



The Care Leaders Council is a global group of care experienced advocates from across the world championing the rights of care-experienced people as well as children without parental care. The council does this through research, training, policy advocacy, and socio-economic empowerment of care leavers.

The Council works in partnership with a diverse range of stakeholders, including institutional donors, civil society organisations, and care-experienced networks around the world to be champions of alternative family-based care.



## GRACE NJERI

**KENYA**

Grace Njeri is a remarkable child protection practitioner and human rights advocate, particularly focused on the well-being of children and young people in Kenya. With a background in Sociology, she has significantly contributed to shaping Kenya's National Care Reform Strategy through her involvement with the Kenya Society of Care Leavers. Grace's influence extends globally, as evidenced by her role in co-crafting a strategy for involving individuals with lived experiences in the "Changing The Way We Care" project and co-authoring a pivotal research paper by CAFO on care reforms in the Global South. Her leadership roles in the Global Care Leaders Council and active participation in the Kenya Society of Care Leavers underscore her commitment and expertise in care reform.

Grace envisions an ideal world where future generations live free from violence.



## MAICOL LONDOÑO

**COLOMBIA**

Maicol Londoño has a degree in Philosophy and Religious Sciences, with certification in youth leadership and educational methodologies from the Ministry of Israel Mashav and others. He holds a diploma in political campaign management and development. His personal experience of transitioning from State care allows him to understand and address the challenges faced by young people in their transition back to the community and to adulthood, dedicating himself to giving them a voice and visibility. As a founding member and director of the first association of care leavers in his country (ASCEP) and in Latin America, Maicol has led and implemented social projects for children and young people transitioning from state care and protection. His leadership extends to platforms such as the Care Leaders Council and YouthLead, where he promotes the exchange of ideas and collaboration. He is a recipient of the Civic Award for a Better City and has represented youth at various international forums, including the United Nations Forum on Global Statistics in Dubai and the High Policy Impact Forum in New York.

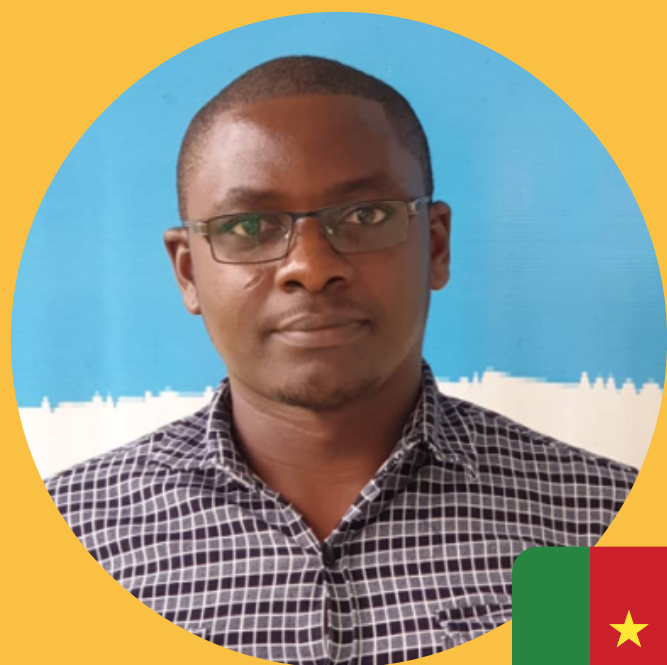


## NEELAM UDAYAN

**INDIA**

Neelam has over two years of work experience in the non-profit sector and earned a Bachelor of Computer Application degree. She has also worked with IBM India for over five years. Neelam grew up in a non-profit orphanage (Udayan Care) where circumstances and surroundings accustomed her to adult and youth rights, education, and women empowerment. Neelam has also completed her MSc in IT with management from the University of St Andrews, Scotland on a full scholarship and worked in London in a Tech startup. Now she is back in India and working with Genpact as a Salesforce Assistant Manager. Neelam is one of the founding members of the Care Leaver Association Network (CLAN), a group of vulnerable youths abandoned by their residential organization on reaching the age of 18 with no extended support. She is also a Care Leaver, and after dealing with her distressing circumstances, she decided to establish CLAN and pull other care leavers from vulnerability. Neelam has helped Care Leavers get their government IDs created and instigated the awareness of their fundamental rights. This momentum has led thousands of CLAN members to sign a petition to gain support. It has motivated Udayan Care, UNICEF, Care Leavers Worldwide, and India's Woman & Child Welfare Committee to organize the International Care Convention to hear from youth such as Neelam.

