



Future Surgeons Programme: Meet the Delegates

“ The future of
surgery



Prepared by:

April 2026

**International Association of Student Surgical
Societies**



International Surgical Week ISW 2026

The World's Congress of Surgery 51st World Congress of the International Society of Surgery ISS/SIC
19 - 23 April 2026 Mexico City, Mexico Jointly organized with the 34th International Congress of the Mexican Association of Endoscopic Surgery



Asociación Mexicana de Cirugía Endoscópica, A.C.



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Executive Summary



The International Association of Student Surgical Societies (IASSS), founded in 2014, is the official pre-specialist society partner of the International Society of Surgery (Soci t  Internationale de Chirurgie) (ISS-SIC) which was founded in 1902. The ISS-SIC hosts a biannual International Surgical Week (ISW), this year in its 51st iteration in Mexico City.

In 2017, the ISS-SIC identified the need to “open their doors” to younger surgeons and entrusted the IASSS with launching the Future Surgeons Programme (FSP) at International Surgical Week 2017 in Basel, Switzerland.

Since then, the IASSS have been proud to have granted this opportunity to 107 promising medical students and junior doctors from across the world - benefitting from the Program in Basel (2017), Krakow (2019), Vienna (2022), and Kuala Lumpur (2024).

In 2026, the FSP delegation comprises 15 people, 6 of whom are previous delegates, now serving as organisers. Notably, the 2026 FSP cohort is made up of x medical students, x junior doctors, medical officers, fellows and a surgical resident. 8 are from Africa, 2 from Asia, 1 from the Middle East, 1 from Europe, 1 from Oceania (for the first time!) and 3 from North America - 2 of whom are from Mexico.

This group brings with it various surgical interests, experiences and wholehearted enthusiasm with regard to contributing to the future of global surgical and anaesthesia care.





Organising Team



Sulé Burger, MBBCh PGCert (Health Services Leadership)
IASSS Co-founder & Secretary General
Surgical Resident | Tygerberg Hospital

Sulé Burger is the co-founder of IASSS and has served as the Secretary General for the IASSS for many years, guiding and shaping the society into the thriving organisation it is today.

Sulé is currently a General Surgery Registrar at Stellenbosch University in Cape Town, South Africa and previously served as a General Surgery Medical Officer at Worcester Provincial Hospital for a number of years.

Sulé serves as the Chair of the Social Media Subcommittee as a Councillor-at-Large for the ISS-SIC. As part of this role, Sulé manages all the social media for the ISS-SIC and has reshaped the media approach for the organisation.

Sulé led the inaugural FSP delegation to Basil, Switzerland, in 2017, setting the stage for all the FSP delegations that have come since. She has been integral to the growth and development of future surgeons around the world for over a decade.

She also holds a Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Practice, Health Services Leadership with distinction.





Organising Team



Jessica Davies, MBChB
IASSS Board Member, Chief Development Officer
Community Service Officer | Worcester Hospital

Jess Davies is a Community Service Medical Officer in General Surgery at Worcester Provincial Hospital in Worcester South Africa. She is the Chief Development Officer on the IASSS Board. Jess has been part of the IASSS for 6 years and has a strong passion for surgery and serving under-served communities.

Jess is enrolled in the Postgraduate Certificate of Surgery through the Royal College of Surgeons of England and has recently completed her Surgical Primaries through the College of Medicine of South Africa. She hopes to pursue a career in surgery in South Africa one day.

She is currently completing a fellowship through the G4 Alliance focussed on Global Surgery and a Global Surgery Advocacy Certificate through the University of Global Health Equity and Operation Smile.

Jess has been involved in Project Flamingo for 2 years, serving as a volunteer as part of their pro bono mastectomy work in South Africa.





Organising Team



**Cassandra Tatenda Mbanje, MBBCh MSc
IASSS Board Member, Chief Impact Officer
Postdoctoral Scientist | International Agency
for Research on Cancer (IARC)**

Tatenda, also known as Cassandra, Mbanje is a Zimbabwean-born physician (MBBCh, Wits), researcher, global health advocate, and speaker with a deep commitment to safe and equitable surgical, obstetric, trauma, and anaesthesia (SOTA) care worldwide.

