



WORLD EDUCATION SERVICES

World Education Services | Annual Letter 2017

**Global Mobility
Academic Recognition
Workforce Integration**

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Our Mission

WES advances the global mobility and integration of people into academic and professional settings by evaluating and advocating for the recognition of international educational qualifications, and enabling individuals to fully utilize their education.

Our Vision

WES believes in a future where barriers to the understanding or acceptance of academic qualifications no longer exist.





Founded in 1974, **World Education Services** Inc. is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping people with international education to achieve their higher education and professional goals.

Top 6 Countries of Education for U.S. and Canada Applicants in 2017

UNITED STATES



China
38%



India
34%



Nigeria
10%



United Kingdom
7%



Philippines
6%



Canada
5%

CANADA



India
68%



Nigeria
9%



Philippines
8%



United Kingdom
6%



United States
5%



China
4%



June Noronha

Chair, WES Board of Trustees

For over 40 years, World Education Services (WES) has been dedicated to helping international students and professionals in the United States and Canada achieve their educational and professional goals.

WES has set the standard of excellence in the field of international mobility with credential evaluation services reaching almost two million people over the course of its history. It also provides critical knowledge, research, training, resources, and tools designed to ensure the successful integration of immigrant professionals.

This letter will describe our thrust and work in 2017—a pivotal year due to changes in the global geopolitical landscape in which we operate, as well as in the aspirations of international students and immigrants hoping to advance their studies and careers in North America. Our work shifted in response. More and more of those we traditionally serve began to look to Canada as a promising country in which to forge new lives, even as recent political events in the U.S. began to have a chilling effect on the inbound flow of international

students, scholars, and skilled immigrants. With operations in both countries, WES seized the opportunity and responsibility to adapt our services and products. We sought to enhance our efforts to make newcomers to both countries feel welcome and to give them the tools they need to thrive.

Among the many initiatives that WES undertook over the course of the year, I am particularly proud of our work to help Syrian refugees in Canada reestablish their professional qualifications. I am proud, as well, of the WES Board's decision to create a USD\$30 million WES Fund—a philanthropic initiative. Philanthropy is a new field for WES and one that we anticipate will allow us to pursue our mission at a larger and more catalytic and impactful scale. The Fund, which will fund innovative efforts to accelerate the professional integration of refugees and skilled immigrants, will begin operations in 2019.

The work that WES does would only be possible because of the tireless efforts of its talented staff and its dedicated partner organizations. The board is grateful to both.

In times like this, we who support the global flow of peoples—and who fully recognize their many contributions to the countries they migrate to—appreciate and are proud that WES is thriving and strong. Now more than ever, we will live our mission, create innovative solutions, share our knowledge, and seek to further the educational and professional aspirations of those we serve, both in Canada and in the United States.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "June Noronha". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J".

June Noronha
Chair, WES Board of Trustees



1.08 million

Estimated number of international students hosted by U.S. colleges and universities in 2016/17



Estimated number of international students who held study permits to pursue higher education in Canada at the start of 2017

5 million



Estimated number of higher education students who sought education outside their home countries in 2017



1.9 million

Estimated number of skilled immigrants in the U.S. either unemployed or underemployed

Source: Institute of International Education, CIC News, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Migration Policy Institute

World Education Services helps international students and professionals achieve their goals in the United States and Canada.

This work starts simply with evaluations of international educational credentials. In 2017, we received applications for evaluations from almost 300,000 individuals from across the globe. These applicants come from everywhere: Brazil, China, Colombia, India, Iran, Iraq, Kenya, Nigeria, Nepal, Mexico, Pakistan, South Korea, Syria, Turkey, Venezuela, Vietnam, and dozens of other countries.



We also pushed forward with efforts to empower skilled immigrants and international students in other ways. These 2017 initiatives were wide-ranging:

- We worked to reconstruct the academic histories of 337 Syrian refugees so that they could move forward with new lives in Canada.
- We identified and began a pilot program to provide eight cities and states in the U.S. with technical assistance to support their efforts in helping skilled immigrants integrate into the workforce.
- We launched an innovative effort to provide WES customers with blockchain-based digital badges so they can easily and transparently communicate their accomplishments to employers.
- We worked with our board to plan the launch of a USD\$30 million WES Fund, a philanthropic initiative designed to support bold, transformative efforts to help skilled immigrants integrate into the workforce.
- We sought to identify emerging leaders in Canada's settlement sector and support their professional development through scholarships and other skill-building efforts.
- We provided international students and skilled immigrants, in Canada and the U.S., with resources, training,

and mentorship to take the next steps in their academic and professional journeys.

- We conducted and published research to better understand the experiences of internationally mobile individuals, and to recommend practical strategies to improve their experiences and outcomes.

The year 2017 was difficult for those of us seeking to break down barriers to global mobility among immigrants and students. I am grateful that WES is in a position to help the skilled individuals we serve to pursue their dreams in North America.

I am even more grateful that we are able to partner with so many other organizations and individuals—in higher education, local and regional governments, and in the employment sector, as well as at other nonprofits, policy organizations, and NGOs—who remain deeply committed to the core values of internationalization.

Sincerely,

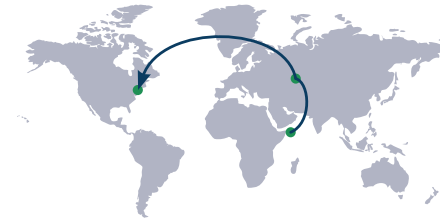
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mariam Assefa'.

Mariam Assefa
Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer
World Education Services



Kunle Ifesanya, PhD, PMP

Construction Manager and
Urban Development Specialist



 Home Country:
Nigeria

 Countries of Education:
Nigeria and Germany

 Now Working In:
New York, NY

“ If I hadn’t gotten my degrees evaluated by WES at that time, I would not have made it to the interview stage in my job search. ”

I’ve always loved the environment. I like beautiful, natural scenery, and I’ve also seen man-made structures that are really exciting and fit into the environment seamlessly. I decided that this is what I want: to create a beautiful environment and make people happy.

I earned my degrees in three colleges in two different countries and on two different continents, but employers wanted me to have American experience. In the United States, having American work experience seemed to be the most important thing in the hiring process. I came in as an immigrant. I had many years of work experience, but I had zero work experience in the U.S. It was a challenge and an uphill battle to get my foot in the door when I first arrived.