She has assembled documents that would instill financial literacy and educational guidance to residential care children, nurturing, and strengthening their transition to an independent life. She has extended a strong commitment to Child Right and You (CRY) to instill holistic development and empower disadvantaged children in rural areas with limited to no educational access. Neelam has leveraged her technical skills to enable the VigyanShaala International-Kalpna program (promoting STEM education amongst young women) participants to get accustomed to the virtual platform.



## MBANGOWA ELVIS NGWA

**CAMEROON**

Mbangowah Elvis is a passionate social worker, with extensive experience in Child Protection and development. He holds a Masters Degree in Human Rights and Humanitarian Action and has been supporting the Child Protection Departments of various International NGOs and Faith-based Organizations in Cameroon and abroad. Elvis is the Founder of 'Stars From Scars Network' which is actively involved in advocating for Care Leavers and Care Reform in Cameroon. He passionately mobilizes Children and Youths with lived care experience organizing training sessions on life skills and mentoring them especially during their transition from Care Institutions.

Elvis is the founding President of Stars From Scars Africa, a non-profit that prioritizes the protection of street children and other vulnerable children and also supports humanitarian response in conflict-affected regions in Cameroon.



## RUTH WACUKA

**KENYA**

Ruth Wacuka is a child and youth rights advocate whose life experiences have profoundly shaped her professional career as a speaker, changemaker, and advocate. Trained in journalism and communications, Ruth uses her expertise to challenge systems affecting children and youth with care experiences. Ruth is dedicated to ensuring that the lived experiences of children and young people in care are not only heard but also integrated into policy and programming decisions. She is a founding member and the current Director of the Association for Care Leavers Networks in Africa, a pan-African, youth-led organization that unites care-experienced youth across the continent for a unified voice and action. She has served in various capacities, supporting governments, NGOs, and donors in advancing the rights of children and young people with care experiences through care reforms in Kenya and globally. Ruth is also passionate about redirecting voluntourism towards community and family-based initiatives. Ruth's advocacy extends to issues of identity, culture, and justice, particularly for young people. As a recognized speaker in international forums, she has championed the work of care-experienced youth on the global stage, while always remaining proud to call Kenya home.

Ruth is committed to seeing care leavers supported and recognized as equal stakeholders. She believes that care leavers are not just recipients of decisions but have valuable solutions if given the right support. Passionate about challenging the traditional narratives that view care leavers as charity cases, Ruth emphasizes their success and resilience, advocating for a shift in perception to one that celebrates their achievements and potential. Cognizant of the role care leavers Networks play in transforming systems of care, as a member of the Care Leaders Council, she seeks to rally support and investment for care leavers Networks in Africa and globally.



