



American Institute
for Contemporary
German Studies
JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

AICGS' New Transatlantic Exchange Program for Young Minorities: Giving Voice to Future Leaders

Participant Biographies



Aliza Monique Auces
The College of Idaho

Aliza Monique Auces earned her B.S. in Health Sciences and Spanish with minors in Psychology and Health Professions Studies at The College of Idaho in 2016. During her undergraduate studies, Ms. Auces was accepted into the nationally competitive Summer Medical and Dental Program (SMDEP) at the University of Washington School of Medicine and since has served as an active ambassador for the program. Committed to improving the healthcare of Caldwell and Nampa residents, she created a new internship and became the first Latino Health Intern at the Center for Community and Justice in Idaho. During her last year as a full-time undergraduate student, Aliza presented her research project in developing a Novel Cell Motility Assay for Glioblastoma Multiforme cells under the guidance of Dr. Luke Daniels at the annual Student Research Conference at the College of Idaho. She also worked as an emergency department medical scribe throughout the Treasure Valley with Idaho Emergency Physicians, where she gained meaningful first-hand experiences of how current health policies affect emergency medicine and other fields of medicine. Aliza is the first Latina from Idaho accepted to the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI) Public Policy Fellowship Program. Eager to gain the skills that would allow her to become a better advocate for the development of health policies that promote health equality for the Latino community and other underserved communities, she completed her placements at the Association of American Medical Colleges and the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee under Ranking Member Senator Patty Murray.



Francisco Bencosme
United States Senate Foreign Relations Committee

Francisco Bencosme is a Legislative Research Assistant on the United States Senate Foreign Relations Committee, where he assists the Ranking Member on issues related to East Asia/Pacific, South Asia, and State Department/USAID oversight. Francisco assisted the Ranking Member during the passage of the "North Korea Sanctions and Policy Enhancement Act of 2016" as well on several other Asia-related legislative issues. Francisco also staffs the Democratic Senate Foreign Relations Committee on key hearings that have focused on U.S.-China relations, South and East China Sea, South Korea civil nuclear cooperation, Southeast Asia democratic and human rights, Afghanistan, food security, and the State Department budget and authorization issues. In addition, Francisco also serves as the President of the Congressional Hispanic Staff Association (CHSA) and as a board member of the Foreign Affairs Congressional Staff Association (FACSA).



German Cash

Leadership for Educational Equity

German Cash is the director of Diversity and Equity Leadership Development at Leadership for Educational Equity. German was born and raised in Los Angeles, the son of immigrants from El Salvador and Nicaragua. Growing up in South Central LA, German witnessed and experienced at a very early age the social and economic marginalization of his community. He is fueled by a passion to bring positive change to his community, working to elect progressive leaders and enact progressive policies that help uplift and empower underserved and underrepresented populations. German has been involved in political campaigns and public advocacy work for several years. He has developed grassroots organizing experience working as a field organizer for federal and local campaigns. His previous professional experiences include working at the National Center for Disaster Preparedness, where he developed community outreach strategies for underrepresented and vulnerable populations, and as political director at the new American Leaders Project. He has also worked abroad in Latin America for the United Nations Development Program, conducting in-depth research on economic development and political inclusion policies for minority and indigenous communities. German has served as a facilitator on inclusive leadership and governance for the Transatlantic Inclusion Leaders Network, an international conference in Brussels for American and European elected officials. German also sits on several executive boards and commissions, including the NYC Young Professional Leaders Council, as well as Columbia University's Diversity Task Force. German holds a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Southern California and an M.A. in International Affairs from Columbia University.