I knew that if I wanted to get into any professional environment, I needed to prove that I was capable of delivering and that the degrees I have are equivalent to degrees in the U.S. I found WES online and decided to get all my

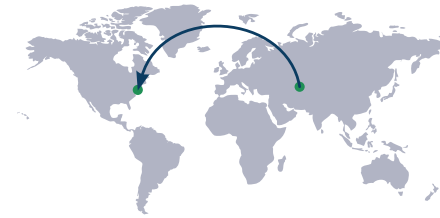
degrees evaluated. It was really beautiful when the evaluation results showed I had the equivalent of an earned doctoral degree in the United States. If I hadn’t gotten my degrees evaluated by WES at that time, I would not have made it to the interview stage in my job search.

I also attended a seminar hosted by WES Global Talent Bridge a few years ago. The presenters provided valuable insights into the basics of writing American-style résumés and the importance of networking, which may seem insignificant, but really helped me to rejig my strategy. I am now working in my field of architecture and urban development. It’s a big accomplishment and a testimony to the openness of the American society. I don’t know of many countries you can go and be able to fit in that smoothly.




Gauthami Vijayakumar

Instructional Designer



 Home Country:
India

 Country of Education:
India

 Now Working In:
Newark, NJ

“ The process was really smooth for me, and I was so happy with the results because it meant I could apply for graduate programs that I wanted. ”

I studied electronic media at a private university in India. During my studies, I did an internship at the Discovery Channel in India. During my internship I had to interact with a lot of professors in the U.S., and that’s how I came upon master’s degrees in instructional design.

In India, only medicine or engineering are four-year degrees. You assume that if you have a three-year degree, studying in the United Kingdom or Australia is your only option. It’s almost a given that you can’t go to the U.S. with a three-year degree for a master’s program unless you do a fourth year in India. I actually did submit an application to a U.K. school, but I changed my mind. My heart was set on getting a degree from a program in the U.S. I was convinced that the programs in the U.S. were right for me.

I wrote to admissions officers from schools in the U.S. that I wanted to attend. I told them I had a three-year degree, had done a few internships, and taken extra courses. I wanted to know if they would consider my application.

The director of graduate admissions at New York University strongly recommended that I have my credentials evaluated by WES. I received my credential evaluation in 2009. The process was really smooth for me, and I was so happy with the result because it meant I could apply for graduate programs that I wanted to attend. I started my master’s program in instructional design at NYU in the fall of 2010, and now I work as an instructional designer for Audible Inc.



1 million

Nearly one million new immigrants will settle in Canada between 2018 and 2020, according to 2017 estimates released by the national government.

Over the past five years, WES has been one of the credential assessment services designated by the Government of Canada to provide assessments for those wishing to apply to come to Canada as skilled immigrants. During this time we have assessed the credentials of more than 500,000 men and women.

This figure represents an enormous increase in the number of people who enter Canada already knowing the value of their educational credentials in terms of how they equate to Canadian standards.

WES is proud of the opportunity to do that work, and to do it at that scale, and I am often humbled by what it means:

The hundreds of thousands of individuals who arrive in Canada as adults from abroad often have much of their professional identity wrapped up in what they have learned, and in the degree or diploma they have earned. But on arrival in Canada, many are told that their credentials and experience have no value. They hear that they will have to start over again, from the beginning.

The credential evaluation reports provided by WES represent documentary evidence to counter those statements. Each report communicates that the holder's educational qualifications are equivalent to recognized degrees and certificates held by people educated in Canada.

That is why our work is so critical. We provide individuals with a tool they can use to build their lives in their new home. We know that a credential assessment is not the only thing they require. They may still want to go back to school to enhance their skills, need to take exams to enter a licensed profession, and perhaps improve their English. That is where the work of WES Global Talent Bridge, which helps pave the way for internationally educated individuals to integrate into the workforce, is essential.

We are fortunate in Canada to be working in an environment where there are many support services for newcomers, and the WES mission of enabling the integration of globally mobile individuals as they pursue their academic and professional goals resonates with many Canadians.

We have witnessed many political and societal changes over time and expect to see more. But we, as an organization, are poised to continue to empower and advocate in behalf of skilled immigrants and international students for decades to come.

Sincerely,



Tim Owen

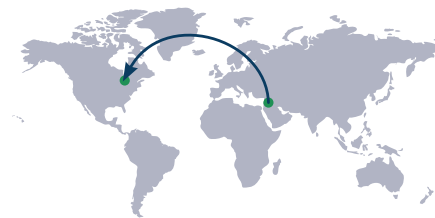
Director of WES Canada and Deputy Executive Director of World Education Services





Talar Chitjian

Law Student



Home Country:
Syria



Country of Education:
Syria



Now Studying In:
Toronto, ON

“ WES was able to provide an assessment with the documents I had submitted. ”

In late 2014, my husband and I fled the war in Syria to Lebanon as a newly married couple. We were trying to find the best place for us to settle. We wanted a peaceful country where our children could grow. Without a doubt, that country was Canada. With the sponsorship of our community center, our dream to rebuild our lives in Canada became a reality in late 2015.

My husband and I had lost everything, but the experience offered me the chance to analyze and find my identity. As a result, I discovered that law is my real passion.

I’m an internationally trained lawyer, and I practiced law in my home country for more than four years. However, I faced many difficulties while attempting to move forward in my career in Canada. My university transcripts and my documents were not in sealed envelopes. Because they were unsealed, all my documents were not considered official—even though they were original and ratified by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Syria.

The first time I applied for a WES evaluation, my documents were rejected because they could not be verified.

Soon after, however, WES launched the Refugee Pilot Project. Through ACCES Employment, I filled out the application for an alternative credential assessment. Eventually, the good news came. WES was able to provide an assessment with the documents I had submitted. Upon receiving my assessment, I applied to York University’s Certificate in Foundations for Graduate Legal Studies program.

WES’ assessment was really beneficial for me. It provided me with the validation of my documents which was required by the Osgoode Hall Law School admission team for my unique situation. I will begin classes soon for a master’s degree in Canadian Common Law. Eventually, I will become a licensed lawyer in Ontario.

