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## Developing Future Civil Society Leaders Around the World

POSTED BY ROBIN LERNER

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Emerging Global Leaders Initiative-Atlas Corps Fellows Pose for a Group Photo

Last week, the [Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs](#)' Office of Private Sector Exchange hosted the launch of the “[Emerging Global Leaders Initiative \(EGLI\)-Atlas Corps Fellowship](#)” at the State Department’s Marshall Center. This exciting event celebrated a new and innovative partnership between the U.S. Department of State and Atlas Service Corps (Atlas Corps). Through the partnership, Atlas Corps runs a highly competitive process to select applicants for civil society and public service fellowships in the United States. Atlas Corps fully funds the fellowships and the State Department helps to raise awareness of the exchange and vet candidates. This model of “private sector exchange” provides a new development opportunity for highly-motivated young leaders, and a no-cost-high-quality engagement opportunity for embassies and consulates around the world.

Last week’s event welcomed the first cohort of 23 fellows -- a cadre of outstanding up-and-coming civil society leaders representing 15 countries from every region. Fellows will be placed at organizations such as: Ashoka, Grameen Foundation, Habitat for Humanity, Peace Corps, Points of Light Institute, Save the Children, Special Olympics, Susan G. Komen, UN Foundation, UNICEF USA, and World Wildlife Fund. Assistant Secretary Evan Ryan of the Bureau of Educational Affairs, Shannon Green, Senior Director of Global Engagement at the White House National Security Council (NSC), Macon Phillips, Coordinator for

International Information Programs and Andrew Rabens, Special Advisor for Global Youth Issues were all on hand to personally applaud and inspire these energetic new fellows during last week's launch.

The EGLI-Atlas Corps Fellowship advances President Obama's ground-breaking Stand with Civil Society Agenda, launched in September 2013, to support, defend, and sustain civil society. Over the next two years, some 100 individuals will take part in the fellowship, and spend six to 18 months focusing on leadership development, social justice, access, diversity and many other topics through intense on-the-job training and development experiences. When they go home, we may certainly expect to see these fellows tackle tough social issues, share best practices of nonprofit management, and build ties between civil society leaders in the United States and their home communities around the world.

This year's class includes Prem, a youth development leader funded by the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad serving at the Malala Fund in Washington, D.C. Prem told the audience in the Marshall Center that the experiences and relationships formed in the United States will help support his strong passion "to reform the broken education system at home" and "to educate more Malalas" in the future. Leaning on the words of Nelson Mandela while addressing the audience, he stressed that the work of inspiring change around the world "always seems impossible until it's done." The new relationships he is forming with other fellows will undoubtedly energize each of them with new confidence to make significant impacts in their respective countries long after the fellowship ends.

As Assistant Secretary Evan Ryan said, "Today, more than ever before, forging bonds with future leaders is our greatest hope for change and progress around the world." We thank U.S. missions around the world for their support and encourage them to spread the word about the next application cycle for the EGLI-Atlas Corps Fellowship to eligible candidates. Application is now open and the priority deadline is March 15. To apply and to find out more information, please visit <http://apply.atlascorps.org>.

*About the Author: [Robin Lerner](#) serves as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Private Sector Exchange in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.*

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**Robin O.** | United States

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Based on the track record of the Bush/Obama foreign policy, this looks like the precursor to more neocolonial "color revolutions".

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**youth d.** | Bangladesh

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