2019-20 Social Enterprise Fellows

Deema Almoayyed

Deema is a second year MA candidate in International Development at the Korbel School of International Studies. Originally from Bahrain, Deema completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Auckland in New Zealand, where she majored in Finance and Commercial Law. She then returned home and pursued a career in research and program consulting for several prominent governmental organizations. Through this work, she familiarized herself with local economic development programs targeting women, students, farmers, and other segments of Bahraini society, and took an interest in international development. Deema’s current research interests at Korbel center on development in the Middle East, with a focus on gender, water scarcity, and migration in the Gulf. As a Barton Institute Fellow, Deema hopes to complement her academic training with practical community experience and learn how to successfully turn ideas into functional and impactful social enterprises.

Elena Filatova

Elena is an MA student in Economics, aiming to discover and illuminate pathways toward a healthy relationship between people and planet. She immigrated to Colorado with her family from Moscow, Russia. After beginning her undergraduate education in Spain, she transferred to the University of San Francisco to earn a degree in Entrepreneurship and Innovation, amidst the unique startup culture of Silicon Valley. Elena’s personal research focuses primarily on sustainable food systems, problems within the current food industry, and more broadly on socioeconomic concerns related to the environment. Between her roles as a student and a research assistant looking at the use of urban infrastructure in disinvested rustbelt cities, you might find her putting brush on canvas, moving her body to music, wandering through the mountains, or digging in the soil. Whether planting apartment tomatoes or volunteering at an edible school garden, being in communion with the Earth is her life’s defining feature.
Talia Halfon

Talia is a Master’s student at the University of Denver’s Graduate School of Social Work, where her concentration is Sustainable Development and Global Practice. She is born and raised in Colorado and obtained her bachelor’s degree from the University of Colorado, Boulder where she studied International Affairs. She then went on to pursue a Master’s of Education at the University of Missouri while teaching middle school writing with Teach for America in Kansas City. Through this experience she was able to work primarily with refugee communities, as well as different resettlement organizations. She has experience teaching in Uganda and Israel, as well as working on research campaigns with in Eastern Africa. Through her experiences teaching and traveling, she has found a passion for working with refugees specifically in the Denver community in order to promote economic independence and sustainability as well as foster community. In addition to her academic pursuits, Talia enjoys yoga, hiking, spending time with her dog and drinking coffee.

Katie Heideman

Katie Heideman spent her childhood moving cross-country as a military brat, her teen years in south Denver, and undergraduate years outside of Boston. She has a background in project management and grant writing for behavioral healthcare non-profits. Katie was instrumental in launching the Dahlia Campus for Health and Well-Being, an internationally award-winning center that supports community mental health broadly—through early education, nutrition and food access, dentistry, exercise, and therapy. Katie hopes to bring a similar approach to revolutionize how we think about rehabilitation in the criminal justice system. Accordingly, Katie is in her second year of law school at the Sturm College of Law. She’s passionate about integrity, kindness, and curiosity, and is a sucker for a good op-ed, a dark cup of coffee, and anything from Trader Joes.

Micaela Iveson

Prior to pursuing an MA in International Development from the University of Denver, Micaela worked for the ONE Campaign in Washington, DC. At ONE, Micaela helped plan and execute advocacy campaigns that promoted the health, education and economic empowerment of women and girls throughout sub-Saharan Africa - work that took her everywhere from the sidelines of rock concerts to the floor of the UN General Assembly. She has also held fellowships with the Andrew Goodman Foundation and Roosevelt Institute Campus Network and is currently a Sié Fellow at the Josef Korbel School. Micaela
graduated with Summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa honors from the University of Idaho, earning a BA in International Studies. She was born and raised in Reno, Nevada and enjoys running, road-tripping and performing stand-up comedy.

Rachel Kamnkhwani

Rachel Kamnkhwani hails from Malawi, South Eastern Africa. She holds a bachelor’s degree in Education from African Bible College, Malawi. She moved to the US in 2015 and attended East Tennessee State University from 2015 to 2017. She graduated with a master’s degree in Secondary Education and immediately started serving as a Life Skills and Curriculum Development Intern at World Vision International (Washington DC office). She then worked as a Film Evaluation and Curriculum Development Intern at Docademia LLC. She has experience in teaching, research, curriculum development, community and prison outreach, rural community development, and sexual violence awareness and prevention. The motto “making a difference: one person, one family and one community at a time” pushes her to stay focused. Rachel is excited to join the Barton Institute for Philanthropy and Social Enterprise with her wide range of skills and interests.