WES Refugee Pilot Project by the Numbers

337

Number of WES evaluation reports provided to Syrian refugees in Canada through the Refugee Pilot Project



57%

Participants in the Refugee Pilot Project who held a **bachelor's** degree



19%

Participants in the Refugee Pilot Project who held a **graduate** degree



100%

Participants who submitted documents and received a credential evaluation



Paul Feltman

Deputy Executive Director
Global Talent Policy and Programs



Beth Clarke

Director of Strategic Partnerships,
WES Canada

World Education Service's Global Talent Bridge program does what its name suggests: It seeks to create a "bridge" for skilled immigrants to put their talent and professional know-how to work in the fields for which they have trained and in their new communities of choice.

The program operates in Canada and the United States. In both places, the need for such a bridge is clear: Many immigrants to these countries find that, even with evidence of their academic achievements in hand, they face acute barriers to reentry into their professional fields.

Although they may have adequate knowledge or experience, the challenge often occurs in translating their skills and qualifications in a way that local employers will value and understand. They may also need further education and training, an understanding of the local labor market, and knowledge of how to navigate their options to choose a career path.

The work we do in each country varies considerably.

In the U.S., our efforts to help these individuals focus on three primary strands of work. These are:

- **Field building:** The WES Global Talent Bridge program leads a coalition, IMPRINT, which supports national, state, and local efforts to incorporate multilingual/multicultural talent into the professional workforce. IMPRINT's partner organizations include the Community College Consortium for Immigrant Education (CCCIE), the National Skills Coalition, Upwardly Global, the Welcome Back Initiative, and the Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians.
- **Direct assistance:** The WES Global Talent Bridge program provides skilled immigrants with a range of direct supports, including seminars, webinars, and other online resources that cover topics such as how to obtain professional licensing or certification, how to pursue training that fills discrete résumé or linguistic skill gaps, and how to find suitable employment in the U.S.
- **Technical assistance:** In 2017, the WES Global Talent Bridge program began providing eight communities across the U.S. with customized

- technical assistance to advance skilled immigrant integration efforts in highly targeted ways. These communities include the cities of Denver, Colorado; Louisville, Kentucky; Santa Clara, California; St. Louis, Missouri; Boise, Idaho, and Boise's regional partners, Twin Falls, Idaho; and Salt Lake City, Utah; as well as the states of Ohio, Michigan, and Maryland.

In Canada, the WES Global Talent Bridge program seeks to add value to an already robust network of organizations focused on ensuring that newcomers obtain the opportunities they need. Our work in Canada involves:

- Developing pragmatic solutions to humanitarian crises: In 2017, we successfully completed an 18-month pilot project to determine whether it would be possible and feasible to create a reliable, replicable process to help Syrian refugees in Canada obtain credential assessments, even in the absence of verifiable documents from their home country.
- Strengthening networks: We seek to foster knowledge sharing by sponsoring conferences

and convenings that focus on finding systemic solutions to the problems skilled immigrants and refugees face in their efforts to enter the workforce.

- Developing future leaders: We seek to identify and support, through grants and scholarships, the professional development of emerging leaders who may dedicate their careers and talents to helping newcomers integrate into the workforce.
- Deepening knowledge and advising partners: We participate in large-scale research studies and sit on multiple advisory committees that address local and national integration issues across Canada.
- Helping individuals: We connect skilled immigrants to the range of services available to help them, share information on how to register for further education or enter a licensed profession, and connect them to community organizations that specialize in job search services.

This year the WES Global Talent Bridge staff encountered new challenges and opportunities in both the U.S. and Canada, but we still found many reasons to be encouraged in making a real difference for skilled immigrants. We remain optimistic and eager to see what the future brings.

Sincerely,



Paul Feltman
Deputy Executive Director
Global Talent Policy and Programs



Beth Clarke
Director of Strategic Partnerships, WES Canada



x **325**

Number of WES employees



x **37**

Number of languages spoken by WES staff



x **40**

Countries of origin among WES staff

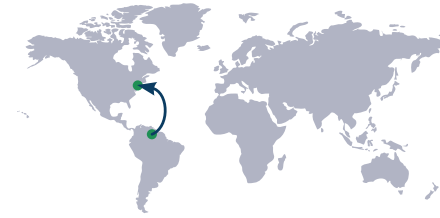


Number of credential evaluation applications received at WES



Niurka Melendez

Founder, Venezuelan and Immigrants Aid (VIA)



Home Country:
Venezuela



Country of Education:
Venezuela



Now Working In:
New York, NY

“ We are immigrants and we don’t need to be superheroes to succeed. We just need to use our voices. ”

In Venezuela, I studied computer science. At the bachelor’s level, that’s a five-year degree. Then I worked as a developer and a social media content manager. I left Venezuela in 2015 because of the political situation, which has only gotten worse.

My husband and son fled first, but I stayed, waiting and hoping that the situation would get better, and I wouldn’t have to flee too. There was no medicine, we had to wait in line for food, and we had no security just because we think differently from the government.

When your immigration is almost forced, it’s hard to accept that you need to start a new life and keep moving forward—but I was afraid, so I left to join my family in New York.


When I heard of WES’ mentorship program through the Andrew Romay New Immigrant Center, I already had the idea of creating an organization for the Venezuelan diaspora, but I needed help getting everything organized. My WES mentor was really helpful. I told him I was in the U.S. starting from zero, but I didn’t feel that I needed to work in my old field of computer science. I feel that I needed to do something to help other Venezuelans who were in a similar situation. My WES mentor helped me learn how to get information in the U.S. to create a non-profit.


That is how I started Venezuelan and Immigrants Aid (VIA). VIA is an organized movement of asylum seekers who want to empower our communities with information. I called it VIA because it means the same in English and Spanish, *the road*. We’re all walking this road together. We are immigrants and we don’t need to be superheroes to succeed. We just need to use our voices.




Sebastian Ibarra
Clinical Research Coordinator



 Home Country:
Colombia

 Country of Education:
Colombia

 Now Working In:
New York, NY

“ I felt so good knowing I had someone who could help me through the situation. ”

I've been working on my English and taking tests to get my medical license in the U.S. to do my residency here, but I also wanted work experience here because I know that's really important to build my résumé and make connections.

