I am also fortunate to have been named a BoldForce Trailblazer since joining and appointed as the Salesforce BoldForce (Black Organisation for Leadership and Development) Events Lead for the UK with a mission to connect with the wider black community and to increase diversity in the tech industry whilst working with the Global Equality office.

Outside my professional work life, I have just completed a data science course and I am also excited to mention that *Vybl* has gone from an idea to its prelaunch phase. We launched *Unlock*, our annual conference for young people late last year, which engaged around 200 young people and enabled them to network with leaders from top tech companies and startups ranging from the likes of Google and Salesforce to GRM Daily and to engage in various activities from speaking sessions to performances.

In the journey of the average African-Caribbean child from the beginning of their educational life to thriving in their career, there are a number of points where their chances for success are severely affected. And although diversity initiatives address a part of the problem, it is usually a small part and at the later stage of the journey. The major issues we discovered related to a cultural disconnect that widens the gap over time. Once these opportunities become a norm in our everyday lives, and as Idris Sandu said, 'tech becomes cool' as well as other things, you connect with a generation that can achieve greater things.

With a growing team of 50+ people and a mission to address these cultural disconnects in the distribution of information and opportunities, we believe that as young people who are integrated with the culture, we are the best equipped to address this. We've focused most of this time on refining internal operations, establishing partnerships with top organisations, conducting user research, securing funding, fine-tuning our branding and making sure we're creating content that genuinely explores and represents the black experience in a useful, engaging and accessible manner across multiple platforms by really listening to people. We will officially be launching in October and releasing two original content series, one tentatively titled 'Conversations with the Diaspora', a documentary-style series exploring the stories around first-generation immigrant families and their various experiences and the other titled 'letsbereal' exploring the experiences of young black people as they navigate adulthood, the first set focusing on the emotional rollercoaster of university life.



Alongside this, we will be carrying out our first school and university tour to engage with young people at various stages of their journey. We will also be launching our new website and other social media platforms to engage them in ways that connect with them culturally and to provide intuitive access to relevant information and opportunities. Our pilot website engaged thousands of students across the country and we aim to push this further, with great content, an inspiring campaign and building our ambassador network, to engage thousands more when we launch officially in October.

E.Mission, a startup I co-founded to focus on the effects of our diet on carbon emission and how we can address this, has received more funding and is supported by the European Union, and is now partnering with more restaurants across the country to pioneer low-carbon menus. We've started with enterprise users to reach a larger set of consumers faster, but will be releasing a consumer app in the near future to help everyday consumers make smarter choices when it comes to delicious but carbon-friendly recipes and meals. We are increasingly getting some press attention and I am excited about the future of this endeavour too!

So here I am, being recognised for things I did simply because I thought they were necessary and I enjoyed doing them. To think of the journey from when I was born in a small town in Nigeria, my parents not having a dime on them and a decade later, migrating to the UK, to growing up in South London, a hair's breadth away from taking the wrong turn in life, being stabbed and having to move to a new school. To discovering design, technology and entrepreneurship shortly after, channelling my energy into those areas, learning mainly from the internet. And from there to running a business that would eventually take me around the world. And all the while facing various ups and downs along the way.

The one thing I can really say is there is no true recipe for doing great things or being successful, I feel like I haven't started yet and I'm going through a process. There is no moment of sudden turnaround, where everything starts taking a linear upwards growth. I have failed and succeeded at many things and each experience teaches me more about myself.

It's not about these achievements, they might help you recognise that you are on the right path but the most important thing is your journey. Always take a step forward and make the most of every opportunity you're given to make a difference, either great or small.

The Judges



TREVOR PHILLIPS OBE

Trevor Phillips is a writer, broadcaster and businessman. He is an award-winning TV producer and presenter, with three RTS journalism awards to his name, and has written and presented some of the most talked-about programmes of recent years, including “Has Political Correctness Gone Mad?” and “Things We Won’t Say About Race That Are True”; the latter was described by The Times as “probably amongst the most important documentaries of the decade”. He writes regularly for some of the UK’s biggest selling newspapers, including The Daily Mail, The Sun and the Sunday Times, on a variety of subjects. Trevor is also Chairman of Index on Censorship, the international campaign group for freedom of expression.

