

## Webinar: The Interview Of A Lifetime: An Analysis of Visa Denials

### Speaker Bios (In Order of Appearance)

July 26, 2023



#### **Rajika Bhandari, Ph.D., serves as a Senior Advisor to the Presidents' Alliance**

Rajika Bhandari, Ph.D., serves as a Senior Advisor to the Presidents' Alliance, focusing on international student research, data, and narratives. With 25+ years as an international higher education expert and scholar-practitioner, she is the Principal of Rajika Bhandari Advisors, an international education research and strategy firm. Quoted frequently in the global press, she is a keynote speaker on international student issues, global talent, and Asian American identity; a widely published author, most recently of the award-winning memoir, [\*America Calling: A Foreign Student in a Country of Possibility\*](#); and the host of the World Wise podcast on the intersections of education, culture, and (im)migration. Dr. Bhandari previously spent over a decade at the Institute of International Education where she led IIE's research, evaluation and thought leadership portfolio, including the [Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange](#), an essential resource for understanding international student flows. Committed to immigrant and diaspora issues, she is the Co-Founder of SouthAsia-IEN (the South Asia International Education Network) that brings together leaders, practitioners, scholars, and entrepreneurs in U.S. higher education whose origins and/or work touch upon the countries of South Asia. Learn more about her work at: [rajikabhandari.com](http://rajikabhandari.com).



#### **Shelley Landry, Senior Director of Government of Affairs, Shorelight**

Shelley Landry serves as Shorelight's Senior Director Government of Affairs. Shelley is responsible for developing and executing strategies to promote Shorelight's mission by working with U.S. elected officials, agencies, and trade associations, to advocate for international education policies. Based in Washington, D.C., Shelley closely monitors legislative and agency policies to identify opportunities and address challenges that affect international students. She also leads efforts to raise awareness among members of Congress and their staff about the significant contributions of international students to the U.S. higher education system, workforce, and economy. Prior to joining Shorelight, Shelley held various positions in politics

and advocacy, including Chief of Staff for the Idaho House Minority and Regional Director for former Rep. Walt Minnick. Shelley studied at Harding University, where she specialized in elementary education.



**Munya Chiura, Head of Africa Business Development, MPOWER Financing**

Munya Chiura serves as the Head of Africa Business Development at MPOWER Financing. Munya was the Head of Middle East & Africa Payments for Flywire. He is a native of Zimbabwe and is extremely passionate about fintech, payments, innovation and tech in Africa. Munya is also an Innovation Consultant with the World Bank in Zimbabwe and sits on the Fintech Africa Advisory Board at Village Capital. Village Capital is a venture capital firm that finds, trains, and invests in early-stage ventures solving major global problems in agriculture, education, energy, financial inclusion, and health.



**Lydia Kemunto Bosire, Founder and CEO, 8B Education Investments**

Dr. Lydia Kemunto Bosire is the Founder and CEO of 8B Education Investments, first VC-backed education loans platform for African students attending university outside the continent. 8B provides tools to enable African students to identify best-fit global universities and level up their applications, access affordable financing and connect with career support for job placement, thereby providing colleges and employers access to the world's fastest-growing talent pool. The mission of 8B is enabling African brilliance to have a global impact.

8B was recently featured on CNN International announcing new Board member Tariq "Black Thought" Trotter from the Roots, and has an agreement for \$30m in lending capital from Nelnet Bank, the first time for a US bank to support African students, announced in September at the Clinton Global Initiative.

Prior to leading 8B, Lydia's career spanned nearly two decades as a diplomat including serving at the Executive Office of the UN Secretary General at the UN Secretariat, the World Bank, and the World Health Organization. She currently serves on the Board of Directors of WorldQuant University.

Previously, she served as an advisor to the Entrepreneurs-in-Residence program at Schindt Futures, a mentor of the Oxford Women in Business network, on the founding Board of Directors of Keep a Child Alive, on the Council of the Global Citizen Impact Funds, as a Senior

Advisor at MacroAdvisory Partners, and on the UWC Atlantic College Advisory Council. Earlier in her impact career, she co-founded Oxford Transitional Justice Research, and pioneered the YouthForce HIV/AIDS advocacy platform.

She is an expert speaker on a wide range of topics, including innovative finance, higher education, the future of work, entrepreneurship, philanthropy, impact investing, sustainable development, international politics and human rights.

Lydia holds a doctorate (D.Phil) in Politics from the University of Oxford (New College). She also holds an MSc in African Studies from Oxford (St. Cross College), where she attended as a Clarendon Scholar. She received an undergraduate degree with honors in Government and a Master of Public Administration from Cornell University.



**Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, the North Star Distinguished Professor and Associate Provost, Case Western Reserve University**

Paul Tiyambe Zeleza currently serves as Associate Provost and the North Star Distinguished Professor at Case Western Reserve University, a leading American research university. His immediate past appointment was at the United States International University-Africa in Nairobi, Kenya as Vice Chancellor (President) and Professor of the Social Sciences and Humanities. Prior to that, for twenty-five years, he held distinguished academic and administrative positions in Canada as College Principal at Trent University, Center Director at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, Department Chair at the University of

Illinois at Chicago, College Dean at Loyola Marymount University, and Academic Vice President at Quinnipiac University.

Altogether, he has been at a dozen universities in six countries on three continents and the Caribbean region. He received his bachelor's degree (with distinction) at the University of Malawi, master's at the University of London in Britain, and PhD at Dalhousie University in Canada.

In the early 2000s he worked as a consultant for the Ford and MacArthur foundations on their initiatives to revitalize higher education in Africa. His research project on the African academic diaspora conducted for the Carnegie Corporation of New York in 2011-12 led to the establishment of the Carnegie African Diaspora Fellowship Program in 2013 that has to date sponsored more than 500 African born academics in the United States and Canada to work with dozens of universities in six African countries.

He has published over 400 journal articles, book chapters, encyclopedia entries, reviews, short stories, and online essays and authored or edited 27 books and five short monographs. Several of his books have won international awards including the 1994 Noma Award for Publishing in

Africa for A Modern Economic History of Africa, Vol I: The Nineteenth Century (1993). His most recent book is Africa and the Disruptions of the 21st Century (2021). He is currently editing a volume of reflections by former vice chancellors of some of Africa's leading universities titled, The Chronicles of African University Leaders.



**Jill Welch, Senior Policy Advisor, Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration**

Jill Welch serves as Senior Policy Advisor to the Presidents' Alliance on international student and refugee student policy issues. As Principal of Out of Many 1 Advocacy, LLC, Jill specializes in mobilizing diverse stakeholder interests to achieve local, state, and federal change. With more than two decades of experience as seasoned public policy advocate, nonprofit leader, and strategic partnership expert, she has served in senior policy leadership positions both inside and outside of government.

Before launching her consulting firm, she was Vice President of External Relations at the U.S. Institute of Peace and Deputy Executive Director for Public Policy at NAFSA: Association of International Educators. A columnist for The PIE with her "Jill on the Hill" series, she is regularly quoted in influential media outlets and is a sought-after source for both advocates and policymakers alike who seek to internationalize U.S. higher education, modernize the U.S. immigration system, and renew our democracy. She holds a masters in public administration from American University and a BA in political science and French from Berry College.