Rachel is a transformative leadership enthusiast. She is currently enrolled in the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies doctoral program at the University of Denver. She is presently serving as a board member of the Malawi Washington Foundation; an organization that supports marginalized girls and women from rural communities in Malawi. In the 2019-2020 school year, Rachel will be serving as the Communications Chair of the College of Education Student Association. Her long-term goal is to make a global impact in fighting global Gender-Based Sexually Related Violence (GBSRV) in schools and work spaces.

Rebecca Macey

Rebecca Macey is the manager of exhibitions at the University of Denver Libraries and is pursuing a master’s degree in Real Estate and the Built Environment program at Daniels College of Business. Her research interests and professional pursuits focus on the interaction of human culture and the built environment through innovative real estate development strategies and investment platforms for the public good. Rebecca came to DU to study anthropology after several years working in urban planning and real estate development in Chicago. She also tackled community development and sustainability issues as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Morocco. Rebecca holds a B.S. in Urban and Regional Studies from Cornell University and has completed graduate coursework in cultural anthropology with a focus in museum and heritage studies at the University of Denver.
Cherish Marquez

Cherish Marquez comes from the Emergent Digital Practices program and is beginning her final year as an MFA graduate student. She works as a graduate teaching assistant, tech facilities manager, and serves on the Graduate Students of the Four Faculties. She has a strong background in working with nonprofit organizations as an Operations Coordinator which included HR, social media, and advocacy. She has been involved with movements that support the disability community, mental health awareness, LGBTQ advocacy, and sexual assault prevention programs. As an artist, she works in various mediums such as creative coding, digital fabrication, wearables, VR, and game development. Her research is on combining the digital realm and the physical world through the mediation of cultural practices. She is interested and passionate about activism through art and technology and believes that preserving the culture of others is vital.

Fatima Rezaie

Fatima joins the Barton Institute and CiviCO Social Enterprise Fellowship Program from the Joseph Korbel School of International Studies, where she is pursuing a Master’s degree in International Development. In addition to being a graduate student, she is also a project manager in the Office of Institutional Partnerships, where she provides support and helps manage the implementation of the Campus Framework Plan, a roadmap for DU’s built environment for the next 20 years. Fatima graduated from the University of Denver in 2015 with a Bachelor’s degree in International Studies and Psychology and a minor in Spanish. She is honored to be selected as a CiviCO Social Enterprise fellow and looks forward to learning how development, particularly social and economic development, can be achieved through social enterprises.

Shubham Sapkota

Shubham is going to be in his second year of his Joint PhD. Program in Theology and Religious Studies through DU and ILIFF. He did his undergraduate degree from Hope College in Michigan and graduated with his master’s in international studies, with a focus on Comparative Politics and Religion, from the Korbel School in 2017. After graduating from Korbel, Shubham went on to work for a tech company based out of Canada and Ghana, working with technologies and how they can go about helping in development projects. He was working directly with the USAID projects for the company and
was based out of Kathmandu, Nepal during his time. Originally from Nepal, Shubham loves going on long backpacking trips into the Himalayas and wants to work towards a holistic approach for environmental and educational policy in these areas. He hopes to integrate spirituality and religious values into policies. Apart from being in school, he enjoys the outdoors and loves working at the library of the schools he goes to. This is his 7th year working in an academic library.

**Wil Watkins**

Wil is currently pursuing an MA in International Administration at the Josef Korbel School of International Studies and works with the Frederick Pardee Center for International Futures as a Research Assistant. Over the summer he will be working with the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction and Candide Group, an impact investing firm. Before starting graduate school, Wil served in the Peace Corps in Morocco. Prior to that he was a math teacher at an elementary school in Denver Public Schools. Additionally, he has worked with various nonprofits and NGOs focused on community development, immigration and refugee resettlement, public transparency, and youth leadership. He has developed a strong interest in the use of capital, such as impact investing, to scale the impact of successful social enterprises in developing countries.

**Omotola Williams**

Originally from Nigeria, Omotola graduated from the University of Lagos, Nigeria with a B.Sc in Accounting. She is a chartered accountant who has worked in the Banking as well as Oil and Gas industry giving her a decade of experience in banking, relationship management, accounting, income generation and customer service. Tola is currently pursuing an Master's degree in Social Work and she intends to combine her finance experience with her social work skills to make social impact. She is particularly interested social enterprise, fundraising, grant writing, social responsibility, economic equality, financial capability, administration and relationship building. In her current role as a Research assistant, she helps deepen the understanding and implication of Realyst (a national collaborative of academic and community partners) findings on homelessness for program, policies and public perception change. Tola presently volunteers as a Mentor at the North Denver Women Who Lead program - an empowerment and leadership program aimed at building leadership and job skills for women to empower their personal and professional life while also strengthening their social and civic capacity within their communities. She enjoys sewing beautiful outfits in her spare time.