

MICHELLE ARJONA

SPANISH (NATIVE), ENGLISH (FLUENT),
ARABIC (BASIC, SELF-TAUGHT – KHALIJI
DIALECT FAMILIARITY)

CONTACT

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PROFILE

Diplomat and purpose-driven mentor with proven success representing Panama in Science, Technology, and Education at international levels. Strong track record of fostering global partnerships, advancing diplomatic missions — including Gulf-region initiatives — and empowering students to build confidence, resilience, and leadership.

Fluent in English and Spanish, with basic proficiency in Arabic (self-taught – Khaliji dialect familiarity), and a passion for cross-cultural collaboration in education and technology.

References available, including letters from Ambassador Natalia Royo and international collaborators, attesting to diplomatic achievements, educational leadership, and cross-cultural impact.

EXPERIENCE

For illustrative examples of my work, please see the "Key Expertise" section below.

LEARNING FOR IMPACT SPECIALIST

UK EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION | DECEMBER 2024 - PRESENT

- Create interactive, coaching-aligned educational content that enhances emotional literacy, confidence, and social responsibility in primary students.
- Collaborate with UK-based educators to tailor content to diverse student needs—including SEN—building inclusive classroom environments and early learner resilience.

MENTOR - UNFOLD, LONDON

NON-PROFIT ORGANISATION | JUNE 2024 - PRESENT

- Provide consistent, one-on-one support to young adults navigating transitions in education, work, and personal life—strengthening confidence and direction.
- Apply coaching-informed methods to help mentees clarify ambitions, overcome limiting beliefs, and build actionable plans for growth.

DIPLOMAT - SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & EDUCATION

EMBASSY OF PANAMA, LONDON

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS | NOVEMBER 2020 - DECEMBER 2024

Served as a key diplomatic representative advancing Panama's global presence in education and technology, with emphasis on UK relations and emerging opportunities in the Middle East, particularly UAE collaborations.

- Spearheaded Panama's first-ever participation at the Education World Forum (London, 2022), amplifying the country's voice in global education dialogues.
- Engaged with UAE-based initiatives and explored Gulf-region partnerships, basic proficiency in Arabic and cross-cultural understanding to build connections.
- Worked closely with Ambassador Natalia Royo to establish bilateral education and technology collaborations, including facilitating UK-Panama knowledge exchange and supporting Latin American missions.

DEPUTY MANAGER - CENTRE 404, LONDON

NON-PROFIT ORGANISATION | SEPTEMBER 2018 - NOVEMBER 2020

CUSTOMER SUPPORT MANAGER - PTK, LONDON

START-UP | AUGUST 2017 - JULY 2018

BUSINESS PROCESS IMPROVEMENT (BPI) - SOS, PANAMA

NEW MEDIA | JANUARY 2017 - AUGUST 2017

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY MANAGER - UNE, PANAMA

NON-PROFIT ORGANISATION | JULY 2013 - JANUARY 2017

PROCESS IMPROVEMENT OFFICER - PIRC, LONDON

INVESTMENT RESEARCH CONSULTANTS | JULY 2011 - JULY 2013

INTERNATIONAL CORPORATE ACTIONS SPECIALIST (12 YEARS)

LONDON & NEW YORK

CITIGROUP, SCHRODERS INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT & JP MORGAN CHASE

KEY EXPERTISE

International Diplomatic Leadership, Education & Technology Innovation

Combining international diplomatic leadership, including Gulf-region engagement, with educational and technological innovation to create impact, strengthen partnerships, and empower individuals to grow and succeed.

International Diplomatic Impact

- Played a pivotal role in strengthening Panama's diplomatic presence in Science, Technology, and Education, particularly between Panama and the UK, with emerging connections in the Gulf, including the UAE.
- Spearheaded Panama's first-ever participation at the Education World Forum (London, 2022), showcasing Panama's innovation in education on the global stage.
- Received strong endorsements from Ambassador Natalia Royo and international collaborators, recognising diplomatic leadership, cross-sector partnership building, and transformative mentorship.
- Leveraged cross-cultural communication skills — including basic Arabic (Khaliji dialect familiarity) — to foster international collaborations aligned with Panama's educational and technological advancement goals.