## ATHENKOSI FANI

**SOUTH AFRICA**

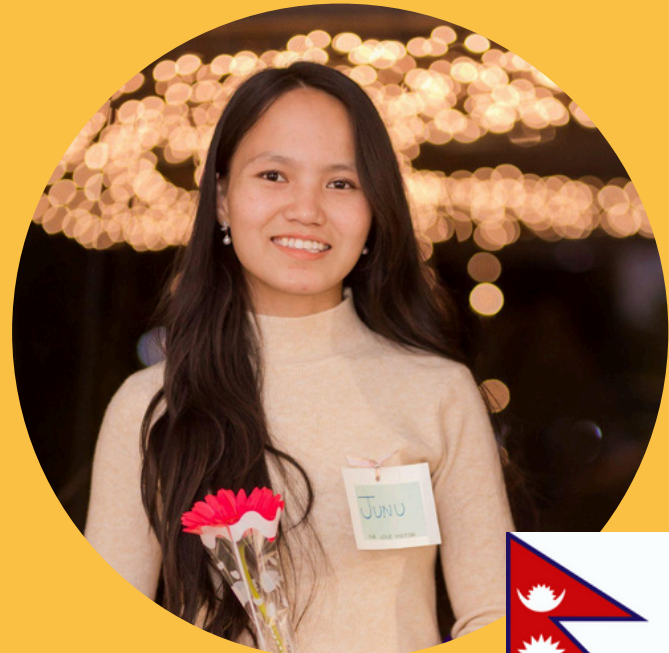
In the bustling landscape of LGBTQI activism, Athenkosi Fani emerges as a compelling force for change, transcending his humble beginnings in Reeston. Because of his background which was detrimental to him he went on to stay in several orphanage homes in the Eastern Cape. His journey unfolds as a testament to resilience and an unwavering commitment to fostering more representation and inclusion in society.

In 2020, he carved a path as a trailblazer, founding the Boniswa LGBTQI Foundation. The LGBTQIRISE campaign, a brainchild of Fani, not only challenged stereotypes but also became a powerful vehicle for combating homophobia and empowering the LGBTQI community. Walter Sisulu University recognised his impact by appointing him as the first-ever Ambassador in 2020.

In 2021, Fani faced challenges head-on, leading a successful campaign against financial exclusion and making history as the first independent candidate for the Student Representative Council at Walter Sisulu University. His achievements were not confined to accolades; he earned recognition as the 2021 Eastern Cape Youth award winner and found his place among the Gender-based Violence Champions at the university in 2022.

Looking ahead, Fani's journey continues with a vision to collaborate with the transformation office at the University of Johannesburg. His aim is to contribute to the sensitisation of LGBTQI members, emphasizing his commitment to fostering inclusivity within academic institutions and the overall student environment.

Athenkosi Fani's story is not just a narrative of triumph over challenges; it is an unfolding saga of leadership, resilience, and an unyielding pursuit of positive change. As a distinguished figure in the Top 100 Shining Stars of 2023, his multifaceted contributions resonate as a beacon of hope for a more inclusive and understanding society.



## JUNU LAMA

NEPAL

Junu lama is a care-experienced young activist from Nepal and a student of business studies. Being in institutional care for a long period she is highly motivated to advocate for the rights of care experienced, and be the voice of unheard and vulnerable ones, she is determined to bring change and awareness in the community and most importantly raise issues of care for experienced children and youth. On 18 November 2020, she along with other care experienced young people from Nepal formed a network SHINE TOGETHER-Care Experienced Network Nepal. This initiative aims to build a supportive and safe space where young care experienced people can connect, share their stories, and work towards independence and empowerment. Junu has been actively working as a youth advocate, drawing from her own experiences in institutional care. Junu is particularly focused on advocating for the after care services and the rights of those still in care, stressing the significance of identity for care-experienced young adults in Nepal. Junu is dedicated to changing perceptions and creating a safer, more inclusive environment for care-experienced youth. Her passion for amplifying unheard voices and driving social change reflects her resilience and commitment to making a positive impact. Through her personal story and experiences, she aims to change people's perspectives and attitudes. Junu expresses her emotions through poetry, using her writings to raise awareness and advocate for change.

She has over four years of experience with The Himalayan Innovative Society, where she has dedicated her efforts to this important cause. She is also one of the general members of Rotaract Club of Charumati, Youth organization.



## JASON MWANZA

ZAMBIA

Jason Mwanza, a prominent youth activist in Zambia, has a compelling personal story that drives his passion for advocacy. Having lived in an orphanage for four years, Jason experienced firsthand the challenges faced by young people in care. This background instilled in him a deep commitment to improving the lives of care-experienced youths in Zambia. As a Child Ambassador trained by the Media Network on Child's Rights and Development (MNCRD), Jason has dedicated himself to advocating for the rights and welfare of children. His training equipped him with valuable skills to raise awareness about critical issues affecting youth, including education, health, and social inclusion. Jason is also an active political and good governance advocate. He believes in the importance of engaging youth in the political process and promoting transparency and accountability within government. Through various initiatives, he encourages young people to take an active role in shaping their communities and holding leaders accountable.