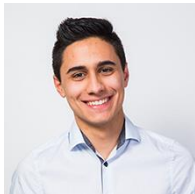
Shabel Castro

University of Pennsylvania Law School

Shabel Castro is currently a second-year student and a Toll Scholar at the University of Pennsylvania Law School. Additionally, she is pursuing a Master of Science in Social Policy at the School of Policy & Practice. Prior to attending law school, Shabel worked as a Legal Advocate at Part of the Solution (POTS), a nonprofit organization in New York that provides comprehensive and holistic services to community members in crisis. At POTS, Shabel advocated on behalf of clients who were at risk of being evicted from their homes or losing public benefits that support their livelihood. Dedicated to both social justice and to her community, Shabel was a peer mentor for first-generation college students and has volunteered facilitating English classes to adult immigrants and mentoring youth. Shabel is an alumna of the Latino Leadership Initiative, a program that was hosted by the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. During this academic year, Shabel will serve as President of the Latino Law Students Association and as a Wharton Nonprofit Board Fellow with Team Up Philly, an organization dedicated to empowering young girls through sports.

**Guadalupe Chavez***The New School for Social Research*

Guadalupe Chavez is currently a graduate student at the New School for Social Research (NSSR) in New York City pursuing a Master's degree in politics. She holds a Bachelor's degree with honors in Political Science and History from the College of Saint Rose. Her research focuses on global migration, emigration, and integration policies and citizenship through a U.S.-Mexico context. Guadalupe was a Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI) intern in the of Spring 2016. Her experiences as an intern on Capitol Hill provided her the opportunity to reflect and critique how federal laws and policies are designed and implemented. Moreover, these experiences have motivated Guadalupe to pursue a career in public service. Guadalupe has held various internships at the local, state, and federal level and in the nonprofit sector. She has interned at the Offices of Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez and Senator Charles E. Schumer, the NYC Comptroller's Office, and the Center for Migration Studies. Further, she has conducted research projects in the hopes of dismantling transnational violence and systemic marginalization toward undocumented communities.

**M.K. Tayyib Demiroglu***Daimler AG*

M.K. Tayyib Demiroglu is currently working at Daimler AG within the Future Transportation division at Mercedes-Benz Vans. He is responsible for the business side of the Robotic Delivery swarm cell, which utilizes autonomously driving robots for parcel delivery. Tayyib studied International Business Administration at WHU – Otto Beisheim School of Management and completed a semester abroad in Hong Kong. During his studies, he interned in start-ups, in the speechwriting team of the Board of Management of Daimler, and in a strategy department of ThyssenKrupp in Turkey. He wrote his thesis about disruptive innovations at Daimler Mobility Services. Tayyib is the Founder and Chairman of the NGO German-Turkish Young Diplomats, which aims to empower young Turkish-Germans as bridge builders between German and Turkish society. He was awarded with several scholarships for his volunteering, including by the Foundation of German Business.

**Talha Evran***University of Cologne/Kemerburgaz University Istanbul*

Talha Evran is a first-year law student pursuing a double degree from the University of Cologne/Germany and Kemerburgaz University Istanbul/Turkey. He is currently working as a student research assistant at the Institute for Private Law and Company Law at the University of Cologne. He is a scholarship holder of the German Academic National Foundation (Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes). Talha launched the "Campaign Refugee Child" in 2014, a campaign aimed at drawing attention to the unpleasant circumstances of refugee children in Germany. The same year he was announced as the "UNICEF Youth Ambassador of the Year" by the German Committee for UNICEF. Moreover, he is voluntarily working as a Junior Coach on behalf of the social initiative "180° Turn." His international experiences include participating in a summer seminar in San Antonio, Texas, sponsored by the German-American Fulbright Commission.



Juan Carlos Gomez
United States Senate

Juan Gomez serves as the Healthcare Legislative Correspondent for United States Senator Cory Booker. Juan is particularly interested in finding ways to address healthcare disparities and increase access to mental healthcare. Through the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute he was able to intern in the House of Representatives for his local New Jersey Congressman. He also has experience interning in political campaigns, nonprofits, and lobbying firms. Juan earned his B.A. in Psychology and Political Science with a minor in Public Administration from Montclair State University.



Anna Guadarrama
San Diego Metro Region

Anna Guadarrama strategizes workforce development and employment solutions in the San Diego Metro Region with a focus on San Diego's college youth successfully entering the labor force. Previously, Anna actively engaged in Mexico's public and private education sector as an English professor and as a Fulbright fellow promoting mutual cultural understanding. Prior to working abroad, Anna served under the Obama administration as a White House intern with the Domestic Policy Council providing assistance in areas of social innovation, philanthropy, and service. She has a B.A. in International Studies from Utah State University, is an alumna of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI), and was selected as a Public Policy and International Affairs (PPIA) Fellow at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public Policy.