Programme Design and Digital Visibility

- Created a manual connecting Panamanians to 260+ scholarships, expanding reach through tailored social media and learning tools.
- Built this scholarship framework through extensive liaison with educational institutions, government agencies, and private sector stakeholders, ensuring multi-sectoral alignment and impact.
- Facilitated the establishment of a UK-Panama partnership that launched Challenges Abroad in Panama, mobilising 300+ UK students for intercultural exchange and youth development.
- Led a website revamp, launching the first Education section to improve digital access and showcase solutions-focused educational initiatives.

Coaching and Mentoring for Career and Personal Growth

- Provided one-on-one mentoring through Unfold's Volunteer Programme, empowering young adults with skills to navigate academic, personal, and career challenges.
- Designed coaching-informed programmes to improve confidence, critical thinking, and goal achievement.

Academic Guidance and Transition Support

- Guided students through vocational pathways and global scholarships, enabling independent progression.
- Mentored students and young professionals to achieve tangible milestones.

Educational Content Design and Youth Empowerment

- Designed inclusive materials for UK primary schools (aligned with National Curriculum) to build confidence and engagement.
- Advocated bilingualism in Panama, promoting English as a gateway to global opportunity.

Communication and Emotional Intelligence

- Presented at global forums (Education World Forum, COP28, UN conferences), demonstrating cultural sensitivity and strong communication skills in high-stakes, international settings.
- Created mentoring spaces fostering active listening, vulnerability, and personal growth.

Strategic Learning and Development

- Designed and implemented initiatives focused on skill-building, learning engagement, and personal development, promoting lifelong learning habits among students and young adults.
- Integrated coaching-informed educational tools and assistive technologies to promote inclusive learning environments and foster lifelong learning mindsets among diverse student groups.

I am deeply committed to advancing Panama's presence on the international stage by combining diplomatic leadership with educational and technological innovation. Whether through fostering partnerships, empowering young minds, or building cross-cultural bridges across Europe and the Gulf, I bring passion, resilience, and a solutions-focused approach to every role I undertake.

For further details on my professional trajectory, downloadable CV, and reference letters, please visit www.mich17.com.



**EMBAJADA DE PANAMÁ
REINO UNIDO**

London, 19 March 2024

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to provide a reference for Michelle Arjona who has worked as part of my team since November 2020 at the Embassy of Panama in London as the Science, Technology and Education Attaché. She reports to me in my position as Ambassador and Consul General of Panama to the United Kingdom, Ireland and Iceland.

As an employee, Michelle has always been a reliable and resourceful professional who is passionate about and committed to her work. During her time in my team, Michelle has managed to conduct high-impact research and to make a number of key recommendations that resulted in significant outcomes to the organisation, such as the digital transformation projects she has managed during her tenure, which have accelerated the way work is done and has reduced the time in which tasks are carried out in the organisation.

Michelle's strong passion for all that relates to tech instills the need and the importance of technology to all. Michelle has an innate talent to recognise what people are good at and encourage them to embrace technology to facilitate the processes involved in their activities. She has helped train people in tech concepts, especially to people who are not tech, even to me. I was not a tech person and I have to say that through Michelle I have learned to embrace IT and to see how IT helps me on my day to day activities, that is both personally and professionally.

I have always put a premium among my team members on initiative and willingness to collaborate outside of their immediate work tasks and Michelle has never failed to deliver on both fronts.

An example of Michelle's willingness to go above and beyond her duties was clearly shown when she was eager to implement and run an internship programme at the Embassy. Michelle has been able to showcase the internship programme in such a way that she has managed to get the interns motivated about the tasks they have been assigned to. Michelle is able to identify the best in each of the interns (through one-to-one meetings) allowing for the interns to become much more enthusiastic as they would find purpose in their efforts. Michelle instills in them the passion for work through positive reinforcement, especially in aspects around Corporate Sustainability and ESG.