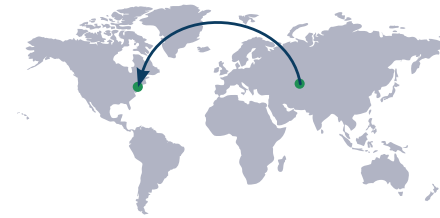
I had gone to résumé and cover letter writing workshops, so I felt confident that they were well done. Then I heard about WES' mentorship program through the Andrew Romay New Immigrant Center. By the time I started with the WES mentorship program, I already had a job interview. I think my English is good but I got so nervous during the interview I forgot everything! I felt really bad because I made a lot of mistakes, but I spoke with my WES mentor and she told me not to worry about it. She said the next interview would be better. We just had to focus on those areas where I made mistakes, and we did. We started working on those details where I didn't feel comfortable.

My mentor gave me a lot of advice, and we practiced a lot with mock interviews. One time I met with my mentor, and she had a lot of resources to learn more about job interviews. So we read, and we practiced so much that I started to feel more confident. After going to more interviews, I received two job offers in my field! Even though I can't practice medicine yet, I can work as a clinical research coordinator and that's what I'm going to do.

I really appreciate WES' mentorship program and my mentor because I had the opportunity to express myself, and be honest about the whole job search process. I felt so good knowing I had someone who could help me through the situation.



Aizhan Moldakunova
Accountant



-  Home Country:
Kyrgyzstan
-  Country of Education:
Kyrgyzstan
-  Now Working In:
New York, NY

“ My accounting professor explained that with my experience, previous degree in finance, and evaluation, I could actually be enrolled in a master’s degree program. I had no idea. ”

I relocated to the U.S. in 2010 with my two sons. I had a bachelor’s degree in finance, but it took more time than I expected to find my way because I didn’t speak English. I spent four years just learning the language in a survival job as a nanny. I really wanted a change because I knew I could do more: I could be a professional working in accounting or finance.

I heard about World Education Services from another nanny who was working toward her master’s degree. When I got my evaluation, I applied to the City University of New York (CUNY). I went to CUNY LaGuardia Community College for a while. I was a straight-A student, and I thought the classes were pretty easy.

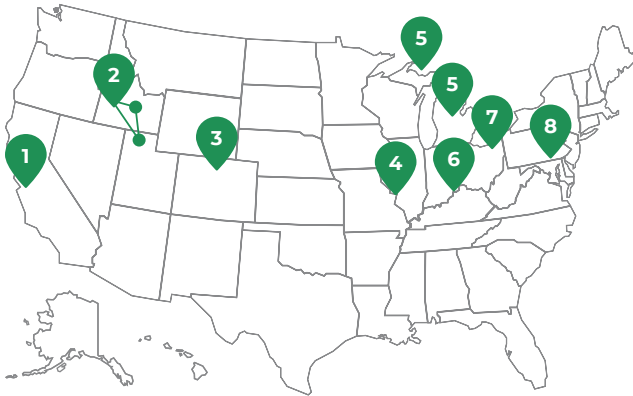
One day after class, I was talking to my accounting professor and he told me that I was in the wrong place. I was shocked. Why would he say that? He

explained that, with my experience, previous degree in finance, and evaluation, I could actually be enrolled in a master’s degree program. I had no idea. I had hoped that my degrees from Kyrgyzstan would help me here, but I thought I needed to start over with a U.S. degree.

I applied to CUNY Brooklyn College for a Master’s of Business Administration with a concentration in accounting, and I graduated in 2017. I learned from a friend about Upwardly Global, one of WES’ partners that helps immigrants find jobs. They taught me about the American work culture, like how to communicate with people, how to network, how to handle job interviews, and how to prepare your résumé. After graduating, I received a job offer to work with Bloomberg as an accountant.

Beyond Credential Evaluation:

How WES Makes a Difference



U.S. communities participating in the WES Global Talent Bridge skilled immigrant integration pilot program

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 Santa Clara, CA
Refugee & Immigrant Forum | 5 Michigan
Office of New Americans |
| 2 Boise, ID
Office for Refugees | 6 Louisville, KY
Office for Globalization |
| 3 Denver, CO
Emily Griffith Technical College | 7 Ohio
Welcoming Initiative |
| 4 St. Louis, MO
International Institute | 8 Maryland
Dept. of Labor |

Hands-on Help: Technical Assistance for Communities Integrating Skilled Immigrants

In 2017, WES Global Talent Bridge staff selected eight U.S. communities to participate in skilled immigrant integration pilot program.

The communities selected were the states of Ohio, Michigan, and Maryland; and the cities of Denver, Colorado; Louisville, Kentucky; Santa Clara, California; St. Louis, Missouri; and Boise, Idaho. The latter is participating along with its regional partners, Twin Falls, Idaho; and Salt Lake City, Utah. Each community had shown a significant commitment to helping internationally educated immigrants enter the local workforce.

Since its launch, the pilot program has provided leaders in each of these communities with technical assistance from WES as well as other partner programs. This technical assistance has

taken the form of hands-on coaching, advising, workshops on immigrant professional integration, and moderated monthly calls. The goal is to help staff in participating communities do the following:

- Develop resources to help skilled immigrants understand the steps they need to take to obtain meaningful employment in the fields in which they are trained
- Develop strategies to engage employers in hiring skilled immigrants
- Develop strategies to engage community colleges in training skilled immigrants in the additional skills they need to successfully integrate into the local workforce

- Develop and advocate for local- and state-level policy solutions to the workforce challenges faced by skilled immigrants
- Create public education campaigns to raise awareness about the contributions that skilled immigrants can make to the local workforce and economy
- Strengthen local and regional partnerships among similar organizations

The program is expected to be renewed and expanded once an analysis of its successes and areas of improvement is complete.

Testing New Solutions to Emerging Challenges: The Refugee Pilot Project

In 2017, WES completed an 18-month pilot project to determine the feasibility of creating a reliable, replicable process to help Syrian refugees settled in Canada obtain credential assessments, even in the absence of verifiable documents from their home country.

The project, which included staff from across WES, put WES' core expertise—credential evaluation—to work in a new context. Refugees who flee their homes under dangerous circumstances may not take all or even *any* of their documents with them. Arriving in the United States or Canada without access to proof of their education, such individuals find that they cannot convince potential employers of their educational qualifications, skills, and professional experience, and so they cannot move forward in their careers or lives.

Conducted in Canada, our 2017 pilot study set out to test a new approach to assessing the credentials of refugees and other people who have fled their homes in crisis conditions. We recruited applicants by working through trusted referral partners who could screen them for program eligibility, explain the purpose of an assessment, and guide participants through the process.

