



NEWS

West Africa's Fulani: James Courtright fellowship report



Returning fellow **James Courtright** has spent a highly illuminating two years deep in the field across West Africa exploring how Fulani societies—the world’s largest pastoralist group—are responding to climate change, discriminatory governments and increasing jihadist activity, and what it reveals about the roots of violence and other major developments in the region’s countries. He’ll report on his fellowship in Washington, DC on Friday, May 17 at 2 p.m., followed by a panel discussion that will include former fellow **Hannah Rae Armstrong** (Sahel, 2012-2014).

After finishing his fellowship in December, James has begun work with the Dutch think-tank Clingendael, part of a team researching jihadist insurgent infiltration in northern Ghana. He’s also working on a project funded by the British High Commission in Accra, researching the contributions of livestock markets to local economies in northern Ghana, and the role of marginalized Fulani in Ghanaian society. And he plans to do some long-form writing following threads uncovered during his ICWA travels.

Friday, May 17

2 p.m.

1050 K St. NW

Washington, DC

Register via Zoom: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_WAI_XXJwSGSpu0mB-jOaXQ

Andrew Weil Fellow launches



Rowland Robinson | comparative health care | 2024-2026

Andrew Weil Fellow **Rowland Robinson** will investigate integrative health care approaches to problem substance use in the Netherlands, Portugal and Brazil. He aims to better understand public health policy and practices pioneered by the Netherlands and Portugal, followed by an investigation of how those models translate in a larger country, Brazil, which implemented a Dutch-style drug law in 2006.

A graduate of Northeastern University in international affairs, Rowland was a legislative assistant for US Senator Angus King and an opioid response project manager for the state of Maine. He is also son of former fellow **John B. Robinson** (Madagascar, 1996-1998).

Rowland's fellowship is generously supported by the Weil Foundation. Trustee and former fellow **Andrew Weil** (Latin America, 1972-1975) is a world-renowned pioneer in the field of integrative medicine and the founder and director of the Andrew Weil Center for Integrative Medicine at the University of Arizona.

SAVE THE DATE



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ICWA Centenary celebration

November 14, 2025, Washington DC

We're looking forward to marking our 100th birthday next year, and we want to see everyone who can make it! We'll have a very fun bash, reconnect, consider the institute's past, plan the next century and discuss pressing global issues. You'll not want to miss it! We'll be in touch with details soon, meantime please mark your calendars.

FELLOWS

Aron Ouzilevski



Exiles from Russia's North Caucasus discover their voices

Aron Ouzilevski met natives of Russia's North Caucasus who are, not unironically, getting in better touch with their cultures through music and camaraderie since fleeing their homeland after the Kremlin's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. A Circassian ethnomusicologist told Aron he had grown up learning "Soviet-era stereotypes that anything indigenous was backward and that Russian was the language of progress."

In Tbilisi, Russian emigres grieve over Navalny's death

After the Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny died in a remote Arctic prison in February, **Aron** also spent time with emigres in Tbilisi who shared their grief, anger and confusion. "It's important for us to be together," a rock musician told him. "The mourners' raw emotions weren't prompted solely by the fact of his death but also the incredibly harsh way it had occurred," Aron writes.



Prachi Vidwans



A Seoul drag queen on a mission

Levinson fellow **Prachi Vidwans** met with queer performers, including the artist and activist Heezy Yang. "What I'm trying to do is create safe spaces where LGBTQ+ artists can express themselves and be themselves," Yang told her.

In South Korea, an experimental school prioritizes happiness

Prachi also visited an innovative program outside Seoul where middle-schoolers spend a year focusing on self-development away from the intense pressure of the traditional school system. “I want to be happy right now, not only in the future,” a student told her. “In middle school, I didn’t have any time to think about myself or my life.”



Edric Huang



Letter from Taipei

For Lunar New Year, Mixner fellow **Edric Huang** looks at the often-perilous family dynamics LGBTQ+ people face in Taiwan. Among some queer friends, there’s a tacit understanding their parents are worried. “Beneath the silence is a barrage of questions,” one told him. “Without children, who will take care of you when you are old? What if someone bullies you for your sexuality? What if you aren’t able to get a job or a promotion?”

Taiwan’s LGBTQ+ politicians blaze trails

Edric also closely followed Taiwan’s general elections in January, observing how smaller, lesser-known parties are visibly expanding representation in the country’s young democracy. He was surprised to hear a fruit vendor normalize a queer candidate’s identity: “She’s honest with herself and us,” the woman said. “Shouldn’t we have politicians who inspire us to become ourselves so Taiwan can become a truer democracy?”