Dildar Kaya
University of Bremen

Dildar Kaya is currently a bachelor's student at the University of Bremen, where she is pursuing a degree in Psychology. Her social and political interests have led her to work with a variety of NGOs such as Oxfam and UNICEF. As a One Young World Ambassador, she was invited to the European Commission to discuss youth perspectives on preventing and countering violent extremism, which was chaired by Kofi Annan. At an educational program for Telefonica and the Deutsche Kinder- und Jugendstiftung, Dildar works with young people from marginalized groups to support them in implementing their ideas to establish their projects and start-ups. In this context she was chosen to prepare and moderate a dialogue with young students on the subject of "good living" with German chancellor Angela Merkel. She also produces a newscast with a multicultural team of young people focused on political commitment. After high school she volunteered in China.



Ozan Kaya
University of Greifswald

Ozan Kaya is currently finishing his studies in political science and public law in the University of Greifswald. Ozan's concentration is politics, immigration, and integration. His interest in those topics occurred when he interned for MdB Aydan Özoguz in the German parliament, the first woman of Turkish descent to serve as a Commissioner for Immigration, Refugees, and Integration. The internship in her office allowed him to understand how important it is to engage in immigration in a globalized world. He also interned for MdB Cansel Kiziltepe and the Senate Administration for Integration, which gave him a deeper look into the immigration system of Berlin. Ozan is a member of a political party and member of the Working Group Migration and Diversity. He is also engaged in different migration and refugee working groups and initiatives in Berlin and as a tutor for autistic children in a school in Berlin. He was raised in Berlin after he and his family fled from the armed conflicts in East Turkey to Germany.



Ouassima Laabich
Philipps-University Marburg

Ouassima Laabich studied Politics of the Near and Middle East and Peace and Conflict Studies at the Philipps-University in Marburg and Arabic in Amman, Jordan. This year, she will continue with the Public Policy Master's Program at the Hertie School of Governance in Berlin. Ouassima is a board member of the Muslim Youth in Germany (MJD e.V.) and responsible for community involvement, empowerment strategies, and advocacy programs. She is also a scholarship holder of the Avicenna-Studienwerk e.V.



Saad Malik
Deutsche Welle

Saad Malik is a Communication Designer and independent filmmaker from Berlin. He is currently working at Deutsche Welle and will continue his studies in Psychology and Communication Science at the Free University Berlin. He is also a founding member of the Young and Active Muslims (JUMA e.V.) in Berlin and responsible for social inclusion of minority groups and equality topics. He has directed several films and documentaries about social realities, including an international short film which participated in the Dubai Film Festival and which won second prize. He is the part of an aspiring YouTube Channel that deals with political and religious topics in a humorous way and which has won many prizes for their work.

**Gilberto Soria Mendoza**

University of Michigan, Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy

Gilberto is a Master of Public Policy candidate at the University of Michigan's Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy. Prior to coming to the Ford School, Gilberto was a senior policy specialist for state-federal affairs at the National Conference of State Legislatures, where he covered immigration and hunger/nutrition policy issues. Before that, he was a 2012-13 Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellow at the Congressional Hunger Center. In 2011, he took part in the prestigious Ford School Junior Summer Institute as a Public Policy & International Affairs Fellow. Gilberto is from East Palo Alto, California, and received his bachelor's degree from UCLA, where he studied political science, public affairs, urban planning, and labor & workplace studies.

**Enes Mert**

WMP Eurocom AG

Enes Mert is currently an intern at the communication consultancy WMP Eurocom AG. As of September 2017, he will start a Master's in International Relations at the University of Edinburgh. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from Free University Berlin and the University of Warwick in Great Britain, where he specialized in Foreign Policy Analysis and BRICS states. He has been a volunteer at InteGREATER e.V. since 2014 and regularly talks to young students with an immigration background to raise awareness for education. Enes gained work experience as an intern in the German parliament and spent two months as an assistant to the chair of the faculty for International Relations at METU, Ankara. In 2015, he has participated in the School of Democracy in Italy, a forum for young leaders organized by the S&D Faction in the European Parliament.