Tatenda's relationship with ISW spans many years – from her selection as a Future Surgeons Programme delegate at ISW 2019 in Kraków, to ISW 2022 in Vienna where she was a recipient of a Breast Surgery International Travel Scholarship and was awarded 2nd Prize for her free paper oral presentation, to moderating sessions and representing the IASSS as its President at ISW 2024 in Kuala Lumpur. She returns to ISW 2026 as a board member of the IASSS, and having served as Associate Director of the G4 Alliance SOTA Fellowship Programme - a role she was nominated for following her participation in the 2024/25 fellow cohort. Her experiences with the G4 Alliance, combined with her business development background in HIV/TB programming across Southern Africa, have deepened her passion for community-level systems strengthening and improving access to SOTA care globally.

An Oxford-trained epidemiologist (MSc, Global Health Science and Epidemiology) and incoming Postdoctoral Scientist at the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), Tatenda brings epidemiological rigour to her advocacy for stronger, more equitable health systems. Her Masters dissertation, which examined inherited Indigenous American ancestry and cause-specific mortality using the Mexico City Prospective Study, reflects a further dimension of her research interests, particularly in leveraging large-scale population data to understand health inequities across diverse communities, making ISW 2026 a particularly meaningful congress for her.

Outside of work, she is an avid reader, writer, and self-described new runner.





Organising Team



SangEun Lee, MBBCh
IASSS Immediate Past-President
Community Service Medical Officer |
Taung Hospital, South Africa

SangEun Lee is a South Korean-born medical professional currently completing her community service in rural South Africa. A graduate of Stellenbosch University (MBChB) and former intern at Tygerberg Academic Hospital, South Africa, she has built a clinical foundation centred on adaptability and high-quality care within resource-constrained environments. Driven by the belief that education is the primary catalyst for generational change in healthcare, she focuses on building sustainable surgical systems.

As the Immediate Past President (2025) of the International Association of Student Surgical Societies (IASSS), SangEun has been a leading voice in global surgical education. Her leadership extends to the AMEE Student Task Force and the IFMSA, where she advocates for accessible training formats and international mentorship. These roles have provided her with a unique perspective on the systemic barriers facing the next generation of surgeons worldwide.

An emerging clinician-scientist, SangEun's research portfolio encompasses surgical training, global surgery, and trauma. She is currently transitioning towards a career that integrates clinical practice with health policy research, with specific interests in paediatric surgery, ophthalmology, and healthcare systems. As a global citizen, she intends to dedicate the coming years to advanced research, aiming to drive system-level impacts in global health equity.

Beyond the hospital, SangEun maintains a disciplined balance through ballet, golf, and the culinary art, reflecting her appreciation for technical precision and cultural exploration.





Organising Team



Kirtana Ponnuswamy, MBBS PGCert (Clinical Education)
IASSS Office
Resident Doctor | East Kent Hospitals University Foundation Trust

Kirtana Ponnuswamy is a resident doctor pursuing higher speciality training in general surgery, currently combining clinical practice with medical education and research. She has gained experience across general surgery, acute care, and trauma-related settings and recently completed her PG cert in clinical education from University of Aberdeen.

Alongside her clinical work, she is a Medical Education Fellow, where she contributes to the design and delivery of teaching programmes for medical students across 4 universities in the UK. She is also the lead for the recruitment and appointment of doctor representatives to the local academic board across all specialities and is an active part of redeveloping the doctors voice group within the trust.

Her academic interests focus on improving training environments and accessibility within medicine. She leads a research project exploring neurodivergence in early-career doctors, aiming to better understand how healthcare systems can support diverse cognitive styles. In parallel, She is also piloting AI-simulated patients and health record systems into simulation training, with a focus on improving preparedness for on-calls and acute clinical scenarios within the curriculum.





Organising Team

(Remote Support)



Michael Petrus, MBBCh MDPP
IASSS 2026 Co-President
Doctoral Candidate | University of Oxford

Michael Petrus is a medical doctor, Rhodes Scholar, and DPhil (PhD) candidate in Medical Sciences (Cardiovascular Medicine) at the University of Oxford. His research focuses on the cross-talk between adipose tissue and the cardiovascular system, using artificial intelligence and CT imaging to develop precision diagnostics for cardiometabolic disease. He also holds a Master's in Development Policy and Practice from the University of Cape Town as a Mandela Rhodes Scholar, reflecting his interest in the intersection of health systems, policy, and scalable healthcare innovation.