In his day job he is the Chairman of the Green Park Group, a leading executive recruitment consultancy, and co-founder of the data analytics firm Webber Phillips created with Professor Richard Webber in 2014. He was, until June 2018, the President of the John Lewis Partnership, Europe’s largest employee-owned company. In recent years he has written frequently about the organisational and cultural impact of machine learning and AI, and served as a consultant to major tech companies on this topic.

Born to Guyanese immigrant parents, Trevor was educated in London and Georgetown. He started working life as a research chemist, graduating from Imperial College. After a stint as President of the National Union of Students, he entered TV as a researcher for LWT, rising to become Head of Current Affairs. He later set up his own production company, notably making the BBC series “Windrush” and co-authoring the associated Harper Collins book. “Windrush” won both domestic and international awards, and turned a previously obscure episode into an iconic moment in British history.

Trevor has spent four decades in public life, including becoming the founding chair of both the Greater London Authority (2000), and of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (2007). He has also chaired several charities, amongst them the Social Mobility Foundation. He was awarded the OBE for achievements in TV in 1999, and the French order of the Chevalier de la Legion d’Honneur in 2006 for his work on integration and community cohesion. He holds honorary degrees from several universities.

He lives in London with his TV producer wife. He retains a deep interest in the arts, especially theatre and music. He was Chair of the Hampstead Theatre, and a member of the Aldeburgh Festival Council. He is a board member of the Barbican Arts Centre and of The Headlong Theatre Company.



KEM IHENACHO

Kem Ihenacho is a partner at global law firm Latham & Watkins. He is the Global Vice Chair of the Private Equity Practice and Co-Chair of the firm's Africa Practice Group. He is an M&A lawyer with more than 20 years of experience, focusing on complex cross border private equity, infrastructure, and M&A transactions. Prior to joining Latham he was a partner at a Magic Circle law firm.

Kem has been actively involved in recruitment and diversity initiatives in the law for many years and mentors many young lawyers and professionals. He was one of the chairs of the Latham global recruitment committee and for many years has sat on the advisory board at Rare. He is also a director of the not for profit enterprise International Lawyers for Africa.

Kem studied law at Cardiff University. He trained with a regional law firm before joining a Magic Circle firm as a junior associate. Kem is a keen sportsman and spends most weekends trying to keep up with his three young sons.



SOPHIE CHANDAUKA

Sophie is Global COO of Morgan Stanley's Shared Services and Banking Operation. She spent four years as Head of Group Treasury (Legal) at Virgin Money leading execution of corporate finance activity in excess of £13bn, including the company's flotation in 2014.

Once a Senior Associate at global firm Baker McKenzie based in London, she advised NIKE, The Body Shop, Citi, Macquarie Bank and others. She is the recipient of many industry awards and has been featured as a business leader in the Financial Times and Sunday Times.

In September 2018, Sophie was featured in Brummell Magazine's 2018 list of the most inspirational women in the city of London. She is an Ambassador of the 30% Club and Co-founder of the Black British Business Awards. She is a member of the Executive Leadership Council (ELC) - the preeminent membership organization for the development of global black leaders and serves on its International Presence Committee with a view to increasing the number of black executives in c-suite and corporate board positions in global enterprises.

She is a Rotary International Paul Harris Fellow and has served on a number of charitable boards including Sentebale, Prince Harry's charity for children in Africa. In 2018 she was recognised by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth for her contribution to the Commonwealth diaspora during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

Sophie was born and raised in Zimbabwe. She has studied and worked in Zimbabwe, America, Britain and Canada. She and her family currently split time between London and New York.



TIA COUNTS

Tia Counts is the Global Corporate & Investment Bank and EMEA Head of Advancing Black Leaders (ABL) for JP Morgan, responsible for leading and driving the ABL strategy supporting managers in attracting, developing, retaining and advancing black talent at the firm. Tia also contributes to the broader Diversity and Inclusion agenda for JP Morgan.

Prior to her current role, Tia was an Executive Director and Assistant General Counsel in JP Morgan's Legal Department, providing strategic legal counsel to the Corporate & Investment Bank. Tia has over 20 years' experience specialising in domestic and cross border investment banking both as a lawyer and on the trading floor as a cross asset-class structurer of financial products.

A diversity champion, Tia is a founding member of the Black Leadership Forum, a group of senior black heritage officers based in the EMEA offices of JP Morgan, who work in support of the ABL global initiative. Tia is also a leader in the Culture and Conduct program run by the Legal department and is regularly invited to speak on the topic for various JPMorgan groups.