Michelle has consistently demonstrated her competence in the improvement of any processes she manages through her natural ability to analyse situations, break them down into manageable pieces and organically creating effective systems around them. A recent example of this has been her ability to create a system around a variety of Consular Services within a short period of time in spite of these being presented to her at a short notice.

Michelle's innovative thinking has stood out through her strong analytical skills, being detail-oriented and her innate ability to use data to generate impactful results. Exemplified when she oversaw the design and implementation of a wireless network, the revamping of the organisation's website, and the creation of a manual (from concept) for individuals in Panama to gain access to over 260 partial scholarships (collated under her management), all these resulting from the extensive liaison with a variety of agents and officials from educational institutions, governmental departments and private sector.

I commend Michelle's commitment to Education which she has been able to show, for example, through the consistent efforts she has made to promote bilingualism in Panama through the implementation of initiatives that promote the teaching of the English language, keeping always in mind that becoming proficient in English opens opportunities for our citizens, not only in terms of culture but also in broadening peoples' perspectives as to the existence of a greater range of opportunities around the world, that is at both professional and personal levels. The same scenario applies with other languages, hence Michelle currently learning Arabic, applying this reasoning herself not only to English speaking countries but beyond, to the Arabian culture, a different world in its entirety.

Michelle has consistently been positive with her work to the point of her enthusiasm being contagious. Michelle has clearly shown her positive spirit, and an example of this is how Michelle would always finish our meetings with the phrase "*We are changing the world*", a phrase that would gain much more value especially knowing that we often have been working against the odds.

Michelle is a delight to work with – a team player and a very loyal person with a positive can-do attitude all the way. I truly believe Michelle would be a great asset to any company. I would not hesitate to hire her again if the opportunity arose.

I would like to thank Michelle for her excellent, long-standing contribution. I wish her every success and all the best for her future professional and personal life.

Please do not hesitate to contact me, should you have any questions.

Yours faithfully,


NATALIA ROJO
Ambassador and Consul General



Nairobi, Kenya

07/05/2025

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to provide a reference for Michelle Arjona. I've had the privilege of being supported by Michelle through challenging times in my life, and the benefits have been truly remarkable. Here are some thoughts I have on the transformative journey we have walked together.

Coaching with Michelle has helped me take more responsibility for my life. One of the most significant outcomes has been a heightened self-awareness. Through thoughtful, funny, sometimes painful, and always insightful conversations, Michelle has guided me to better understand my motivations, fears, and patterns of behavior. I always emerge from our conversations with greater clarity and a deeper sense of purpose.

Michelle creates a safe, non-judgmental space where one can freely explore their thoughts and emotions. She consistently equips me with practical tools to navigate difficult situations, and she is generous with both her time and presence. Thanks to her coaching, I feel significantly more resilient and capable of facing life's uncertainties.

Michelle's support is wide-ranging. She often recommends carefully chosen resources, reflective exercises, and grounded practices to nurture mental and emotional well-being. As a result, I feel a deeper connection to myself and a stronger sense of personal agency.

What has stood out most in my experience with Michelle is the consistency and integrity of her presence. Whether in moments of clarity or confusion, she meets me exactly where I am—never with judgment, always with care. Her approach is not formulaic—it is responsive, intuitive, and deeply personalized, which I believe is what makes her such an effective coach and mentor.

Michelle does not just help you cope—she helps you grow. Her guidance extends far beyond our sessions, often surfacing days or weeks later as a quiet shift in perspective, a deeper breath, or a new decision made with greater confidence. In this way, her support continues to shape how I move through the world.

I am immensely grateful for Michelle's wisdom, expertise, and compassion—and wholeheartedly recommend her to anyone seeking meaningful and lasting support.

Yours Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth Kamundia", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Elizabeth Kamundia

Director, Disability Rights Division

Human Rights Watch

Confidential
Sent by email

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January 2024

To whom it may concern,

Reference: Michelle Arjona

I hereby provide a reference letter in support of Michelle Arjona's application to join your organisation.

Before joining the Sustainability Graduate Scheme at Turner & Townsend, a global consultancy business serving strategic clients in the real estate, infrastructure and natural resources sectors in September 2023, I graduated with a MSc in Environment, Politics & Society from University College London (UCL) and a BA in Politics from King's College London (KCL).

