



# Newsletter

FALL 2024



## Class of 2024 At A Glance

50 female scholars  
52 male scholars

52 from East Africa  
42 from West Africa  
5 from Central and  
Southern Africa

1 from the Middle East  
2 from Asia

71% in the medical field

## Welcoming the WMI Class of 2024

WMI is delighted to welcome 102 Student Scholars from 18 countries to the "family" in 2024! We received over 1600 qualified applications, and thanks to the incredible effort of our 155 volunteers, we were able to evaluate each one, through four rounds of interviews, to select this outstanding group of individuals.

WMI has now served student scholars and graduate scholars from 55 low-income countries, with 334 currently studying in their home countries and 472 graduate scholars who have completed their bachelor's degree. Thanks to the comprehensive support WMI offers these scholars, and thanks to people like you, they are well positioned to become the leaders, changemakers, and entrepreneurs their countries need.

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# A Warm Welcome from our Executive Director

Happy fall! In this season of gratitude, I wanted to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for *you*, our faithful supporters, and everything that you do to make the work of WMI and the amazing scholars that we serve possible. As you will see in the pages to follow, it has been a busy season at WMI, growing and refining the ways in which we continue to meet the needs of our 806 scholars, the changemakers of tomorrow. You will read about the upcoming Scholar Ambassador visit, the Online Academy, and the impact of WMI's Community Development Grants (CDG) program on marginalized communities worldwide. I hope these highlights will serve as a reminder to you of why WMI's work is critical in the world today, and of the deep appreciation that our scholars feel for your support, today and every day.



Lisa Meadowcroft  
Executive Director, WMI



## Featured Graduate Scholar

CALEB  
MUKHWANA,  
KENYA

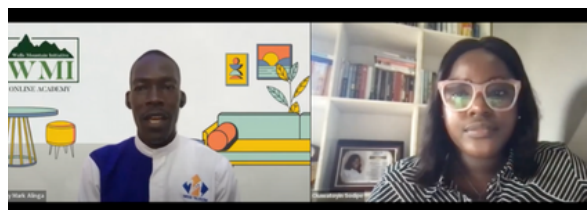
“I wanted to express my deepest gratitude for the unwavering support WMI provided me through my university journey. Thanks to your generosity and belief in my potential, I successfully completed my studies in July 2024.

As I join the WMI Graduate Scholars Community, I am thrilled to share that I recently accepted an offer to serve as the Head of Growth and Partnerships at Lapid Leaders Africa in Nairobi. Here, we are all about empowering the next generation of African leaders. **This achievement would not have been possible without the critical financial assistance and encouragement the WMI family extended to me.**

Your impact on my life has been profound, and I will forever remain grateful. I am eager to give back and contribute positively to the community, just as WMI has done for me.”

## Online Academy

Launched in 2020, The WMI Academy is an opportunity for recent graduates to participate in an intensive professional development program, further preparing them to launch their own businesses and community-based organizations.



Running from September through December, this year's Academy boasts 45 registrants and twelve accomplished presenters from four different countries. Courses will include Market Research, Financial Management, SWOT Analysis, Monitoring and Evaluation, and more.

The Academy culminates in a pitch competition with cash awards to support the implementation of the top three community-based projects.

Past winning initiatives include sustainable agriculture and increased food security, peacebuilding research and advocacy, and improved medical interventions.





Jeremiah Thoronka



Joyce Shikuku



Mala Deep

# Scholar Ambassador Visit

OCTOBER 11-20, 2024

Each October, WMI invites just a few of its most prodigious scholars to visit the United States, as a celebration of their accomplishments as well as an opportunity for WMI supporters to connect with them.

This year we are proud to welcome three pioneering WMI Graduate Scholars who are leading local and global change in their fields of clean energy, women's equity and empowerment, and technology for social good.

**Don't miss your opportunity to meet our scholars virtually!**

**Wednesday, October 16th  
6 - 7 PM EST via Zoom**

**REGISTER  
HERE:**  
[rb.gy/vc1m19](https://rb.gy/vc1m19)



## Meet our Scholar Ambassadors

**JEREMIAH THORONKA** - A native of Sierra Leone, Jeremiah began his life as a refugee in the midst of civil war, an experience that left an indelible mark on his life and later motivated his passion for clean energy. He is especially focused on the intersection of energy conservation and innovation that can leverage local socio-cultural insights, enabling communities to fully realize the social value of accessible renewable energy. Jeremiah was named to Forbes Africa's 30 under 30 this year, and was honored as a Mandela Washington Fellow in 2023.

**JOYCE SHIKUKU** - Joyce is a Social Scientist with over a decade of experience in project management and Social Behavioral Research. A native of Kenya, Joyce is passionate about utilizing research-backed data to advance policy reform for women and girls in Africa. She founded a community-based organization dedicated to empowering underprivileged adolescent girls and young women in remote parts of Kenya. Through strategic partnerships, she has empowered over 250 girls in menstrual health management, life skills, and the creation of reusable sanitary towels.

**MALA DEEP** - A native of Nepal, Mala is a Data Scientist and Founder of Dataksha Analytics who is passionate about harnessing data and digital technology for the betterment of society. His research focuses on integrating methodologies from data visualization, human-computer interactions, machine learning, visual analytics, and data mining to address pressing global issues. His goal is to make complex systems more accessible for organizations, particularly those serving marginalized communities.

# Scholar Highlight Seed Grant

Victor Lee is a WMI Graduate Scholar from South Sudan who completed his degree in Public Health in 2024. A South Sudanese refugee living in Uganda, he has firsthand experience of the myriad challenges that individuals and families face while living in refugee camps.



Because of extremely volatile conditions in South Sudan, Uganda currently hosts nearly 1,000,000 refugees from South Sudan, over 75,000 of whom live in the Kiryandongo Settlement Camp. With provision support decreasing dramatically for that camp over the past 5 years, life for the families and children that live there has become more and more fraught with hunger, lack of educational opportunities, sickness, and death.

With a Seed Grant from WMI, Victor was able to found the Lift Up Community Initiative to empower South Sudanese youth and single mothers in the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement Camp with vocational training in book making and entrepreneurship. Upon completion, participants will receive startup materials for making and selling the books that they create.



## NEW INITIATIVE: Scholar of the Month

This July WMI began a new initiative that allows scholars to celebrate their fellow peers who exemplify strong academics, community service, and leadership. Through the Scholar of the Month program, scholars nominate fellow scholars who receive official certificates and accolades via social media.

We are excited to see how this program will increase camaraderie and achievement within our Scholar circle!



## Community Service Highlight

ANNE ISHIMWE, RWANDA  
GRADUATE SCHOLAR, ON HER  
EXPERIENCE VOLUNTEERING IN  
A COMMUNITY GARDEN

“As the trees took root and the garden began to flourish, the transformation of the space was remarkable. The once barren area now bore the promise of a greener, more vibrant future. The community rejoiced, and the sense of accomplishment was palpable.

This experience taught me the power of collaboration and how a collective effort can rejuvenate and transform a community. It reiterated the significance of preserving our environment and fostering a sense of belonging and pride within a community.”