Tia joined JP Morgan in 2012 from Morgan Stanley where she was an Executive Director in the Financial Engineering Group, an Executive Director and Head of the EMEA Equity Derivatives legal execution team, and prior to this a Vice President in the Markets practice within legal. Tia worked at Morgan Stanley in both their London office and New York office for 10 years. Prior to joining Morgan Stanley, Tia was a lawyer at Clifford Chance's New York office where she worked in the Derivatives and Capital Markets team, with a focus on Latin America.

Tia received her J.D. from Columbia University School of Law and her B.A. from the University of California at Berkeley.

Tia currently lives in Clapham, South London, with her husband and two children.



TOM CHIGBO

Tom is a Senior Organiser for Citizens UK working in Leeds and West Yorkshire. Over the last 7 years Tom has equipped hundreds of people of a variety of ages, faiths and backgrounds with the skills to take positive social action.

Tom began his career at Citizens UK with Money Mentors, an innovative community financial literacy campaign in response to the UK recession. He then spent 3 years as a Community Organiser in the London Borough of Lambeth, where he worked with the local council to achieve Living Wage accreditation in 2012. He later directed CitySafe, an initiative that rebuilt relationships between young people, small businesses and the Metropolitan Police and opened over 600 safe havens across the capital. In 2015, he launched Leeds Citizens, an alliance of 30 faith, education and community groups campaigning to address issues of low pay, mental health and youth opportunities around the city.

Tom holds a BA in Geography from the University of Cambridge, where he made history by becoming the university's first black Student Union President. During his term of office, he successfully campaigned for the university to fund a Student Advice Service and multimillion pound sports centre. His achievements were recognised by Rare, who named him the first No.1 Rare Rising Star in 2009. Tom also has an MA in Community Organising from Queen Mary, University of London. He serves on the Board of Directors for Amnesty International UK, an NGO working around the world to promote human rights.

Closing Statements

Words from Our Sponsors



University of Cambridge

“One of the most powerful ways of encouraging students to fulfil their potential is to show them the extraordinary things that others like them have achieved. Rare’s Rising Stars is not just a celebration of talented individuals, it is a call to action for the next generation of students to challenge themselves and succeed. The University of Cambridge is delighted to be a sponsor and wishes this year’s Rising Stars the very best as they pursue their ambitions.”

Jon Beard, Director, Cambridge Admissions Office



University of Oxford

“The stories and achievements of this year’s Rising Stars are truly inspiring. Their journeys highlight hard work, dedication and service to their peers and wider community. Rising Stars showcases and celebrates the talent and potential of black students across the UK. This is vital if we are to promote positive role models in our schools and communities. It matters to us at the University of Oxford that we champion and welcome the stories of exceptional students and support them. I am in no doubt that this year’s stars will continue to forge a bright path, inspiring and encouraging other students to follow. The University of Oxford is delighted to work with organisations such as Rare Recruitment and to sponsor this publication.”

Dr Samina Khan, Director of Undergraduate Admissions and Outreach



Latham & Watkins

“We each have a responsibility to support and develop a diverse pipeline of talent for the legal profession. As a firm, Latham & Watkins hires and nurtures the best and brightest lawyers from all backgrounds, and we continue to protect and preserve our inclusive culture where every lawyer can flourish. Congratulations to the 2019 Rare Rising Stars.”

On behalf of Latham & Watkins

rare

www.rarerecruitment.co.uk

About Rare Rising Stars

Rare Rising Stars allows us to recognise and celebrate extraordinary candidates. Each year, we showcase the achievements of the best black students in the UK. Since the development of our Contextual Recruitment System, we have been fortunate enough to be able to shine a light on all overachievers, by setting each candidate's achievements in context. We are delighted to now be recognising the achievements of more candidates, on a wider scale.

We are privileged to encounter incredibly high achievers on a day-to-day basis and work with clients who really care about changing the face of the City. Now in its eleventh year, we are once again pleased to be able to share the stories of our ten Stars - stories of ambition, resilience and passion. We hope that this celebration of excellence continues to inspire young black students to contribute to their communities and pursue their dreams.

Our nationwide search made it clear that there are many more high achievers to be discovered. Our judges Kem Ihenacho, Sophie Chandauka, Tia Counts, Tom Chigbo and Trevor Phillips OBE had the unenviable task of selecting ten finalists from yet another remarkable list of black students.

We aim to continue developing a community of excellence by sharing the stories of our ten Stars, role models for their own generation.

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