

East-West Center

# Alumni news



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## LETTER FROM EWCA PRESIDENT AMANDA ELLIS



Aloha Fellow Alumni,

Please join me in welcoming our new chapter from [Mongolia](#).

Congrats to alum Abu Anas, first Bangladeshi journalist to win Gold in The Prince Albert II of Monaco and [UNCA Global Prize](#), for coverage of climate change. COP 25 is meeting in Madrid as you read this and given the increasingly dire news, [especially for islands](#), this issue highlights a refresh for the [Pacific Islands Development Program](#) (PIDP) in its 40th year at the Center.

We have just wrapped up Thanksgiving which is my favorite U.S. holiday: It reminds us of all we have to be grateful for, and for Keric and me, our EWC experience remains high on our list. Many of you will remember the inimitable Sumi Makey, whose memorial service



Marina George (2nd from left), current recipient of the Sumi Makey Scholars Award, with AI and Trudy Wong, fellow Ambassador Charlie Salmon, and myself

## December 2019

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- Letter from EWCA President
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- New Era for a More Responsive, Connected, and Relevant PIDP as EWC Hosts Inaugural Micronesian Conference of Leaders
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was held in November. It was an honor to represent you, along with many of Sumi's former students and to celebrate her extraordinary contributions to the Center and to so many of us.

My family joined many current EWC students and fellow alum to celebrate Thanksgiving at the home of Trudy and Al Wong. Mahalo, Wongs, for doing such a wonderful job of organizing the EWC 'ohana host family outreach program!



One of the Wong's host students, Anny Wong (no relation!), recently wrote to express her gratitude for the newsletter – mahalo, Anny and many other alum who have so generously reached out in recent months. She sent this cute photo from Halloween celebrations and matter of factly commented she recently lost an eye. When I expressed distress, I got this inspiring

response: "Life is good for each day we are given and the wonderful people we have in our lives. . . .No real negative change to my vision or sense of balance and everyday life. It's part of me. Embracing it all. Me and pirate duck".

Wow! Anny, mahalo for your permission to print this and thanks for showing how we can "embrace it all". Just what we plan to do at the [EWC 60th anniversary celebration](#) next June 30-July 2. See you all there!

Warmest Aloha for the holiday season,  
Amanda

- In Memoriam
  - Chapter News
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## APPLY NOW

- [Asia Studies Visiting Fellowship](#) – deadline: January 3, 2020
  - [Pacific Islands Leadership Program with Taiwan](#) – deadline: February 3, 2020
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[\*\*Registration is now open!\*\*](#)

**EWC/EWCA  
60<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary  
International  
Conference  
in Honolulu**

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## 2020 EWC/EWCA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN HONOLULU – NOMINATIONS OPEN FOR EWC/EWCA AWARDS

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The Alumni Office is accepting nominations for the [Distinguished Alumni Award](#), [Outstanding Chapter Award](#), [Outstanding Volunteer Award](#), and [21st Century Outstanding Service Award](#) to be presented at the 2020 EWC/EWCA International Conference in Honolulu. Click on the respective awards above to see the eligibility and criteria for each award. Nominations made by alumni chapters must be submitted by the president or recognized leader on behalf of the chapter with a list of the names and signatures of the officers who endorse the nomination. Nominations made by individuals must be supported by at least three other EWC alumni evidenced by a list including the names, signatures, and addresses of those individuals who support the nomination. The deadline to submit nominations is **January 15, 2020**.

And don't forget . . .

- [Register online](#) by **January 31, 2020** to take advantage of the \$325 early registration fee for EWCA members. The registration fee will increase to \$350 on February 1.
- **January 31, 2020** is also the submission deadline for [individual abstract submissions](#) and [organized panel submissions](#).
- [Share](#) your East-West Center Memories with us. The collection will be updated periodically to include new submissions so share your story and photos with us today. [View](#) the first collection of EWC Memories we received.

[SUBMIT your favorite EWC Memory](#)

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[APLP Navigator](#)

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[Who are the Humans of the EWC? Find out!](#)

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- Check out [60 Years / 60 Facts](#) for a series of 60 weekly items celebrating EWC's 60th year.