WES ultimately identified 337 participants, all from Syria. We accepted any available documentary evidence—including cell phone pictures of transcripts or diplomas—that showed that participants had attended or completed a program of study. Using a stringent methodology and reconstructing the course of study by referring to our extensive database of documents from Syria, we were able to work with even partial records to assess and report on participants' academic qualifications, and to determine the comparable Canadian credentials.

The project broke ground for WES: We tested not only a new evaluation methodology but a

new service delivery model. We partnered with community-based, refugee-serving agencies to provide application assistance and case management. We also engaged with end-user institutions to explain our methodology with the aim of increasing recognition of the resulting credential evaluation reports.

Going forward, we will use what we learned to offer this evaluation service to others who have fled their homes, either as refugees, or because of other crises such as conflict or environmental disaster. The work will launch first in Canada.

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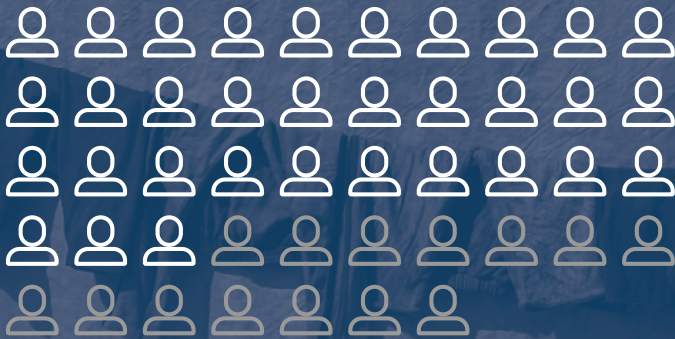
This report gave my clients back their dignity. The sooner you can deliver hope, the better. An early sign that your foreign education has value is a priceless gift when everything else has been taken from you.

”

—WES Refugee Pilot Program Referral Partner

65.6 million

Number of people worldwide who had been forcibly displaced from their homes by 2017. 22.5 million were refugees



Of the 47,000 refugees who settled in Canada in 2016, **33,000** were Syrian.



Prior to the Syrian conflict, the country's population was 22 million. As of 2017, **13.1 million** Syrians had fled to locations either within Syria or abroad.

Source: UNHCR

Knowledge Sharing: Publications, Research, and Training

WES seeks to eradicate barriers to the understanding and acceptance of international academic qualifications. Doing so depends on deep and shared knowledge among a broad range of collaborators.

To that end, WES conducts research, monitors the environment in which we work, and shares what we learn among as broad a range of stakeholders as possible. In 2017:

- We published original research pertinent to the international education community in the U.S. and Canada, as well as to communities interested in helping to integrate skilled immigrants and skilled refugees into the professional workforce.
- We provided in-person and Web-based technical training to university admissions administrators, with 25 webinars as well as in-person workshops held in New York, Toronto, San Francisco, Boston, Washington D.C., Kentucky, Vancouver, and Barbados.
- We published multiple newsletters designed to share knowledge and to support others involved in encouraging global mobility among skilled and internationally educated individuals. These newsletters included:
 - *World Education News & Reviews*, a monthly publication that provides higher education administrators and international education professionals with up-to-date resources about education systems around the world; insights into global student mobility trends; and original research on topics such as the international student experience, the career aspirations of international students, and recruitment strategies.
 - *WES Advisor*, a biweekly publication that provides globally mobile students and skilled immigrants with a variety of free tools and information.
 - The IMPRINT coalition newsletter, which helps our partners and practitioners in the field of skilled immigration stay up-to-date on news related to skilled immigrant integration; and real-time changes in the policy and political environments in which they work.
- We also published a range of e-guides to help internationally educated individuals succeed professionally and academically in the U.S. and Canada. Our most ambitious effort on this front is a series of guides developed by the WES Global Talent Bridge team. The e-guides are designed to help immigrants trained in specific professions to find work in their fields. Each guide explores specific career pathways in fields such as education, medicine, engineering, architecture, information technology, and accounting. WES released the first such e-guide, *Career Pathways in Nursing: Using Your Foreign Education*, in 2017, with one edition for the Canadian market and another for the U.S.

“ It was such a high-quality workshop with very interesting content, great presenters, and good samples of documents we could work on. I would definitely attend another one in the future. ”