**Rocio Rodarte**

United States Senate

Rocio Rodarte is a Legislative Aide in the United States Senate. She works on judiciary issues, including immigration, criminal justice reform, and civil rights, as well as energy and the environment. She is a founding member of the Virginia Latina Advocacy Network (VA LAN), which operates as an extension of the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health (NLIRH) and organizes communities in Virginia around issues that impact the Latino community. She serves on the Diversity Advisory Council for the President of Brown University. She is a graduate of American University's WeLead Leadership Program run by the Women and Politics Institute and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute Internship. She holds a B.A. in International Relations from Brown University.



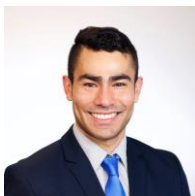
Safiye Sahin
Humboldt University of Berlin

Safiye Sahin is pursuing her Ph.D. and working as a research assistant at the Refugee Law Clinic of the Humboldt University of Berlin. She studied Law at the Free and Humboldt universities, specializing in International and Constitutional Law, with diverse study visits in Barcelona, Budapest, and Istanbul. She completed her legal clerkship, at the German Department for Foreign Affairs, at a Co-Plaintiff of the NSU case in Munich, and at the Chair for Constitutional Law at the University of Istanbul, among others. She also volunteers for vulnerable groups, such as children, youth, and refugees.



Berhan Tongay
University of Stuttgart

Berhan Tongay is currently pursuing a Master of Science degree in Civil Engineering at the University of Stuttgart. In addition to his studies, Berhan has worked in one of the leading planning companies in the area of special and lightweight construction, where he contributed to the successful implementation of many globally recognized projects that were conceived, planned, and built with an international team in an intercultural environment. Building bridges is not only his expertise as a civil engineer, but also his vision for the community. In order to address social challenges and eliminate stereotypes and prejudices, he decided to engage both politically and in non-governmental organizations. In the wake of the recent influx of refugees, he co-founded the project "bildungsbringer," an initiative that allows refugees without educational background to begin their own learning courses by donated paper bags provided by the local society. As the co-founder of a new start-up in Stuttgart, Berhan is also an active member of the regional start-up scene. Among his acquaintances he is known as "The Maker"—an open, social, and visionary person.



Felipe Vieyra
Together Colorado

Felipe Vieyra is currently a Bilingual Community Organizer at Together Colorado in Denver, Colorado. His previous positions include working as a Program Director at the Colorado Rapids Youth Soccer Club and as the Southwest Denver Community Organizer for Stand for Children. Mr. Vieyra completed a B.A. in Political Science, International Relations, and Spanish Literature and Language at the University of Denver. He has been working in community involvement and advocacy programs for the last 8 years in Denver. He was appointed to the Immigrant and Refugee Commission of Denver by Mayor Michael Hancock and served on the commission for 4 years. He sits on several boards including the following: ACCESO Spanish Advisory Board for the Denver Clerk and Recorder, Denver Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, Young Latino Philanthropist Board, Denver Young Democrats Executive Board, and the New Leaders Council Denver Board of Directors. He is currently a Policy Fellow for the National Institute of Latino School Leaders through the National Council of La Raza (NCLR). He is originally from Morelia, Michoacan Mexico.

**Seycan Yildirim**

Free University Berlin

Seycan Yildirim currently studies law at the Free University Berlin, pursuing the state examination. Besides her studies she works in the German parliament as a student assistant. She has been engaged in politics since 2009 and has been a member of the Social Democratic Party of Germany since 2012. Seycan has held many positions within the SPD. She began as a chairperson of the Young Socialists and is now a representative in the city hall of a Berlin district. She supports the Management Board of another Berlin department of the Social Democratic Party. She was one of the cofounders of the Alevis Student Association, with the aim of helping young high school graduates find the right career path.