GLOBAL CURRENTS



Earthquake response burnishes Taiwan's reputation

When a fierce earthquake rocked Taiwan in April, ICWA Mixner fellow **Edric Huang** was in Taipei. Observing the government and public response first-hand, he said it was a test of the state's preparedness and reflection of efforts to build diplomatic and trade relations around the region.



EU reforms asylum system, but core problems remain

ICWA's **Steven Tagle** (Greece, 2021-2023) spoke with former fellows **Emily Schultheis** (Germany, 2019-2021) and **Joshua Levkowitz** (Turkey, 2021-2023) about EU migration and asylum reforms that have done little to please either humanitarian groups or right-wing political forces in the bloc.



In a cost-of-living crisis, East Asian youth scale back dreams

ICWA fellows **Prachi Vidwans** and **Edric Huang** share their observations from Asia about the local impact of the global cost-of-living crisis and atmosphere of resentment and insecurity it's fostering.



After Navalny's death, Russian exiles urge opposition

In the concluding discussion of ICWA's series on Russians in exile, the economist **Sergei Guriev**, journalist **Mikhail Zygar**, Free Russia Foundation's **Natalia Arno**, US diplomat **Jorgan Andrews** and moderator **Miriam Lansky** reflected on the "moral bankruptcy" of Putin's government and Russia's future.

SOCIAL MEDIA



Cris Duschek returns to Romania

Twenty years after former fellow and trustee **Cristina Duschek** @crisduschek began her ICWA journey in Romania (2004-2006) to follow that country's transition from communism, she returned to Bucharest with her daughter.

Inspired by what they experienced together in a “fast-changing, mesmerizing” place now a full-fledged member of the European Union and recent addition to the Schengen Zone, she says she's grateful to ICWA for the opportunity of a lifetime.

After her fellowship, Cris reported for a wide range of publications, including The Economist, Adweek, American Banker and The Washington Post, before rejoining the business world to lead communication, branding and marketing campaigns. She is now chief communications officer for Paradise Advertising and Marketing, Inc.

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Operations Director Bruce Teeter welcomes baby

Bruce and wife Meagan Chisholm gave birth to a baby boy, Jack, in March. Mother and son are doing well.

ALUMNI



“Nobody Cared About Turkey’s Elections—Until Results Came In,” by **Joshua Levkowitz** (Turkey, 2021-2023), Inkstick Media, April 3, 2024

“Two Israeli Air Strikes, and Two Syrian Mothers and Sons,” by **Andrew Tabler** (Lebanon, Syria, 2005-2007), The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, April 8, 2024

“Artificial intelligence in the barn,” by **Jean-Benoit Nadeau** (France, 1998-2000), McGill Reporter, April 2, 2024

“Why India’s Political Opposition Is So Weak,” by **Astha Rajvanshi** (India, 2020-2022), TIME, April 2, 2024

“Leaving Haiti,” by **Pooja Bhatia** (Haiti, 2009-2011), London Review of Books, April 4, 2024

“Juan Merchan Is Donald Trump’s New Least Favorite Judge,” by **Andrew Rice** (Uganda, 2002-2004), New York Magazine, March 26, 2024

“Qatari royal invested about \$50 million in pro-Trump network Newsmax,” by **David Kenner** (Saudi Arabia, 2019-2021), Sarah Ellison and Jonathan O’Connell, International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, March 26, 2024

“Women in Peace Talks: Lessons Learned from Mali,” by **Hannah Rae Armstrong** (Sahel, 2012-2014), Megatrends Afrika, February 23, 2024

“The extremists driving Netanyahu’s approach to war with Hamas,” by **Neri Zilber** (Israel, 2011-2013), Financial Times, February 19, 2024

“The founding father of a future Russia,” by **Gregory Feifer** (Russia, 2000-2002), Engelsberg Ideas, February 20, 2024

“The Nazi Era Continues to Haunt This German City,” by **Emily Schultheis** (Germany, 2019-2021), Foreign Policy, February 10, 2024

“Wedding Venues That Give a New Twist to the Ol’ Ball and Chain,” by **Joel Millman** (El Salvador, 1987-1989), Wall Street Journal, February 12, 2024

UPDATES

After seven years in Berlin and Vienna, **Emily Schultheis** is back in the United States, where she started reporting this month with Politico’s California team.

If you would like to add alumni updates, please write to icwa@icwa.org.

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