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December 23rd, 2020

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BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE ALUMNI

Inspire. Empower. Connect.

Dear Friends of #ExchangeAlumni,

Welcome to our Exchange Alumni Newsletter! We continue to develop and grow our programming as we expand our virtual workspace, and we have several updates and alumni highlights to share with you. If you have questions or content to add, reach out to Emily Rand at RandEF@state.gov. To add someone to this newsletter, email us at ECA_P_A_Outreach@state.gov

Happy Holidays!

The Alumni Affairs team wishes you a wonderful, relaxing holiday and happy New Year. This year was an exciting year on many fronts, with many first-ever experiences and successes. We're excited for what 2021 has in store!

Ugly Food and Data-Driven Strategies

How did a beginner blogger turn “uncelebrated food” into a recipe for success? Ranía Renno, author of *Hungrily Homemade*, offered insight into this culinary journey on our most recent [MentorTalks episode](#) December 15th.

We discussed Ranía’s career as an entrepreneur as well as her experience in digital marketing and data-driven strategy. In this episode, Ranía offered

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And, tune in for our next MentorTalks episode on **Thursday, January 28th at 1pm ET** to hear from a Fulbright specialist and Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) Program specialist about how to set up and run a successful non-profit organization!

Alumni TIES TechCamp Reconnect Session



Advancing Digital Citizenship through Media Literacy

We are so excited to host a TechCamp Reconnect session at this spring's Alumni TIES **March 15-26, 2021!** At this virtual seminar, a select group of Alumni TIES participants will have an opportunity to connect and network with international exchange and TechCamp alumni; receive training and mentorship on skills and tools fundamental to media literacy education; and increase their knowledge of media literacy and countering disinformation. Additionally, participants will have the chance to apply for small grants that support innovative strategies to promote and strengthen media literacy.

The deadline for eligible alumni to apply for the session has been extended to **December 27th, 2020.**

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Take a trip down memory lane with highlight videos of some of the participants of the "Arts, Culture, and Transforming Conflict" Alumni TIES that was held in Santa Fe, New Mexico in December 2019.

[Access The Alumni Videos Here](#)

When a Crisis Hits, Exchange Alumni Rise and Respond



U.S. and foreign exchange program alumni have been harnessing their international exchange experiences to give back to their local communities for decades. This year is no exception, as alumni have delivered on many fronts, coming up with innovative solutions to pandemic-related public health and economic challenges.

Published on the U.S. Department of State's DipNote blog, this story showcases the collective efforts of alumni and how they have stepped up to meet the most urgent needs in their local communities.

[Find the Story Here](#)

Recent Alumni Highlights

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Seeking to promote social sustainability in Greece and across the world, Melina Taprantzi's non-profit is seeding the future of food while giving back to local communities. Learn how the exchange alumna is giving back here.



Thanks to exchange alumni, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has made a difference around the world. Find out how exchange alumni have had an impact on the lives of those with disabilities.



Recognizing the need for improved access to information amidst the coronavirus pandemic, YTILI alumna Kateřina Vacková has brought together Czech medical professionals to disseminate critical information.



In Poland, a game called Democracy Cake has provided young children an interactive opportunity to delve into values and ideas that make up the core of democracy. Through a series of interactive games and sessions, children gradually unveil the core values that make up our democracy.

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How did “ugly” foods lead to culinary success? Join the convo on [#MentorTalks](#) with Rania Renno on Dec. 15@1:00 PM ET! Rania will share how her international exchange experiences & intl background lead to an unexpected brand. <http://ow.ly/UNSB50CJq6n>



"Congratulations to our 2020 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund ([#AEIF](#)) winners! Out of 300 applications, 80 winning teams were chosen to represent 67 countries. This year marks the [U.S. Department of State's](#) 10th annual AEIF competition.

LinkedIn

We are so excited to have hit 2,000 followers on LinkedIn! Our page is a great way for alumni to learn about upcoming opportunities and connect with one another. We can be found at [#ExchangeAlumni - Alumni Affairs](#).

Alumni Resources

International Exchange Alumni Website ([link](#))

Alumni Thematic International Exchange Seminars ([link](#))

Citizen Action Diplomacy Fund ([link](#))

Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund ([link](#))

Alumni Archive ([link](#))

U.S. Citizen Alumni Newsletters ([link](#))

International Alumni Newsletters ([link](#))



Many alumni are creating positive health, educational, and social impacts in their local communities using the diverse experience and skill sets gained through exchange programs. Their courage, ingenuity, and kindness are the threads that we, the Office of Alumni Affairs within the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), pull together to build a stronger alumni network.

But, we need your help. We know alumni are often working across cultures, classrooms, and communities to ensure people are staying strong, safe, and healthy. Encourage the alumni you work with to tag us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) with [#ExchangeAlumni](#) to share out their stories of a brighter and healthier future! If you have an alumna/alumnus you would like us to interview for a story or pitch for a possible guest, let us know at ECA_P_A_Outreach@state.gov.

We also encourage alumni to follow our new LinkedIn page, [#ExchangeAlumni - Alumni Affairs](#) to learn more about upcoming networking events, job opportunities, career advice, and more. They can add in a section on their exchange program experience on their work profile to find out who they might know, and to connect with an alumnus who might spark their next big project or idea.

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