He serves as Co-President of the International Association of Student Surgical Societies (IASSS) and is the founder of the Namibian Student Surgical Society, which he started to advance surgical education, research engagement, and advocacy around health inequalities. He was selected as a Future Surgeon Program Delegate to attend the World Congress of Surgery 2024 in Malaysia. His work sits at the intersection of clinical medicine, artificial intelligence, and global health systems, with a long-term vision to develop scalable solutions that improve early disease detection and expand access to high-quality surgical care globally.





Organising Team

(Conference Support)



Yuki Julius Ng, MBBS(IMU),
PGCert(RCSEng), MRCS(Edin)
IASSS Academic Networking Director
Surgical Doctor | University Hospital Bristol
and Weston

Dr Yuki Julius Ng is a doctor currently working in General Surgery at Weston General Hospital, UK, with a strong clinical and academic interest in general and trauma surgery. A graduate of the International Medical University, Malaysia, he has developed broad experience across surgical and medical specialties, alongside postgraduate surgical training in the UK.

His academic work spans global surgery, trauma systems, perioperative outcomes, humanitarian medicine, and the application of innovation and artificial intelligence in healthcare. He has contributed to international collaborative research and published in leading journals including The Lancet, The Lancet Global Health, BMJ Global Health, Anaesthesia, and the British Journal of Surgery.

Beyond clinical and academic practice, Dr Ng has been actively involved in surgical leadership, mentorship, and international training initiatives. He has organised conferences and educational programmes, supported junior colleagues, and contributed to humanitarian and community-based medical work. His professional interests are grounded in a commitment to compassionate care, surgical equity, and improving access to safe surgery both locally and globally.





FSP Selection Criteria

Mid-2025, IASSS opened applications for the 2026 Future Surgeons Programme. We welcomed applications from IASSS members (medical students, junior doctors and early-stage surgical trainees) from across the world. Following a paper application submission, candidates were invited for a short interview. During the selection process, we prioritised the following criteria:

Demonstrated Interest in Surgery

Applicants had to show a demonstrated interest in surgery - including research work, surgical society involvement and participation in surgery focused events, to name a few.

Demonstrated Leadership Skills

Applicants were required to describe a clear history of having undertaken leadership roles of any kind at various levels.

Access to Opportunities

We prioritised candidates who had lesser access to local and international opportunities, especially those from low and middle-income countries. IASSS prides itself on being an equalizer for medical students and junior doctors around the world.

2026 FSP Group

24 Selected



9 + 5* attending



5 from Africa

4 from Asia

1 from Europe

3 from North America - with

2 from Mexico



36% women

64% completed medical school

79% originating from low-and-middle income countries

*organsing team





The Delegates

Leonardo González Bustos | Mexico



LinkedIn: [Leonardo González Bustos](#)

Research & Academic Interests: Oncological Surgery, Minimally Invasive Surgery, medical education.

Hobbies: Listening to music, playing piano, astronomy, aerospace engineering, reading, being with friends, family and nature, videogames, puzzles, learning about cultures, and history.

Leonardo González Bustos is a fourth-year medical student at Universidad Cuauhtémoc, San Luis Potosí, Mexico (UCSLP). Passionate about surgery, research, and teaching, and is driven by a desire to connect with fellow medical students who share that same love for the field.

His goal is to provide everyone with the best possible foundation in surgery, believing that opportunity should not be determined by economic background, personal connections, or circumstance - so that future surgeons can grow into the best versions of themselves, for their own sake and for the care, outcomes, and quality of life of their patients.

He serves as Director of Oncological Surgery Committee of the International Association of Student Surgical Societies, México (IASSS). He currently serves as a Surgical Techniques Instructor at the Department of Surgical Clinic in Basic Experimental and Advanced Laparoscopic Courses.

Leonardo is actively engaged in clinical and research, particularly in general surgery, trauma and oncological surgery. He has participated in multiple research activities, such as National Academic Conference of the Mexican Academy of Surgery, Mexican Academy of General Surgery, 2nd International Congress of Surgery of Tecnológico de Monterrey.