Currently, Jason serves as the president of Zambia's first Care Leavers Association. This organization aims to support young people who have aged out of the alternative care system, providing them with necessary resources, mentorship, and a sense of community. Jason Mwanza's unwavering dedication to advocating for care-experienced youths has made a significant impact in Zambia. His work continues to inspire many, as he strives to create a better future for those who have faced similar challenges. Through his leadership, Jason aims to ensure that every care-experienced youth has the opportunity to thrive and succeed.



## KYRYLO NEVDOKHA

UKRAINE

Kyrylo Nevdokha spent 16 years in institutional care facilities and is now actively advocating for child protection reforms and family support to ensure that every child grows up in love and a family environment.

He graduated with honors in Social Welfare and coordinates social-educational projects. He leads the Children and Youth Office «DlyMO» at the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, where he unites children and youth to protect every child's right to family-based upbringing.

Ambassador of One Young World. In 2024, he was named to Forbes Ukraine's «30 Under 30» list for his remarkable achievements and impact in the social sector.



## AIYENURO MOSES

**NIGERIA**

As the CEO of Blueroomcare, Moses is passionate about advocating for care leavers and ensuring they have the support needed for a successful transition to independent living. With extensive experience in the healthcare and social services sectors, he has a strong focus on innovative solutions that empower young people transitioning from care. The team at Blueroomcare has implemented programs specifically designed to address the unique challenges faced by care leavers, promoting independence, mental health, and community integration. Moses is passionate about advocating for systemic change and fostering partnerships that create a brighter future for these individuals.

In addition to his leadership role, Moses actively engages with care leaver networks in his region and collaborates with local organizations to amplify their voices and address the unique challenges they face. Through his work with SOS Children's Villages and the Care Leavers Council, he strives to influence policies that create sustainable pathways for care leavers to thrive in their communities.



## NIMMU NIMALI KUMARI

**SRI LANKA**

Nimmu (Nimali) is a care leaver from Sri Lanka. Her journey has been marked by numerous challenges having grown up in the juvenile justice system and spending time in institutional care. Despite these hardships, she has shown resilience and a determination to create a better future for herself and others in similar situations. Her journey has been one of triumph over adversity. She successfully completed her examination and had the opportunity to pursue a degree in Journalism in India, thanks to the support of the Sarvodaya home. After returning to Sri Lanka with a degree and fluency in Hindi, she now work as an Alternative Family & Foster Care - Project Coordinator for Their Future Today foundation, UK & SL. She is also actively involved in advocating for the rights of care leavers through the Asian Very First Care Leavers Network in Sri Lanka.

Despite her achievements, she still faces significant challenges. Many care leavers in Sri Lanka lack support and guidance once they turn 18, leading to various issues and hardships. She is determined to change this by providing a support network for these young individuals, ensuring they have the resources and opportunities they need to thrive. Nimmu recently received the Change Makers youth in Sri Lanka - Shine 50 Award organised by USAID , Echelon and Neon Media.



## LE HOANG PHONG

**VIETNAM**

Le Hoang Phong is a devoted Care Leaver Advocate with over 30 years of lived experience at SOS Children's Villages Vietnam, starting in 1992. With a background in International Studies and a teaching degree from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Phong applies his understanding of sustainable development and political sciences to his community work. As the Founder and Director of Program of YOUREORG Social Enterprise, he is driven by a deep belief in the power of education to transform lives, especially through grassroots initiatives. Throughout his journey, Phong has been privileged to contribute to several international platforms, serving as a Policy Scholar at the European Forum Alpbach (2019), a Future Leaders Connect Scholar with the British Council and University of Cambridge (2021), a YSEALI Professional Fellow with the U.S. Department of State (2022), and a School Princial scholar from Teach For All (2024). His work with the International Care Leaver Community reflects his ongoing commitment to improving the lives of Care Leavers around the world. In 2020, Phong played a key role in organizing the 1st Care Leavers Convention, "Nothing About Us Without Us," which brought together 2,300 participants from 83 countries.