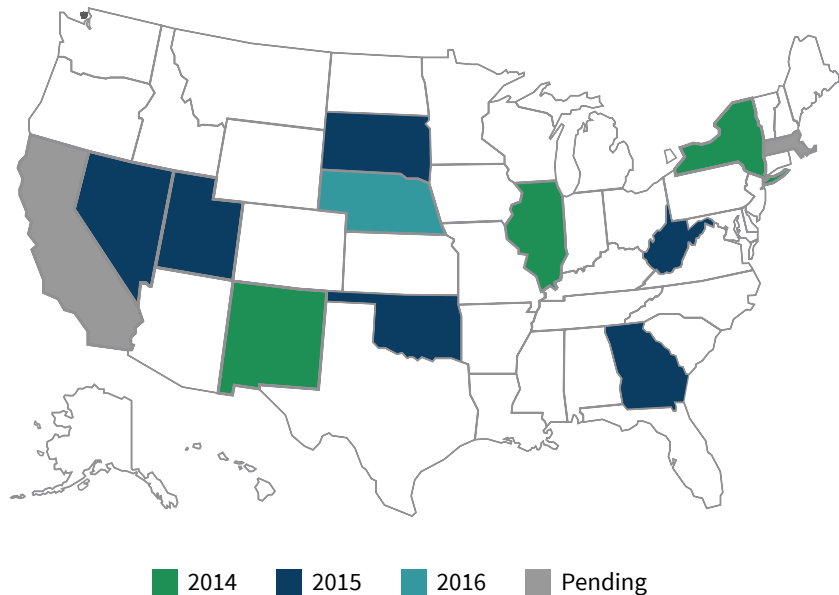
—Lucy Wadych-Ketley

Student Development Services Advisor,
Brookdale Community College, New Jersey



Building (and Mapping) the Field of Skilled Immigrant Integration

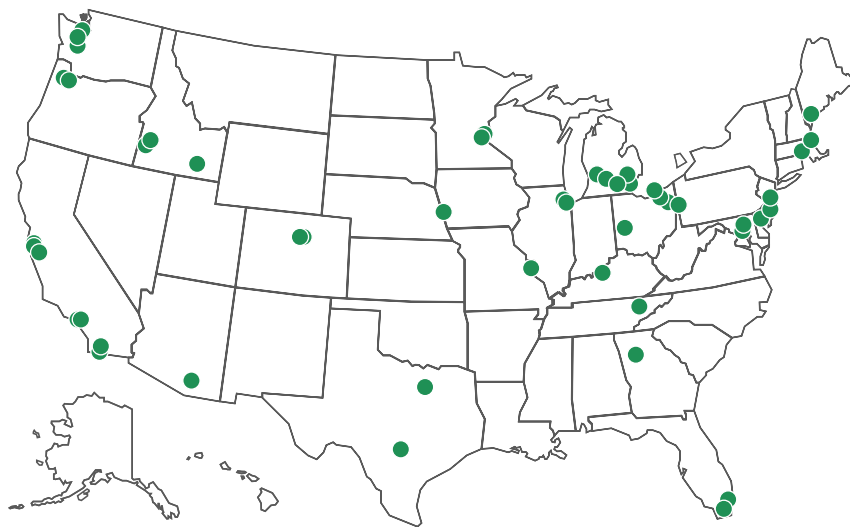
In 2017, the WES-led IMPRINT Coalition researched and published two interactive maps designed to help advocates and policymakers across the U.S. better understand emerging and effective ways to attract and retain highly skilled immigrants and refugees. The first map highlights state legislation on licensing reform. The second map reveals the small but growing number of U.S.-based programs that seek to empower internationally trained immigrants and refugees.



Policies by State

This map indicates the states where there is pending and enacted legislation relevant to the occupational licensing of foreign-trained immigrants and refugees. It is intended to support advocates, policymakers, and practitioners working to reduce barriers to licensure and increase career opportunities for foreign-trained, work-authorized immigrants and refugees.

For the interactive map, visit imprintproject.org/policy-map/.



Programs and Services by State

This map shows the locations of more than 80 programs that seek to help immigrant and refugee professionals achieve success in the U.S. These programs focus on career preparation, specialized language training for highly skilled immigrants, and licensing and credentialing guidance, and are hosted by service providers, advocacy and public education institutions, and technical assistance and resource providers nationwide. The online version of this map also features a data tool that displays demographic data on college-educated immigrants.

For the interactive map, visit imprintproject.org/program-map/.

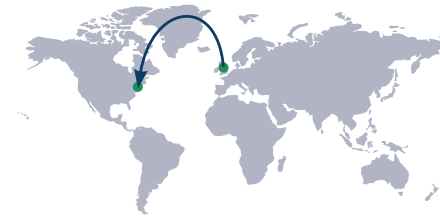
Select Mapped Programs and Services*

- AZ Transition to Jobs, Pima Community College
- CA Mentorship and Career Development Program, Pars Equality Center
- CO Colorado Welcome Back Center, Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning
- DC National Immigration Forum
- FL Foreign Trained Professionals Program, Miami Dade College
- GA Forward, New American Pathways
- ID Global Talent Idaho
- IL National Partnership for New Americans
- KY Greater Louisville International Professionals
- MA Boston Welcome Back Center, Bunker Hill Community College
- MD Skilled Immigrant Apprenticeship Program
- ME New Mainers Resource Center
- MI Michigan International Talent Solutions
- MN Professional Immigrant Bridge Employment Project
- MO Career Advancement for International Professionals
- NE Careers and Connections
- NY NYC Welcome Back Center
- OH English and Pathways for Healthcare Professionals
- OR Professional Immigrant Credential Program
- PA Immigrant Work Force Program
- RI Rhode Island Welcome Back Center
- TN Invest Knoxville
- TX ESL for Professionals Program
- VA Institute for Immigration Research
- WA Puget Sound Welcome Back Center

*For a complete list of programs and services by state, visit imprintproject.org/program-map/.



Sureita Hockley
Vice President of Business Development



 Home Country:
England

 Country of Education:
England

 Now Working In:
New York, NY

“ Having the confidence to go to another country with my qualifications and evaluation from WES, it just felt like my education would be recognized. ”

I moved to New York from England in November of 2007. My initial idea when I first moved to the U.S. was that I would go back to college. I wanted to earn my master's degree. That is why I engaged with WES.

I was accepted into a program but decided not to go in the end. Instead, I used my WES evaluation to get a job. When I went on job interviews, I would take everything with me including my résumé and my evaluation. I was always very conscious about my qualifications from the U.K. and how they would be perceived here. I felt like it was valuable to have the evaluation with me. I felt more confident.

Having my evaluation report was really beneficial. It gave me peace of mind, and the report was widely recognized. I was apprehensive having studied in the U.K. and then coming to the U.S. I didn't know if my education would be accepted—though I didn't have too long to worry about it. I had no idea what

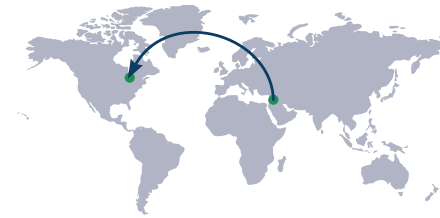
the education system in the U.S. was like, so getting a WES evaluation made me feel confident and the whole process of applying to schools and finding a job was a lot smoother because of that.




I had a very full life in England, and I moved not knowing anything. It was very exciting at first, but that very quickly wore off, and it became very isolating. The first six months were increasingly difficult, but I embraced it.

Now I wouldn't want to live anywhere else in the world. As soon as I received a working visa, I started with the financial company I'm with now. My role has grown significantly, and now I am vice president of business development. I feel very fortunate that 11 years after I started, I'm currently running the consulting side of this business.



Yaman Almousali
Information and Referral Specialist



-  Home Country:
Syria
-  Country of Education:
Syria
-  Now Working In:
Toronto, ON

“ When I heard about WES’ Refugee Pilot Project, I felt as if something opened in my future. ”

I come from Syria, a country in war. I worked as a teacher and a translator there.

Fortunately, my sister has Canadian citizenship, and she sponsored me and my family when we had to leave. I didn’t have all my academic documents when I arrived, and I did not want to lose future opportunities because of it. I became a volunteer in the Arab Community Centre in Toronto. I heard that WES was doing training for staff to refer Syrian refugees for a credential assessment.

When I heard about WES’ Refugee Pilot Project, I felt as if something opened in my future. I have a bachelor’s degree in English literature from Damascus University. I was looking for a way to get a credential assessment for my degree even though I didn’t have access to my documents.