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## NEW ERA FOR A MORE RESONSIVE, CONNECTED, AND RELEVANT PIDP AS EAST-WEST CENTER HOSTS INAUGURAL MICRONESIAN CONFERENCE OF LEADERS

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Leaders from the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau gathered at the East-West Center on October 14 for the inaugural meeting of the [Micronesian Conference of Leaders](#) convened by the [Pacific Islands Development Program](#) (PIDP). Attendees included [FSM President David W. Panuelo](#), along with Palau Vice President Raynold B. Oilouch and Marshall Islands Minister in Assistance to the President David Paul. The leaders were briefed on the broad variety of programs the Center conducts focusing on the Pacific Islands, including use-inspired research on climate change impacts and mitigation; women's empowerment workshops; economic and policy analysis; reporting tours and professional exchanges for Pacific journalists; and leadership training and capacity-building.

The Micronesian leaders expressed strong continuing support for PIDP, which was established by Pacific Island leaders in 1980 to support "equitable social and economic development" in the Pacific region. All three delegations emphasized PIDP's unique and valuable contribution to the region as the only member of the Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific (CROP) based in the North Pacific. They also offered input into future directions for new programs and collaboration in what EWC Vice President and PIDP Director Karena Lyons called ["a new era" for PIDP](#).



The Pacific region has changed remarkably in the last 40 years or so since PIDP was established and PIDP is carrying out a

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## About Us

The East-West Center promotes better relations and understanding among the people and nations of the United States, Asia, and the Pacific through cooperative study, research, and dialogue.

[Short video](#)

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revitalization of its presence and effectiveness in the region. The launch of a new PIDP visual branding and a new tagline – the voyage continues – reflects a new forward facing, use-inspired approach to ensuring that PIDP and the East-West Center is responsive, connected, and relevant to changes, opportunities and the future state of the Pacific to truly meet regional needs and adjust as those needs change.

## **PACIFIC ISLANDS JOURNALISTS TOUR U.S. CITIES**

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The inaugural 2019 [Pacific Islands Journalism Reporting Tour](#), funded by the U.S. Department of State, brought together 12 journalists from 11 Pacific Island countries for an immersive three-week dialogue, study, and reporting tour from September 3-21, 2019. The tour addressed critical issues in the Pacific Islands including climate change; disaster relief and recovery; rebuilding of infrastructure pre/post natural disasters; infrastructure development and financing, specifically related to foreign aid donor/international influence/investment in the Pacific Islands; changing regional security situation brought about by increasing interest in the region; and disinformation/propaganda challenges in the local news and social media networks in the region.

The journalists met with security, development finance, and Pacific island resiliency experts in Honolulu, including INDOPACOM, Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, and Hawaii Green Growth. The tour focused on U.S.-Pacific Island relations in Washington, D.C. and included meetings with Congressman Ed Case and U.S. Department of State experts as well as journalism media literacy and fact-checking trainings from experts such as Poynter, Polifact, The News Literacy Project, and the Atlantic Council Digital Forensics Lab. In Galveston, Texas the tour focused on disaster preparedness, mitigation, and recovery, island resiliency through public-private partnerships and community mobilization. Sample activities included various multi-sector community discussions on lessons learned for Hurricane Ike and the recovery process, presentations by Texas A&M University professors on Hurricane Harvey impacts, responses, and steps taken to mitigate future storm damage, and various community-driven public-private approaches to infrastructure development and disaster recovery. While in San Francisco, California journalists had the opportunity to visit Facebook and attend a presentation by

Facebook staff in the Product and Policy Communications - Misinformation and Technology Communications departments of the company. The tour culminated in a capstone event in Suva, Fiji to highlight lessons learned, reflections, and impacts across the tour themes, which were amplified and disseminated through a wider group of Pacific Island journalists, local NGOs, and university student groups.



## ALUMNI NEWS & ACHIEVEMENTS

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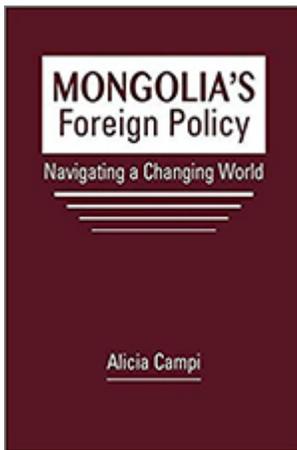
**Bethany Allen-Ebrahimian** (Jefferson Fellowship and Asia Pacific Journalism Fellowship, 2016) has joined Axios as its China reporter and will head up its [China newsletter](#). She has covered the country since 2014 and has also served as a reporter and editor for Foreign Policy magazine and a national security reporter for The Daily Beast. Her recent work has focused on China's influence in the United

States. She was the 2018 recipient of the Robert S. Abbott Memorial Award in recognition of her reporting on China, a 2017 Arthur F. Burns Fellow in Germany, and a 2015 International Reporting Project Fellow in China.