In 2024, Phong's organization was honored with the Best School with Online Education award from the World School Summit and the Best Social Project towards Education award from the Asia Education Conclave. These achievements reflect his deep commitment to advancing education and making a meaningful impact in the lives of marginalized students, ensuring they have access to quality learning opportunities.



## SREYNEE CHHENG

**CAMBODIA**

Sreynee Chheng is a social senior worker and counselor at the Women’s Resources Center Organization. Her experience and background is strongly interactive for youths and guardians since 2017 with diverse groups of institutions. She has provided counseling support and has empowered Cambodian women through emotional aid, referral services, and informal education.

In order to reinforce her potential and commitment, she has actively attended Case Management and Reintegration Children to Communities, Exploitation Communities, Basics of Social Worker, and Child Sexual Abuse trainings with the Ministry of Social Affairs, Action Pour Les Enfants (APLE), and First Step Cambodia.



## TATIANA LUSTIG DA SILVA

**ARGENTINA**

Social Work student at the University of Buenos Aires. Since 2014 she has been a member of the Guía Egreso collective (the first youth participation group of alternative care graduates in Latin America) working in the area of advocacy, planning and program execution. Coordinator of the Youth Committee of the Latin American Network of Protection Graduates (2022-2024), by election of her peers, a space in which she has participated since its creation in 2017. She is a graduate of the alternative care system in Argentina. She actively participated in the enactment of national law 27,364 that creates the Accompaniment Program for the Discharge of young people without parental care sanctioned in 2018, through presentations in the Congress of the Argentine Nation and in the media. He was a representative on the Youth Council of the Ombudsman's Office of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires in 2019.

She contributed to various research projects, including the First Regional Mapping: Activism of Protection Graduates in Latin America and the Caribbean (2022), "Alone against the outside" (2018) and "Building autonomy" (2015) together with Doncel, and various organizations such as FLACSO and UNICEF. She participated as a speaker in various national and international events, including: Regional Consultation on Youth, Peace and Security - UN - Panama 2017, III Congress of the Latin American Network of Protection Graduates - Cochabamba 2017, UNFPA Central America Webinar "Youth Commitment for Global Action" 2020, International Alumni Convention - India 2020.



## YOUSSEF FADLALLAH

**EGYPT**

Youssef Fadlallah is a passionate advocate for children and youth rights, with a special focus on individuals with care experiences in Egypt. Fadlallah is a graduating senior majoring in mechanical engineering and minoring in Community Development and organizing. He has co-founded the Gosoor Organization, which empowers youth without parental care in Egypt. Fadlallah has dedicated his career to ensuring that the voices and experiences of care-experienced youth are integrated into policy reforms and social programs. With a background in leadership experience and community organizing across multiple organizations, Fadlallah champions the rights of care-experienced individuals on both regional and global stages. Through work with governments, NGOs, and donors, he actively contributes to reform efforts to improve care systems and ensure that youth without parental care receive the support they need to succeed. A firm believer in the resilience and potential of care-experienced youth, He advocates for shifting societal perceptions from viewing these individuals as charity cases to recognizing them as valuable contributors with innovative solutions.

As a leader in the Gosoor Organization, Fadlallah collaborates with stakeholders to provide resources, mentorship, and opportunities for care leavers, pushing for long-term systemic changes. Committed to fostering community-based initiatives, [Your Name] works to raise awareness and secure investments for care leavers' networks in Egypt emphasizing the importance of recognizing care leavers as equal stakeholders in decision-making processes. Through Fadlallah's advocacy, they continue to drive change for the next generation of care-experienced youth amplifying the voices of care leavers, ensuring their voices are heard and their contributions valued.