I worked under the supervision of Michelle over the period of May-September 2022, during my internship at the Embassy of Panama in the UK within her role as the Science, Technology and Education *Attaché*. I was principally tasked with finding the available scholarships for Panamanians across a list of 200+ universities in UK, Ireland, and Iceland, producing a 60-page dossier from the data found and listing the possible partnerships Panamanian universities could take part in with other EU Higher Education Institutions under the Erasmus+ Scheme or its UK counterpart, the Turing Scheme.

I truly enjoyed working with Michelle between my Bachelor and my Master's, so much so that I volunteered to stay involved in the projects I would be able to provide support to Michelle, especially within the efforts Michelle placed in creating the relevant diplomatic relations between Panama and the UK in order for UK institutions to visit Panama and ultimately create long-lasting agreements within the subject matters she managed at the Embassy; Science, Technology and Education. I came to the Embassy once a week and liaised very often with Michelle on the establishment of the official LATAM mission where UK institutions would visit Panama and my request to interview ten ministers for my dissertation. Consequently, my mentorship went beyond this internship as Michelle acted as a gatekeeper and supervisor for my Master's dissertation. Indeed, I wrote my dissertation on Panama's carbon-negative status based on the latest greenhouse gas emissions inventory that Panama published (named Nationally Determined Contributions).

After one year and half of work with Michelle, I am confident in saying that Michelle's profile would be an added value to any firm, especially as she demonstrated the following three traits.

Horizontal leadership

Michelle immediately welcomed my ideas, proactive initiatives and rewarded my hard work ethic. This led to several brainstorming discussions every time Michelle exposed me to new tasks, such as on the best way to deliver my research on the collisions between vessels and whales around the Panama Canal's entrance that the Ambassador requested urgently. She trusted my presentation skills and gave credit to my hard work, enabling me to directly present my findings to the Ambassador.

Strong logical reasoning

Michelle constantly shared her reasoning behind the approach she would identify as the most preferable for the task in question. For instance, a business case report was drafted intended to the Ministry of Education on the existing barriers of learning English in Panama. Michelle's background in the inter/governmental, private and third sectors as well as her knowledge of contextual dynamics in Panama were decisive in producing a convincing case, which was meaningful for both audiences that would read it. As a result, a flyer summarising the findings of this research and a 6-step manual were created to empower Panamanians to understand the educational opportunities available to them in the UK, Ireland and Iceland and how to proceed in order to take advantage of these.

Make changes happen

Finally, Michelle always pushed beyond to investigate with a holistic approach the subject matters and chase up the relevant people, enabling to reach an initial goal. The official LATAM mission from the UK to Panama best illustrates Michelle's willingness to make change happen, as her work was essential in making this visit possible and ultimately develop partnerships between UK-Panama institutions on the theme of Transnational Education (TNE), ESG and Corporate Sustainability. It also marks the culmination of her hard work to satisfy her professional tenure as a Diplomat at the Embassy managing the Science, Technology and Education Department, which started from scratch. She successfully developed tight connections with the relevant UK government departments, such as the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the Department for Business and Trade (DBT), and representatives from many UK institutions. I witnessed Michelle's networking skills during the various events I accompanied her to as she has a genuine ability to listen actively and ask the right questions thanks to her natural enthusiasm, determination and experience (at both personal and professional levels).

I can confidently say that Michelle has shaped my personal and professional development. She first helped me to choose between my several Master's offers, as well as inspired me to upskill myself into an area of increasing interest (ESG investing), finally she supported me during my graduate scheme's applications. After completing this internship, I have been able to reinforce my belief that sharing knowledge and experience with someone is one of the most valuable gifts one can receive, especially at an early stage of a career where a lot of questions can arise.

I truly hope that in the future I give back the time and share my experience with individuals who cross my path, as Michelle did with me and other interns. I am confident that she shall definitely become a very valuable asset to any organisation, like she was to the Embassy of Panama in London and to all the interns she supervised. I firmly believe that all of Michelle's experience gained from the role of managing a significant number of interns throughout Michelle's tenure at the Embassy will organically translate into crucial leadership skills to be directly applied in any job she is to carry out.

