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Global Centre for Pluralism announces 2021 Global Pluralism Award Winners

Hand in Hand: Center for Jewish-Arab Education in Israel (Israel), Namati Kenya (Kenya) and Puja Kapai (Hong Kong) awarded for outstanding achievements in promoting inclusion worldwide

February 23, 2022, Ottawa, Canada – Today, the [Global Centre for Pluralism](#) announced three winners of the 2021 Global Pluralism Award, listed alphabetically: **Hand in Hand: Center for Jewish-Arab Education in Israel** – a network of bilingual and integrated schools that foster a community of inclusion, cooperation and respect among Jewish and Arab students; **Namati Kenya** – an organization advancing citizenship rights and access to justice for Kenya’s minority communities; and **Puja Kapai** (Hong Kong) – a lawyer, professor and social justice advocate challenging gendered and racialized cultural norms to promote equal rights for Hong Kong’s ethnic minorities.

"Hand in Hand is deeply moved and honoured to be selected as a Global Pluralism Award winner and for this recognition of our work promoting pluralism, equality, and shared society in Israel," said CEO Hand in Hand, **Dani Elazar**. "Now, more than ever, the time is ripe to advance initiatives which foster equality and combat the deep-seated divisions within Israel's education system and Israeli society at large."

"Access to identification documents is the opener to inclusion - whether in economic, social, or political domains," said **Mustafa Mahmoud**, Senior Program Manager for Namati Kenya’s Citizenship Justice program. "Receiving the Global Pluralism Award is an honour, to be recognized for our work supporting diverse minority communities in Kenya to overcome discrimination in securing their own ID cards and to push for equal access to identification for all."

"I am most humbled to receive the Global Pluralism Award. By honouring my work in advancing social justice in relation to race, gender and minority rights, the Award renders visible the lived realities of all those who are routinely marginalised and experience systemic exclusion and discrimination in nearly every sphere of life. The Award also signals the responsibilities we each carry to begin the journey of inclusion, acceptance and pluralism at home," said **Puja Kapai**, Associate Professor of Law at the University of Hong Kong.

The Global Pluralism Award celebrates pluralism in action. As a result of their sustained achievements to promote respect across differences, the Award winners and seven honourable mention recipients are helping to build more inclusive societies, in which human diversity is valued and thrives.

The Global Centre for Pluralism received 500 nominations spanning 70 countries for the 2021 Global Pluralism Award. This year’s winners underwent a rigorous review process by an independent, [international jury of experts](#) from various disciplines related to pluralism and have made extraordinary strides to advance pluralism through education, legal empowerment and minority rights. The Global Centre for Pluralism, founded by His Highness the Aga Khan and the Government of Canada, recognized the three winners and seven honourable mentions at a virtual award ceremony today. The winners were each granted \$50,000 and in-kind support to further their work in promoting more inclusive, just societies.

“We live in times of great division and inequity. We need to push back against these trends. The 2021 Awardees offer us tangible and innovative examples of pluralism in action. They demonstrate courage and creativity in the face of extraordinary challenges and in times of conflict and crisis. Their stories have the capacity to inspire us to take action towards pluralism in our own spaces. The Centre is deeply honoured to be supporting their work.” said **Meredith Preston McGhie**, Secretary General of the Global Centre for Pluralism.

“The jury is delighted to be recognizing the 2021 Global Pluralism Award winners, selected from amongst hundreds of submissions. They are examples of what contagious change can be inspired by the creative and human instinct of pluralism, of acting together rather than apart,” said the **Right Honourable Joe Clark**, former Prime Minister of Canada and Chair of the Award Jury.

Past winners include Deborah Ahenkorah (2019) – a children’s book publisher from Ghana championing the importance of African literature for children; Leyner Palacios Asprilla (2017) – founder of the Committee for the Rights of Bojayá Victims, which represents 11,000 victims from the Colombian conflict; and Daniel Webb (2017) – Director of Legal Advocacy, Human Rights Law Centre, who combines legal action, medica advocacy, public campaigns and United Nations engagement to tackle the offshore detention issue in Australia.

About the 2021 Global Pluralism Award Winners:

- **[Hand in Hand: Center for Jewish-Arab Education in Israel \(Israel\)](#)** is a network of integrated, bilingual and multicultural schools equipping a new generation to live together in cooperation and respect. In these schools, Hebrew and Arabic languages have equal status, as do both cultures and national narratives. With over 2,000 students and supported by a community of active citizens who come together in solidarity and dialogue, Hand in Hand is working to build a shared, inclusive society.
- **[Namati Kenya \(Kenya\)](#)** uses legal empowerment to aid historically excluded communities who lack national identification documents needed to access even the most basic services. Since 2013, Namati Kenya has supported more than 12,000 Kenyans in efforts to obtain these legal identity documents. Through a network of community paralegals, the organization builds legal awareness, aiming to empower communities to overcome discrimination and cultivate inclusivity and belonging.