I didn’t have my transcripts, but I had my student ID card, my certificate of graduation, and bachelor’s degree certificate. I applied, and within two months

I received an email from WES regarding my situation. They wanted to know if I had my scores and asked why I needed this credential assessment—was it for employment or study? I needed it for both. So I received the assessment report without scores first.

Eventually, I was able to get my transcripts from Syria. When I called WES to tell them I had my scores, they said just send it to us. Within one week, I received a new assessment with the scores.

With my assessment in hand, I applied to Sheridan College and York University. I was accepted into both. While I was applying to schools, I also interviewed for a job with the YMCA. They asked that I bring my certificates and my credential assessment. Within five days, I received an offer to work at the YMCA. I received all three offers in one week!

Our People, Our Strength

WES staff embody the concept of international mobility. They currently represent more than 40 countries and speak over 37 languages. Many staff are immigrants themselves and have a personal understanding of the needs of international students and professionals.

In 2017, WES staff launched a new project designed for and by staff who want to engage and work with immigrants in tangible, meaningful ways that are outside the scope of day-to-day work at WES. In all, more than 95 WES employees have volunteered their expertise to the project in its first year.

The first output of the project was a direct intervention effort. The effort paired skilled immigrants living in New York with a WES mentor, who helped them to explore career opportunities and refine their job search skills, including résumé writing and networking. The first cohort of mentees graduated on February 9, 2018. Several of the graduates were interviewed for this report.

OUR PEOPLE, OUR STRENGTH



Anthony Castro, United States
Communications and Marketing Associate



Isabel Schroeder, Ecuador
Training and Knowledge Management Specialist



Sarah Hua, Canada
Program Manager



Daniel Swann, United Kingdom
Evaluation Quality Manager



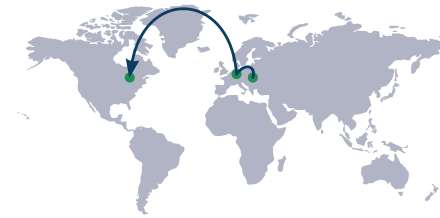
Martin Fitzgibbons, Ireland
Credential Examiners Team Lead






Watson Gomes, Guinea Bissau
Credential Analyst



Dragana Dilas
Credential Examiner, WES



-  Home Country:
Serbia
-  Countries of Education:
Serbia and Germany
-  Now Working In:
Toronto, ON

**“ I understand that behind each document there is a person with their own hopes and ambitions ”
waiting for their evaluation results.**

I first heard about WES when I was applying for permanent residency to Canada. As part of the application, I had to submit my Educational Credential Assessment (ECA) to the government, so my husband and I sent our documents to WES for an evaluation.

I moved from Serbia, my home country, to Canada in 2016. I taught English as a Second Language (ESL) when I first arrived, but it was usually for temporary and part-time work. I was looking for something more stable and within the field of education. I saw a job opening at WES and was thrilled when I got the job because I know WES is a company that does meaningful work.

Having been a WES customer considerably affects how I approach my work. I remember how anxious I felt when I submitted my documents and how important it was for me to get the results as soon as possible. If my evaluation had been late, I wouldn't have been able to apply for permanent residency on time. I

am more empathic and aware when I work on files. I understand that behind each document there is a person with their own hopes and ambitions waiting for their evaluation results. I know the stakes are very high for each customer.

I moved to Canada because my husband and I wanted to find a safe environment where we could raise our two children without the problems we faced back home. When we first arrived we knew almost nobody except distant relatives who helped us find our apartment. We lost the support network we had in Serbia, and I felt like I had lost an anchor. Having to rebuild my career and life in a new country made me feel like I had lost my identity. No one knew me or what I was capable of accomplishing. I had to prove myself all over again.

My work at WES is helping me overcome those challenges because I now feel more comfortable and stable in this new environment. I feel fulfilled in my work here.

Research shows that systemic barriers prevent immigrant professionals from obtaining full employment.

These barriers include:



Lack of critical information and practical advice on career reentry options



Lack of recognition for their academic qualifications and experience



Lack of knowledge of the North American workplace culture



Complex and difficult-to-navigate professional licensing requirements



Limited availability of relevant English language instruction



Lack of professional networks and the social capital needed for a successful job search

WES Technology: **Empowering Customers, Protecting Privacy**

WES maintains one of the most comprehensive databases of academic institutions and programs in the world. This proprietary platform, known as AICES, houses up-to-date information on more than 45,000 academic institutions, one million courses, and 1,600 grading scales from around the globe. It enables us to generate hundreds of thousands of evaluation reports each year.

These reports are then securely delivered to academic institutions, employers, and licensing bodies through AccessWES, an online delivery system.

In 2017, the WES IT team also laid the groundwork for issuing blockchain-secured digital badges, which make the evidence of academic achievement available to our individual customers any time they want it. These badges will put customers in control of how to share evidence of their academic achievements. With a digital badge, our customers can transparently and prominently show proof of their academic qualifications to whomever they like.

Blockchain is a significant advance in the field of credential evaluation in other ways as well: It helps us address a key challenge around integrity in the digital space.

We have always maintained the highest degree of integrity in the evaluation process and in protecting the data that we handle. Blockchain enables that same level of security and integrity in a digital environment.

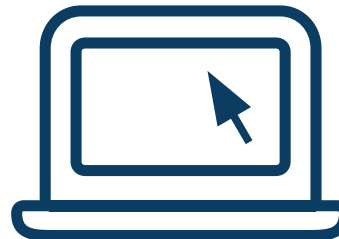
In 2017, WES continued to focus on state-of-the-art cybersecurity systems and comprehensive privacy and confidentiality policies that adhere to the strictest legal standards. We also invested human capital in ensuring that these systems and policies function as designed. WES programmers, engineers, security and privacy specialists, business analysts, database administrators, project managers, and data management experts are working day and night to make sure our systems, data, and customers' information are secure.

In 2017, we also launched a new website and customer portal with a different look and more intuitive flow. We strive to continually improve and add self-service features that will enable customers to get the information they need, when and where they need it, so that they can successfully submit their applications for evaluation without delay.



244,847

Number of evaluations
WES completed in 2017



49,621,653

Number of page views
since the new website
launched in July 2017

43 Years of **WES**: An Evolution



1974

The U.S. hosts 154,580 international students. Iran is the leading country of origin.