The Delegates

Marie Desonnaux | Belgium



LinkedIn: [Marie Desonnaux](#)

Research & Academic Interests: Transplantation surgery, General surgery, Trauma surgery, AI and surgery, SOTA Care (global surgery)

Marie Desonnaux is a fifth-year medical student at the University of Liège, Belgium, with a strong interest in general, transplantation, and trauma surgery. She currently serves as the Belgian Representative and European Chapter Lead for the International Association of Student Surgical Societies (IASSS), contributing to the development of international dialogue and exchange within the surgical student community.

Clinically, Marie volunteers in the General Surgery and Transplant departments at the CHU de Liège, where she has built hands-on experience alongside surgical teams. She is also involved in several ongoing research projects, including work on artificial intelligence in emergency digestive surgery, kidney transplantation and perfusion preservation (in porcine and human model), and gallbladder cancer. As first author, she will be presenting her abstract – Diagnostic and Therapeutic Accuracy of Large Language Models in Emergency Digestive Surgery: A Preliminary Evaluation Using the Artificial Intelligence Performance Instrument (AIPI) Scoring System – at this congress.

Beyond her clinical and research commitments, Marie is dedicated to surgical education at the student level, teaching suturing techniques and the fundamentals of laparoscopy to junior medical students. Through her involvement with IASSS and International Surgical Week, she is committed to promoting student engagement, multidisciplinary learning, and meaningful contributions to the future of surgery.





The Delegates

Yan Bin Fong | Malaysia



LinkedIn: [Fong Yan Bin](#)

Research & Academic Interests: Surgical education, simulation-based training, medical pedagogy, Global surgery

Yan Bin is a medical doctor from Malaysia. He is currently pursuing a Master of Medical Science at the University of Malaya, with a focus on advancing surgical education and medical research. At Universiti Putra Malaysia, he founded the Putra Surgical Interest Group and led several impactful student initiatives, including involvement in the Malaysian Student Surgical Society (MSSS) and Academy for Silent Mentor (AFSM). He also served as the IASSS National Delegate for Malaysia.

Yan Bin has contributed extensively to medical education and community outreach as a Council Member at the Academy for Silent Mentor, where he facilitates cadaveric workshops, teaches surgical techniques, and supports palliative care programmes. He also holds certifications in Good Clinical Practice (GCP) and Trauma Evaluation and Management, reflecting his commitment to strengthening healthcare training and clinical practice.

Yan Bin is currently conducting a randomised controlled trial on perioperative pain control in University of Malaya and also conducting another Systematic Review and Meta-analysis in the similar field.





The Delegates

Diego Emiliano Meraz-Brenes | Mexico



LinkedIn: [Diego Emiliano Meraz Brenes](#)

Research & Academic Interests: Surgical research, Plastic Surgery, and Global Surgery

Diego Emiliano Meraz Brenes is a medical student at the University of Guadalajara (CUCS), Mexico, with a strong focus on surgical research, global surgery, and academic development.

He serves as Research Manager of the International Association of Student Surgical Societies (IASSS) and as National Delegate for Mexico. He is an IASSS representative to the World Health Organization (WHO) Acute Care Action Network (ACAN), contributing to initiatives aimed at improving the quality of emergency and surgical care systems. Additionally, he is part of the International Team within the Education Department at InciSioN (International Student Surgical Network). He previously served as a Surgical Techniques Instructor at the Department of Surgical Clinic at the University of Guadalajara.

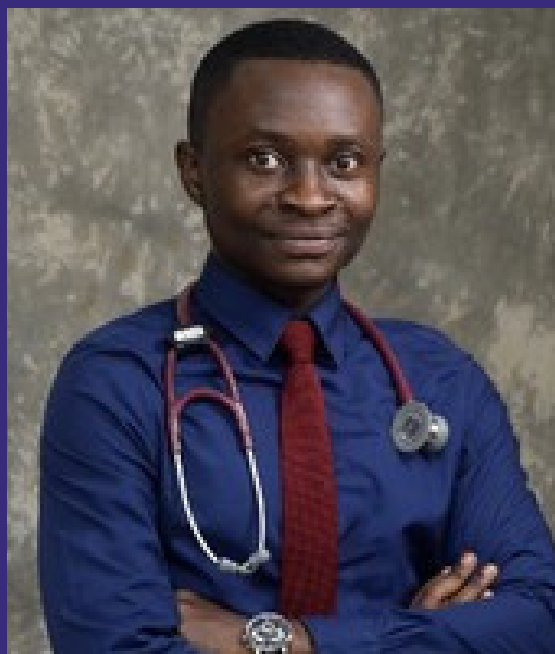
Diego is actively engaged in clinical and academic research, particularly in pediatric surgical pathology and reconstructive strategies in burn patients. He has participated in multiple research fellowships through the Dolphin Program (Programa Delfín), presenting his work at international scientific meetings. He completed clinical research training in pediatric surgery at the Civil Hospital of Guadalajara "Fray Antonio Alcalde" and collaborated in the ALLIGATOR Study (Appendicitis Global Outcomes Study), led by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Global Health Research Unit on Global Surgery. He is currently involved in ongoing clinical research, with several manuscripts under review. His work emphasizes advancing surgical research, teaching, strengthening international collaboration, and fostering the development of future leaders in surgery.





