



PRESS RELEASE

OBAMA SCHOLAR 2025 - 2026

Michael Richard Katagaya

The Obama Foundation today announced that Michael Richard Katagaya, Team Leader of Evidence and Methods Lab (EML), has been selected as part of its eighth cohort of Obama Scholars. This year's cohort is made up of 29 emerging leaders from around the world who will participate in the program at either Columbia University in New York or the University of Chicago during the 2025 - 2026 academic year.

Michael is a Ugandan social entrepreneur and civic-tech leader. At EML, he spearheads efforts to promote transparency, accountability, and social justice by simplifying and visualizing Uganda's national budgets and critical laws. To date, EML's digital platforms have reached over a million citizens, sparking informed debate among youth and strengthening citizen voice in governance. Michael previously worked with government and nonprofit organizations as a monitoring and evaluation expert, designing evidence-based frameworks to support learning and public engagement.

As an Obama Scholar, Michael will join 11 leaders at Columbia University for a nine-month residency hosted by Columbia World Projects. Together, the Scholars will engage in seminars, professional development workshops, audited courses, and tailored programming designed in close collaboration with the Obama Foundation. This opportunity will equip Michael with advanced leadership skills, global networks, and enhanced tools to expand EML's impact in Uganda.

"The Obama Foundation Scholars program plays a key role in building the next generation of leaders," said Obama Foundation CEO Valerie Jarrett. "These Scholars bring bold ideas, deep community ties, and a proven record of service. Over the next year, they'll sharpen their skills, expand their networks, and return home ready to amplify opportunities for the communities they serve."

Launched in 2018, the Obama Scholars program is the Foundation's only international, cross-regional leadership initiative. To date, 190 Obama Scholars from around the world have participated.

To learn more about Michael's work at Evidence and Methods Lab,

visit: <https://evidenceandmethodslab.org/>

To learn more about the Obama Scholars program and the 2025–2026 cohort,

visit: <https://www.obama.org/programs/scholars/>

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