[Ms. Puja Kapai \(Hong Kong\)](#) is an academic, lawyer and social justice advocate who challenges gendered and racialized cultural norms and champions equal rights for Hong Kong’s ethnic minorities. Through an intersectional approach that combines research, advocacy and grassroots mobilization, Ms. Kapai has garnered unprecedented attention to the status of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong, contributing to the abolishment of racially segregated schools for ethnic minority children.

About the 2021 Global Pluralism Award Honourable Mentions:

- **[All Out \(Global\)](#)** is a global LGBT+ movement committed to creating a world where nobody must sacrifice their family, freedom, safety or dignity because of who they are or who they love. Their

work contributes to pluralism and the respect for diversity by building positive narratives about LGBT+ lives around the world, changing hearts and minds among potential allies and ultimately contributing to better lived experiences for LGBT+ communities.

- **ArtLords (Afghanistan)** combines street art and activism to facilitate social transformation and trauma healing. Founded in Afghanistan, ArtLords' collective of 'artists' have painted over 2,000 murals across the country's bomb-blast walls, spreading messages of peace, justice and tolerance. ArtLords is also pivoting their work to new global contexts, including Afghan refugee communities, with a vision to one day hold exhibitions around the world.
- **Ms. Carolina Contreras (Dominican Republic)** is a social entrepreneur who empowers Afro-Latinxs by redefining beauty standards through [Miss Rizos](#) (in English, "Miss Curls"), a global movement that seeks to normalize and celebrate natural hair. With natural hair salons and youth empowerment initiatives in Santo Domingo and New York City, Ms. Contreras is empowering thousands of women and girls to celebrate diversity, challenge stereotypes and rewrite a deeply embedded colonial narrative about what it means to be beautiful.
- **Community Building Mitrovica (Kosovo)** is a grassroots organization that creates safe spaces for dialogue and relationship-building across ethnic lines in northern Kosovo. Working in Mitrovica, a city known for its ethnic diversity and ethnic divides, the organization connects Serbian and Albanian communities that have been separated by war and mistrust. By gathering citizens around issues of peacebuilding, human rights and economic development, Community Building Mitrovica builds links of trust and contributes to advancing a pluralist society.
- **Mr. Lenin Raghuvanshi (India)** is a human rights defender working to advance the rights of India's most marginalized communities. He is co-founder of the [People's Vigilance Committee on Human Rights](#), an inclusive social movement that challenges the patriarchy and the caste system. Mr. Raghuvanshi works at the village level across 5 states in northern India to strengthen local institutions, promote human rights and to build connections across the society.
- **Ms. Rose LeMay (Canada)** is an educator from the Taku River Tlingit First Nation and the CEO and founder of [Indigenous Reconciliation Group](#). Through her organization, Ms. LeMay works to change the mindsets of non-Indigenous Canadians, encouraging them to take the first steps towards reconciliation. Ms. LeMay has spent her career advocating for Indigenous inclusion and has educated and coached thousands of Canadians on cultural competence and anti-racism.
- **Mr. Trésor Nzengu Mpauni (Malawi)**, also known as Menes la Plume, is a Congolese hip-hop artist and slam poet living in Dzaleka Refugee Camp, who uses his talents to raise awareness on issues surrounding refugees. Mr. Mpauni is the founder of [Tumaini Festival](#), the only international arts and music festival based at a refugee camp, promoting intercultural harmony and greater understanding of the refugee experience. Since 2014, he has attracted hundreds of performers and thousands of attendees from around the world to what is today one of Malawi's premier festivals.

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About the Global Centre for Pluralism

The Global Centre for Pluralism is an independent, charitable organization founded by His Highness the Aga Khan and the Government of Canada. The Centre works with policy leaders, educators and community builders around the world to amplify and implement the transformative power of pluralism. For more information, visit www.pluralism.ca

About the Global Pluralism Award

The Global Pluralism Award recognizes pluralism in action. It celebrates the extraordinary achievements of organizations, individuals and governments who are tackling the challenge of living peacefully and productively with diversity. For more information, visit <https://award.pluralism.ca/>