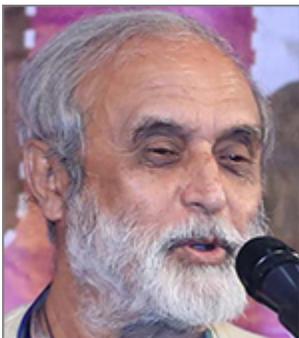


**A.Z.M. “Abu” Anas** (Jefferson Fellowship, 2012; 5th International Media Conference, 2016; South Asia Journalists Dialogue, 2016) is the 2019 Gold Medal recipient of The Prince Albert II of Monaco and UNCA Global Prize for coverage of Climate Change awarded by the United Nations Correspondents Association (UNCA) for best coverage of the United Nations, U.N. agencies, and field operations. Anas is the economics editor of The Financial Express

in Dhaka, Bangladesh and a freelance reporter for The New Humanitarian. He wrote an eye-opening series of articles on the grave environmental challenges in Bangladesh, which sits on a massive river delta and is especially vulnerable to climate change. His winning stories in The New Humanitarian include: [“Bangladesh’s disappearing riverlands”](#), [“Why landslides in Bangladesh’s former conflict zone are becoming deadlier”](#), and [“How dire climate displacement warnings are becoming a reality in Bangladesh”](#).



[Mongolian Diplomacy: Navigating a Changing World](#) by **Alicia Campi** (EWCW, Visiting Fellow 2012) was published by Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc. EWCA Ulaanbaatar Chapter leader **Tsom Altankhundaga** welcomed Dr. Campi to Mongolia at a reception hosted by U.S. Ambassador to Mongolia, Michael S. Klecheski.



Noted poet and novelist **Mohammad Nurul Huda** (Culture & Communication, 1985-1986) recently received the SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) Literary Award. In 2015, he was awarded the Ekushey Padak, the second highest civilian award in Bangladesh.

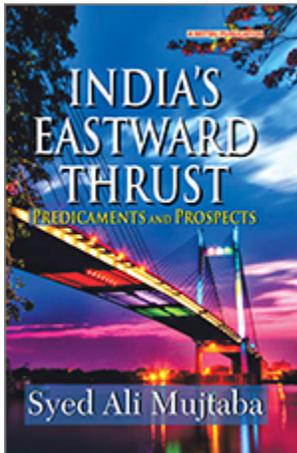


Public policy Ph.D. candidate **Soksamphoas Im** (Education, PhD 2016-2018) has been selected to receive the American Association of University Women (AAUW) International Doctoral Fellowship for the 2019-2020 year. The fellowship provides a \$20,000 award which will allow Im to accomplish her dissertation research project in a timely manner. Her original fieldwork in Cambodia will study the national and global networks that led to the development of Cambodia's new national aging policy focusing on elderly rights and economic opportunities, as well as its impact on elderly populations.



**Layla Kilolu** (Education, MURP 2017-2019), immediate past president of the EWCPA, is continuing her studies at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. The Department of Urban and

Regional Planning (DURP) awarded her the 2019 APA Student Scholarship underwritten by the members of the Hawai'i chapter of the American Planners Association. The scholarship recognizes her impressive academic performance, service contributions to DURP and its student body, and for representing DURP more widely in planning circles and initiatives. She was also recently featured in the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning [newsletter](#).



**Syed Ali Mujtaba's** (Jefferson Fellowship 2003; Seminars 2008; International Media Conference 2016, 2018) latest book, [India's Eastward Thrust: Predicaments and Prospects](#), is available from Mittal Publications. Join him at his book launch on December 10, 2019 from 3-5 PM at the Gandhi Peace Foundation in New Delhi. RSVP to Mittal Krishna at 9810444531 if you wish to attend

