

MICHELLE ARJONA

MULTILINGUAL (ENGLISH / SPANISH / ARABIC)

CONTACT

07572 952 2353 * JBS@MA17.COM

PROFILE

Accomplished Diplomat with extensive experience engaging with policymakers and dignitaries. A data-driven and process-oriented change agent with a proven track record across governmental, private, and third sectors. Committed to advancing social justice and sustainability to create a meaningful and widespread impact on individuals and communities.

**FOR FURTHER DETAILS ON MY PROFESSIONAL
TRAJECTORY, DOWNLOADABLE CV, AND
REFERENCE LETTERS (2024)**

PLEASE VISIT

WWW.MA17.COM.

EXPERIENCE

DIPLOMAT - SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & EDUCATION EMBASSY OF PANAMA, LONDON

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS | NOVEMBER 2020 - PRESENT

- Oversee all aspects of science, technology, and education, driving pioneering outcomes.
- Lead digital transformation initiatives that have significantly reshaped the organisation.
- Spearhead employee training and development, enhancing awareness of the 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR), AI, Corporate Sustainability, and ESG principles.
- Devise and implement initiatives from concept to execution, creating impactful results.
- Develop guidelines and tools based on thorough research, data analysis, and gap analysis.
- Establish and manage a year-round internship program.

For detailed examples of key achievements, please refer to the "Key Expertise" section.

VOLUNTEER MENTOR - UNFOLD, LONDON

NON-PROFIT ORGANISATION | JUNE 2024 - PRESENT

- Empowerment of young adults through mentoring.

DEPUTY MANAGER - CENTRE 404, LONDON

NON-PROFIT ORGANISATION | SEPTEMBER 2018 - NOVEMBER 2020

- Manage a team of 12 to support adults with learning disabilities, while analysing the business and devising new tools and methods for continuous improvement.

CUSTOMER SUPPORT MANAGER - PTK, LONDON

START-UP | AUGUST 2017 - JULY 2018

- Gather and analyse quantitative and qualitative insights to drive product improvements

BUSINESS PROCESS IMPROVEMENT (BPI) - SOS

NEW MEDIA | JANUARY 2017 - AUGUST 2017

- Introduced innovative technologies, including web-based applications and targeted social media campaigns, to expand market reach and drive business growth.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY MANAGER - UNE, PANAMA

NON-PROFIT ORGANISATION | JULY 2013 - JANUARY 2017

- Create from concept as well as coordinate and run the various initiatives that provided technical support to persons with disabilities through AT solutions

PROCESS IMPROVEMENT OFFICER - PIRC, LONDON

INVESTMENT RESEARCH CONSULTANTS | JULY 2011 - JULY 2013

- Devise and implement the automation of key business tasks

INTERNATIONAL CORPORATE ACTIONS SPECIALIST

CITIGROUP, SCHRODERS INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT & JP MORGAN CHASE

- Nearly 12 years of international banking experience with leading institutions in London and New York, with extensive exposure to financial markets across the UK, Spain, Portugal, Latin America, France, the US, and Canada.

EDUCATION

- Organisational Learning & Development Associate Diploma, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) Level 5 (2024). The CIPD is considered a benchmark for excellence in HR and L&D, both in the UK and internationally. Studies to spearhead the design and implementation of strategic L&D initiatives to align with business goals, enhance employee skills, and foster a culture of continuous learning.
- Career Coach and Navigator Professional Certificate, Goodwill Industries International on Coursera (2024). International Coaching Federation (ICF) accredited Professional Certificate on human-centred approach to career coaching, including Career Development theories, models, and tools.
- RPA (Robotic Process Automation) Lifecycle, Implementing RPA with Cognitive Automation and Analytics, Automation Anywhere on Coursera (2020)
- Council for Six Sigma Certification and Aveta Business Institute, Continuous Process Improvement - White Belt (2020)
- Lean Organisation Management Techniques, NCFE CACHE (Aug 2019). The completion of this programme demonstrates the ability for individuals to refer to and implement Lean Organisation Techniques in Business, Business Improvement Tools and Techniques and Working in Business Teams.
- Equality and Diversity, NCFE CACHE (July 2019)
- Functional Skills Level 2 in Maths, City & Guilds (equivalent to level 4 GCSEs in Maths)
- Data Analysis and Interpretation Specialisation, Wesleyan University on Coursera (June 2016). The course provided the elements to access and manage data using both Python and SAS programming language
- BSc (Hons) Applied Psychology & Computing, Bournemouth University, UK

UNITED NATIONS

UN - CRPD

MAY 2024, UNITED KINGDOM

- Diplomat representing the Republic of Panama at the High Level Meeting on "Disability Rights: Advancing the Agenda". An event in the lead up to the 20th anniversary of the 2006 adoption of the CRPD, as well as the 5-year review of the UNDIS.