The Delegates

Michael Effah Ntiamoah | Ghana



LinkedIn: [Michael Effah Ntiamoah](#)

Research & Academic Interests: General surgery, urology, clinical teaching

Hobbies: Swimming, hiking, and site seeing

Michael Effah Ntiamoah is a Ghanaian surgical resident based in Accra, Ghana. Currently in his second year of residency, he is pursuing his membership with both the Ghana College of Surgeons and the West Africa College of Surgeons. His surgical interests include colorectal surgery and urology, and he is also deeply interested in global surgery, policy research, surgical education, and research more broadly. He hopes to use this platform to gain knowledge, experience, and connections that will help him sharpen his skills, broaden his horizons, and build international recognition as he grows in his career.





The Delegates

Patricia Omwansa | South Africa



LinkedIn: [Patricia Omwansa](#)

Research & Academic Interest: Burns reconstruction and congenital anomalies

Hobbies: Running, hiking, and spending time with those closest to me.

Patricia Omwansa is a Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery Registrar, born in Kenya and currently based in South Africa. She views reconstructive surgery not only as a clinical specialty, but as a critical component of global surgery, restoring form, function, dignity, and opportunity in underserved communities.

Patricia is driven by the challenge of combining technical excellence with health systems thinking, with the goal of expanding access to transformative surgical care. Her interests span areas such as burn reconstruction and congenital anomalies, grounded in a broader commitment to advancing surgical equity.

Beyond the clinical setting, she enjoys running and hiking, drawing inspiration from new environments and perspectives. She is motivated by movement in all its forms—whether exploring new landscapes or contributing to efforts that make surgical care more accessible worldwide.





The Delegates

Kacylia Roy Proulx | Canada



LinkedIn: [Kacylia Roy Proulx](#)

Research & Academic Interest: Trauma surgery, pediatric surgery, gender equity in surgery, patient-centered care

Hobbies: Travelling, mountaineering, triathlon, scuba diving, skiing, music

Kacylia Roy Proulx is a final-year medical student at McGill University and an incoming General Surgery Resident with a strong commitment to global surgery and health equity. Her passion for improving surgical care has been shaped by clinical and advocacy experiences in resource-limited settings, where she witnessed the challenges of delivering equitable care.

Her work focuses on pediatric surgery, trauma care, and gender equity, and she holds leadership roles within the Canadian Global Surgery Trainees' Alliance, the Association of Women Surgeons, and the Gender Equity Initiative in Global Surgery, contributing to research, advocacy, and collaboration in global health. Kacylia is also dedicated to mentorship and medical education, supporting fellow students in research, advocacy, and global health engagement. Outside of medicine, she enjoys traveling off the beaten path, whether hiking remote trails or exploring new cultures, and is always seeking her next adventure!





The Delegates


Hritik Savla | India



LinkedIn: [Hritik Savla](#)

Research & Academic Interest: General surgery, Plastic and reconstructive surgery, Pediatric surgery, breast surgeries.

Hobbies: Garba (a traditional Gujarati folk dance), inline skating, vlogging, photography

Hritik Savla is a graduate of Grant Government Medical College and Sir JJ Group of Hospitals, Mumbai, India, with a deep passion for surgery and a long-term aspiration to pursue a career in plastic and reconstructive surgery. Alongside his clinical training, he is the Founder and Director of **CLINICALLY EVOLVE FOUNDATION**  an initiative dedicated to fostering skill-oriented, collaborative, forward-thinking medical education, and community service.