The Hawaii United Okinawa Association (HUOA) presented a 2019 Legacy Award to **Choko Takayama** (Inst. for Student Interchange, MA 1962-1964; Inst. for Technical Interchange 1963-1964) on November 2, 2019. From 2013 to present, he has played a key role in the fundraising efforts for the Hawaii Okinawa Plaza project with his Okinawa Hawaii Kyokai (OHK) colleagues, raising over US\$1 million in Okinawa. In 2017, he co-chaired the Irei Sai Memorial Project to bring to light the 72-year search for the remains of 12 POWs from Okinawa who perished in Hawaii during World War II. From the series of interviews and articles about Okinawans in the Hawaii community that he wrote for the Okinawa Times while a grantee at the Center, he has built cross-cultural exchanges between Hawaii and Okinawa. As president of the OHK (2010-2018) and as president of the EWCA Okinawa Chapter (1996-2012), he has worked closely with the leaders of the Okinawan community in Hawaii to bring performing artists, workshops, concerts, tours, Okinawan government officials, and businesses to Hawaii for cultural exchange as well as welcome Hawaii visitors and coordinate their visits to Okinawa. Recent and current East-West Center and University of Hawai'i students from Okinawa were on hand to congratulate him.





An expert in indigenous archaeology and assistant professor of anthropology at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo (UH Hilo), **Tarisi Vunidilo** (PIDP, 1993) has returned to the same anthropology department where she was an exchange student from the University of the South Pacific twenty-six years ago. Born in Suva, Fiji, she has a passion for connecting and sharing the histories of places, artifacts, and indigenous people. She heads multiple research initiatives at UH Hilo in addition to numerous

side projects in language revitalization and art intervention to raise environmental awareness. Currently, she visits the Bishop Museum in Honolulu monthly to study Fijian artifacts with the goal to write a book about each of the artifacts. She has brought museum studies students from UH Mānoa to the Bishop Museum and hopes to bring her students from UH Hilo in the future. She and fellow colleague Peter Mills are mentoring a small group of anthropology students to identify Hawaiian artifacts housed at the anthropology department. One motivation for her students is the desire to learn more about their family histories. With the face of research changing, she finds it empowering to see these students give their time and energy to do this type of work so that indigenous voices are included in the dialogue.

## IN MEMORIAM

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**Adélar "Dely" N. Alcántara** (Population 1972, 1975-1977, 1980-1985, 1986-1988, 1990, 1991) passed away on November 3, 2019 while enroute home from the Philippines. She had just kicked off the school year at the Manoa Alcántara Jojola International Center for Arts & Language (MAJICAL) Learning Montessori School she co-founded in the province of Tarlac. She is survived by her husband, **Ted Jojola** (Resource Systems, PhD 1975-1980),

director of UNM Community and Regional Planning Program and Indigenous Design and Planning Institute. Dr. Alcántara joined the

University of New Mexico in 1985 and served as the New Mexico state demographer for decades and as the director of Geospatial and Population Studies since its founding in 2011. She was a leader in the New Mexico Filipino community. She worked well with people of diverse economic, racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds and had at least 20 years of community organizing and non-profit management experience. She was a community advocate for diversity, human rights, and social justice.



**U Maung Maung** (Inst. for Student Interchange, MA 1962-1964), recipient of the EWCA Outstanding Volunteer Award at the EWC/EWCA 2008 Bali International Conference, recently passed away. Karen Knudsen reflects, "I had the honor and privilege of knowing U Maung Maung as a dear friend, mentor, and as Myanmar's first EWC Alumni Chapter Leader. His love for the East-West Center and all it represented ran deep . . . He organized and led the

Myanmar alumni chapter with dignity and unwavering commitment, often under difficult circumstances, for many years. While we mourn his passing, his memory and legacy lives on."

## CHAPTER NEWS

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### **EWCA Asia Pacific Leadership Program (APLP) Chapter**

There has been a change in leadership within the EWCA Asia Pacific Leadership Program (APLP) Chapter Board. Melissa Pawnsing did a great job leading the board for two years and her efforts to have close communication with APLP and EWC staff in Hawaii was an important step to make the APLP Chapter stronger than ever. The new leadership includes president Blaine Baldwin, vice-president Scott Coates, secretary Joyce Wong, communications chair Cynthia Chang, and alumni relations 'Ofeina Manuel-Barbarich. Board members currently reside on 5 continents including Australia (1), South America (1), Europe (2), Asia (7), and North America (7). The members of the board bring a wide variety of experiences, expertise from various industries, and great personality. They look forward to continuing the alumni initiatives that include The Navigator on a

quarterly basis and the APLP Global Pau Hana. APLP is quickly closing in on its 20th year and the new board is looking forward to continuing to build on the strong relationships that continue to blossom from the first seeds that started prior to even the first generation meeting in Hawaii back in 2001.