Please do not hesitate to contact me, should you require any further information.

Yours faithfully

Ines Tancrede
Junior Sustainability Consultant, Turner & Townsend
IEMA Graduate Certified
ESG Investing Certified (CFA Institute)



January 2024

To whom it may concern,

Subject: letter of recommendation - Michelle Arjona

My name is Regina Cavero and I am a student of Political Science and Public Administration at the University of Konstanz (Germany) who did a 4-month internship at the Embassy of Panama in London under the supervision of the Science, Technology and Education Attaché at the Embassy, Michelle Arjona. During this time Michelle made this internship way more impactful than I ever would have thought possible.

Even though she could have only taken a role of a supervisor like many other people would have done when having an intern, she went above and beyond the typical duties of such a position. She not only provided guidance on daily tasks but also took a vested interest in knowing more about me on a personal and professional level and in my long-term career aspirations. This is the reason why after only one week at the Embassy I knew that she was going to be my mentor.

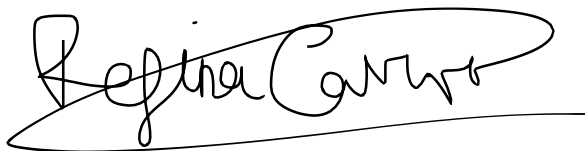
When I started my internship, I was a second-year university student who did not really know what to do after her graduation and had not gathered a lot of experience in today's working world. Michelle was aware that I needed guidance and therefore shared valuable insights and personal experiences related to the several fields she has worked in such as the banking sector, NGOs, and the United Nations among others. When listening to Michelle's stories I understood how important it is to think big and outside of the box but without forgetting to look at the small steps that are necessary to reach those goals. Michelle has always highlighted how vital it is to be detail-oriented or "granular" like she liked to call it. And it was during my internship that I noticed how right she was and what a big difference small details can make in achieving any tasks at hand.

Additionally, Michelle did everything in her power to take me to as many conferences and events as possible since she knew that learning more about several fields would widen my horizons and give me a broader picture on education, one of the topics she managed within her role as an Attaché at the Embassy as well as on other fields. During those events she showed me how fundamental it is to network and how good networking is done. I learned that understanding how human beings think and work is necessary to be able to communicate properly and handle different situations and that confidence is key.

Not only after conferences and events but also after the meetings we had at the Embassy she wanted to hear my opinion on how the meeting had gone and how the information acquired could help us reach the goals she had set within the department she managed at the Embassy; Science, Technology and Education department. By doing so and asking me further questions she helped me to develop and strengthen my analytical skills and she got me out of my comfort zone which is crucial as it helped me grow and prepare myself for similar upcoming situations. I have always admired her self-confidence and how clear her ideas were when she expressed them, and I know that even though I still have a long way to go she has helped me to improve and keep working on those aspects.

In conclusion, Michelle was a mentor who significantly contributed to my personal and professional development and instilled in me a sense of confidence that will undoubtedly shape my future. She played a pivotal role in shaping my perspective of what I want to do in my future that is starting to show its roots now. Before my time at the Embassy, I wanted to do a master's degree after my graduation, but I have come to understand how much one learns during internships and similar practical work experiences. That is the reason why I have decided to seek further professional experience that will help me find out what I truly like and identify the field of work that best fits my acquired skills and innate talents in view to ultimately specialise in it. I will soon start to apply to jobs in the field of international development with a specific focus on education and sustainability. Just like Michelle highlighted regarding her work, I would like to do something with purpose that has a positive impact in the world; and to work hard and systematically in order to make this possible, as Michelle, as my mentor, has shown me.

I really felt that I positively changed during the internship with Michelle, and I am confident that her influence will have a lasting impact on my career trajectory and my life in general. Therefore, I want to end this letter emphasising how incredibly grateful I am for the mentorship and guidance provided by Michelle Arjona.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Regina Cavero". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Regina Cavero