1974

WES is founded as one of the first independent U.S. organizations specializing in credential assessment for internationally educated students.

WES completes 20 applications for credential evaluation.

1979

The Iranian hostage crisis leads to new visa restrictions for Iranian students in the U.S.

Iranian enrollments soon plummet. Taiwan and Nigeria are poised to overtake Iran as the top countries of origin for international students in the U.S.*

1987

IIE estimates the total number of international students in the U.S. at 356,187.

Iranian student enrollments have fallen from a high of 45,340 in 1978 to 10,420 in 1987.

Chinese student enrollments, meanwhile, rise to 25,170 (up from 0 in 1978), while Indian student enrollments rise from 8,050 in 1978 to 21,010.

1983

WES launches intensive in-person workshops to help higher education institutions evaluate international education credentials.

1984

WES completes 4,700 applications.

The Institute of International Education (IIE) estimates the total number of international students in the U.S. at 342,113.

1987

WES publishes the first issue of *World Education News & Reviews* (WENR).

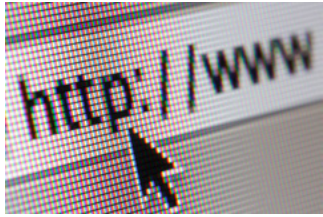
WENR is part of an effort to ensure that higher education professionals in the U.S. have information about global educational systems and student mobility trends around the world.



*<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/international-students-united-states>

1990

The World Wide Web is launched in 1990.



1994

IIE estimates the total number of international students in the U.S. at 449,749.

More than 27,000 are from Asia, led by China, Japan, India, and South Korea. WES processes 14,500 credential evaluation applications.

1995

In December 1995, an estimated 16 million people were online worldwide.

By November 1997, that number had risen to 76 million.

1998

WES launches its proprietary database, AICES.

Over time, AICES becomes one of the most significant repositories of global educational records in the world.

2000

WES opens an office in Toronto.

2004

WES processes 53,000 applications.

WES launches online applications.

**Global Talent
Bridge** Building Opportunities
for Skilled Immigrants

2011

Between 2006 and 2011, around 1,162,900 people immigrated to Canada.

The country's immigrant population reached 6,775,800 people, and represented 20.6% of the total population.

The Syrian conflict begins.

Within six years, more than 5.6 million Syrians will flee the country as refugees; another 6.1 million are displaced within Syria itself.

2016

The number of international students in the U.S. tops 1 million for the first time ever.

328,547 are from China; another 165,918 are from India.

2017

The Migration Policy Institute estimates that 1.9 million immigrant professionals in the U.S. are unemployed or significantly underemployed in low- and semi-skilled jobs.

2009

WES begins focusing on the issue of underemployment among internationally educated people in the U.S.

The effort ultimately becomes the WES Global Talent Bridge program.

2011

WES and five other non-profit organizations launch a national U.S.-based coalition to focus on the challenges faced by immigrant professionals seeking to establish their American careers.

The coalition's name, IMPRINT, stands for "immigrant professional integration."

2013

WES becomes a designated provider of educational credential assessments (ECA) for Citizenship and Immigration Canada (now Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada).

2016

WES launches a refugee pilot project in Canada to reconstruct Syrian refugees' academic qualifications when verifiable documentation is not available.

The project seeks to determine the most efficient way to help displaced persons with international education reconstruct evidence of their academic achievements.

2017

WES completes credential evaluations for the 337 Syrian refugees who participate in its pilot project.

WES launches a product team to explore innovative ways to give individuals control over their credential evaluation reports. The work ultimately leads to the launch of blockchain-based digital badges.

The WES Board approves the establishment of a USD\$30 million philanthropic fund.

2017 WES **Leadership**

WES LEADERSHIP



Mariam Assefa
Executive Director and
Chief Executive Officer



Lisa Connors
Deputy Executive Director and
Chief Financial Officer



Nejat Ahmed
Corporate Controller



Beth Clarke
Director of Strategic Partnerships,
WES Canada



Linda Tobash
Senior Director of
Policy Knowledge Data



Paul Feltman
Deputy Executive Director
Global Talent Policy and Programs



Frank Gutilla
Senior Director of
Evaluation Production



Ed Lavelle
Chief Information Officer



Steve Literati
Deputy Executive Director of
Core Services



Mike Lowe
Senior Director of
Human Resources



Tim Owen
Deputy Executive Director of
WES Canada



Michelle Pollock
Senior Director of
Marketing and Communications



Beka Tavartkiladze
Director of Evaluation Services,
WES Canada

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Ann Buller

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Centennial College



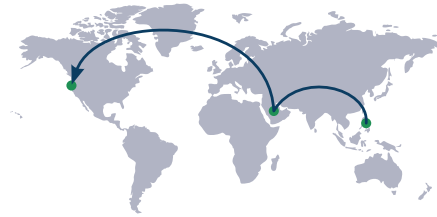
Joan Colligan

Independent Consultant



Bea Bueno

Graduate student and Freelance Art Director and Designer



 Home Country:
Philippines

 Country of Education:
Saudi Arabia

 Now Working In:
San Francisco, CA

“ Having my credential evaluation put me on the track to the career I want, and WES allowed for that transition to study in the U.S. to happen a lot more smoothly. ”

My parents decided to move to the Middle East for work so I went to an international school in Saudi Arabia.

I actually applied everywhere for my undergraduate studies. I applied to schools in London and across Asia, but I really wanted to study art in New York and experience living in the city. When I applied to the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) at the State University of New York they required that I get my evaluation completed by WES. It was a smooth process. All I did was follow the guidelines. WES really helps international students because we have credentials in a different grading system that has to be translated into the American system. Thanks to WES, we know that the colleges or universities we are applying to really understand where we're coming from and how we did in classes.

Having my credential evaluation put me on the track to the career I want, and WES allowed for that transition to study in the U.S. to happen a lot more smoothly. I graduated from FIT with a bachelor of fine arts degree in advertising design in 2015, and now I'm studying for my master's degree in graphic design and new media at the Academy of Art University in San Francisco.

It's been such an adventure because now I get to experience both coasts of the U.S., and it's definitely a fun mix of cultures that I get to experience here. Both schools that I chose to go to have great international student communities, so it made me understand and learn more about the world even though I'm pretty international myself.



 wes.org/AnnualLetter2017