### **EWCA Islamabad Chapter**

The EWCA Islamabad Chapter joined the Snow Leopard Foundation (SLF), Gallery 6 and PSLEP in a unique Art for Conservation of Snow Leopard retreat. About 200 of the 3000+ snow leopards in the world can be found in Pakistan. Their number is decreasing, therefore education and awareness of stakeholders – communities in and around the snow leopard habitat, conservationists, donors, government, media, students and youth, common citizens – is required. This art retreat funded by SLF was initiated and coordinated by vice-president Syed Abu Ahmad Akif. In September, president Dr. Arjumand Faisel selected and led five artists and two photographer participants in the field. They spent seven days at Hopar Valley in the northern area of Pakistan very close to a snow leopard habitat. Called the “land of peaks and glaciers”, the valley is rich with natural, cultural and biological features and offers breathtaking scenic views.

Moving in the area, meeting with the local people, studying their unique architecture and life style, discussing their needs and environment, including snow leopards, generated many ideas for producing interesting artwork. It would be a triple win for the conservation effort, the communities and the artists themselves if snow leopard conservation, as well as conservation of the ecosystem that supports these beautiful animals, is promoted through the artwork. An exhibition of the artwork will be organized in Islamabad and SLF may also consider exhibiting these works at international forums.

On September 18, Syed Abu Ahmad Akif conducted a very interesting session on the conservation of eco system and snow leopards with about 90 students in grades 7 to 10 at Uswa School in Hopar Valley. Nature photographer Yasir Mehmood showed many slides to generate interest in the environment of the area. Tahir Bilal Umami painted a landscape of a view from the school ground within minutes, which was a big surprise for the students. Then three artists – Hamid Hanbhi, Bushra Khalid and Sujjal Kayani – led by Dr. Arjumand Faisel, conducted art sessions in the classrooms. There was active participation and tremendous interest was generated

among the students. The principal was very impressed with the activity and requested the Chapter help him to arrange similar workshops in all ten Uswa Schools in the region.



The group met with Dr. Zakir Hussain, PhD, chief conservator – forest & wildlife, of Gilgit-Baltistan Region in Pakistan to inform him of the art retreat and its follow up activities for conservation education and awareness of different stakeholders. Dr. Hussain was very impressed with the discussion and asked the Chapter to help him in his conservation efforts through art. He will contact Mr. Akif with specific projects and the Islamabad Chapter plans to support him.

### **EWCA Ulaanbaatar Chapter**

A ceremony to launch the chapter was hosted by EWC Changing Faces alumna Gandolgor Purevjav at her institution, the Ganabell Institute, on October 25, 2019. U.S. Ambassador to Mongolia, Michael S. Klecheski, attended the ceremony and offered his congratulations to the alumni for promoting better relations between the U.S. and Mongolia. The event was planned by Dulguun Enkhbold (Education, MPA 2009-2011), Erdene Batzorig (APLP 2017-2018), Amaraa Batchuluun (Education, LLM 2017-2018), and Tsom

Altankhundaga (Education, MPA 2017-2019), with Namuun Tsog who serves as executive leader organizing events.



Two EWCA Innovation Laboratories (EWC Labs) are working with the EWCA Ulaanbaatar Chapter. The EWC Labs applied for and received grants from the EWC Professional Development Program and must collaborate with the Chapter. [Quality Life Mongolia](#), founded by Uyanga Batzogs and Delger Batnyam, translates instructions for 20 popular board games into the Mongolian language, both on paper and in short video format. Mentorship Innovation Lab founded by Tsom Altankhundaga, Joyce Pui Shan Wong, and Amarjargal “Amaraa” Batchuluun, is a new program of the Women Entrepreneurs Mentors Club NGO founded by the board members of [Women’s Entrepreneurs Council](#) at the Mongolian National Chamber of Commerce and Industry. It is one of the five main mentoring programs that replicate EWC leadership program curriculum and values aimed at strengthening micro and small businesses owned by women entrepreneurs in Mongolia, improving collaboration amongst women through a peer mentorship program, and actively promoting the newly established EWCA Ulaanbaatar Chapter to over 100 alumni across Mongolia.

The EWCA Ulaanbaatar Chapter has a new website, <https://www.ewca-ulaanbaatar.com>, and has officially received legal NGO status to promote the vision of the East-West Center in Mongolia.

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