Driven by curiosity and a commitment to excellence, Hritik remains actively involved in academics, research, and leadership. He has also contributed to the global academic community as a member of the Medical Students Advisory Board (MSAB) of IJCR Central for Terms VI and VII. Over the years, he has had the privilege of representing both his institution and India on several international platforms, experiences that have further strengthened his dedication to learning, collaboration, and innovation in medicine. Alongside his academic pursuits, he remains deeply engaged in community service and volunteer initiatives.

Beyond medicine, Hritik nurtures his creative side through photography, crafting, and dancing Garba. These pursuits allow him to stay grounded, bringing balance and perspective to his journey in medicine.





The Delegates

Tebogo Sekgarametso | South Africa



LinkedIn: [Tebogo Sekgarametso](#)

Research & Academic Interests: Multinational research

Hobbies: Reading, running and spending time with family.

Tebogo Sekgarametso is a sixth-year medical student at Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University and an active student leader with a strong passion for surgical education and academic development. He currently serves on multiple national and international committees, including the Surgical Education Subcommittee of the International Association of Student Surgical Societies (IASSS) and as Academic Coordinator for the IASSS South African Satellite Committee. He also contributes as a junior editor for the Guide to Surgery textbook, with the aim of advancing accessibility and engagement in surgical learning. Within his university, he serves as President of the Internal Medicine Student Society and Deputy President of the Student Surgical Society. His leadership extends into academic research, where he has played key roles in global studies such as the Alligator Study (Data Collection Team Leader), the FEMUR Study (Hospital Co-lead), and the RAMPS Study





FSP Abstract Presentations

Name: Leonardo González Bustos.

Abstract Title & Number: "TRANEXAMIC ACID IN ELECTIVE ABDOMINAL SURGERY: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW AND META-ANALYSIS".

Date & Time: 21 Apr, 2026 from 12:45 to 12:48

Name: Hritik Rasikkumar Savla

Abstract Title & Number: "A CLINICAL AUDIT OF GENERAL SURGERY OPERATIVE NOTE DOCUMENTATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A STANDARDIZED TEMPLATE."
- PW07-08

Date & Time: 21 Apr, 2026 from 12:15 to 13:15

Name: Marie Desonniaux

Abstract Title & Number:

"DIAGNOSTIC AND THERAPEUTIC ACCURACY OF LARGE LANGUAGE MODELS IN EMERGENCY DIGESTIVE SURGERY: A PRELIMINARY EVALUATION USING THE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE PERFORMANCE INSTRUMENT (APII) SCORING SYSTEM".

Abstract n°789

Date & Time: Wednesday, 22 April 2026, 15:30-17:00

Name: Diego Emiliano Meraz Brenes

Abstract Title & Number: "RECONSTRUCTIVE STRATEGIES IN PEDIATRIC EXTENSIVE BURNS: A RETROSPECTIVE COHORT ANALYSIS"

Abstract n°609

Date & Time: Tuesday, 21 April 2026, 07:15-08:15

Name: Jessica Davies

Abstract Title & Number: Multiple Gastric Perforations in a Young Patient: A Case Report and Review of the Literature, 546

Date & Time: 20 April 2026, 12:15-13:15





Honouring Selected Delegates Who Could Not Join This Cycle

Rajeeka Singh Tak | India

Nanfa Joel Manuel | Cameroon

Samuel Fodop | Cameroon

Frank-Awat Abaiweh | Cameroon

Abbe Luvale Floribert | Democratic Republic of Congo

Ana Tugia | Fiji

Raneem Frihant | Jordan

Immaculate Mkumbuzi | Zimbabwe

Swechha Bhatt | Nepal

Jeremiah Daniel | Nigeria

Collins Ijezie | Nigeria

Miracle Abraham | Nigeria

Daniel Esanju | Nigeria

Laiba Sarfraz | Pakistan

Roaldo Mtenga | Tanzania

Cathrine Nixon | United Arab Emirates

Find them on LinkedIn!





Connect with us!

“ If you want to go fast,
go alone.

If you want to go
far, go together..

- Anonymous African Proverb

...If you want to build
new and lasting
routes, take with you
the next generation. ”

- Tatenda Mbanje

Email:
president@iasss.org

Website:
www.iasss.org



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