UNCCS

NOV-DEC 2023, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

- Diplomat representing the Republic of Panama at the United Nations Climate Change Conference 28, Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

UNESCO

NOVEMBER 2016, COSTA RICA

- Regional Conference on "ICTs (Information and Communications Technologies) and communication for people with disabilities in Central America". A member of a specialised team representing the Republic of Panama

COSP7, UNITED NATIONS (UN)

JUNE 2014, NEW YORK

- "7th session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)". A member of a specialised team to act as an Adviser representing the Republic of Panama during the COSP7 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

CSW58, UN

MARCH 2014, NEW YORK

- "The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW or UNCSW)". Headhunted by the National Secretariat on Disability (SENADIS) and the National Institute for Women (INAMU) of the Republic of Panama as one of the members of a specialised team of four to act as an Adviser at the CSW58 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

68TH UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, UN SEPTEMBER 2013, NEW YORK

- "The General Assembly (UNGA)", the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations). A member of a specialised team of four to act as an Adviser representing the Republic of Panama at the HLDM during the 68th UN General Assembly in New York.

PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANISATION/WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION

SEPTEMBER 2010 & MARCH - AUGUST 2010, WASHINGTON, D.C.

- Provide project management and working group support on the approval of Resolution CD50.R8 "Health and Human Rights" during the celebration of PAHO 50th Directing Council at the HQ.

KEY EXPERTISE

Process Improvement through Technology

- Successfully led the automation of key business processes in line with companies' strategic objectives.
- At PIRC, conducted a full process analysis for the corporate governance of Director's remuneration packages and CSR offered by blue-chip companies (gap analysis).
- Involved in highly sophisticated mathematical calculations and the development of a CSR profiling system.
- Extensively liaised with all internal departments.
- Managed change functions following the implementation of new systems.

Partnership Building

- Facilitated networks of mutually compatible providers from the corporate, governmental, and charity sectors.
- Propelled the creation of initiatives such as projects providing Assistive Technology to people with disabilities.
- Supported EdTech solutions to tackle challenges surrounding bilingualism in Panama.
- Enabled digital transformation to improve business processes.

Project Management

- Analysed the structure of service provision within companies (gap analysis) to identify areas of improvement.
- Facilitated the automation of key processes through digital solutions, such as Robotic Process Automation (RPA).
- Acted as the process improvement lead between business stakeholders and IT developers..

Management Skills

- Managed services involving the recruitment and deployment of staff across various functions within companies.
- Set staff targets and agreed on outcomes to meet overall company objectives (KPIs).

Educational Diplomacy and International Collaboration

- Creation of a six-step manual -from concept- to guide students specifically from Panama to access programmes of study in the United Kingdom, Ireland and Iceland.
- Creation of a database of over 250 partial scholarships categorised across 22 areas of study at universities in the United Kingdom, Ireland and Iceland.
- Represent Panama in 2022, for the first time, at the Education World Forum (EWF); the largest gathering of education and skills ministers in the world, held since 2002.

Technology and Infrastructure Development

- Identification of tech deficiencies through a thorough gap analysis to carry out the relevant adjustments. For example, the "decommissioning" of a server that was installed 15 years ago and was identified to be in need of removal since it was overheating at dangerous levels.
- Oversee the installation of a Wi-Fi network throughout the building for uninterrupted wireless Internet access, from a speed of 56 kbps to 409,600 kbps, equivalent to 400 Mbps.
- Substantiate the need for the transfer of technology services from the current tech company to a more efficient one for the optimisation of the services offered and oversee the smooth transfer.
- Act as the technical liaison and oversee the installation of a clocking-in machine for the attendance record of the Embassy's work team in view to extend the installation of this type of system to the rest of the Embassies in due course.
- Rebuilt the website "www.panamaembassy.co.uk" while gaining control of the management of the site - for the first time- within the Embassy.
- Oversee and coordinate the addition of an "Education Section" on the website www.paamaembassy.gob.pa in order to -for the first time- create a focal point of reference with relevant information for Panamanian students who wish to study in the United Kingdom, Ireland or Iceland.

Facilitation of International Educational Opportunities and Partnerships

- As a result of extensive Diplomatic efforts, the NGO Future Sense sent around 200 students from the United Kingdom to Panama through the Turing Scheme; Panama being the second country where this initiative is carried out.
- Following considerable Diplomatic efforts, the organisation Futured, a British company based in London, presented the Embassy with an access code to 1,000 scholarships for students from Panama to carry out short course studies at recognised educational institutions in various topics aligned with the UN SDGs.
- Facilitate the establishment of MoUs between British universities (for example: Keele University and the University of Westminster) and universities in Panama; particularly around Transnational Education (TNE) - in progress.
- Facilitate the establishment of EVOLVE in Panama; who specialises in offering internship opportunities to university students or professionals already established in a company. - in progress.
- Further to substantial Diplomatic efforts, the Foxton Books makes an official offer to the Ministry of Education for free and unlimited access to its platform, allowing 5,000 users (students and/or educators) in Panama to benefit from this platform.



**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 ROYO
Ambassador and Consul General



Confidential
Sent by email

Ines Tancrede
1 One New Change,
EC4M 9AF London, UK
+44 7977 552065
ines.tancrede@turntown.co.uk

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)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ines', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

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.

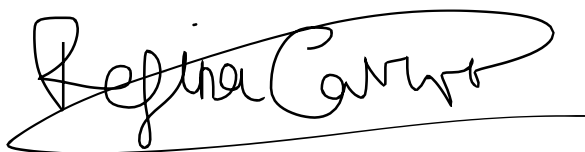
When I started my internship, I was a second-year university student who did not really know what to do after her graduation and had not gathered a lot of experience in today's working world. Michelle was aware that I needed guidance and therefore shared valuable insights and personal experiences related 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 written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish that extends under the name.

Regina Cavero