

AFRICAN YOUTH DIPLOMACY NETWORK  
LOGO GOES HERE

First & Last Name

Add recommenders title and  
Professional address here

October 26, 2024

To Graduate Admissions at Columbia University,

I am delighted to write this letter of recommendation for Michael Osei, who I have had the pleasure of working with as a fellow volunteer at the African Youth Diplomacy Network (AYDN) for the past two years. I first met Michael when we both joined a youth-led project aimed at improving access to education in underprivileged communities in Ghana, and I have since collaborated with him on several other projects. Based on my experiences working alongside Michael, I can confidently say that he possesses not only outstanding leadership abilities but also an extraordinary capacity for empathy and understanding, which make him an ideal candidate for Columbia University's graduate program in International Relations.

What immediately struck me about Michael was his ability to lead with vision and clarity, even in the face of significant challenges. During our work on the "Books for All" initiative, which aimed to provide educational materials to students in rural Ghana, Michael was appointed as the project lead. The project was ambitious, involving partnerships with local schools, NGOs, and government officials, and it required careful coordination to ensure that resources were delivered efficiently and equitably. Michael's leadership was instrumental in the project's success. He spearheaded fundraising efforts, organized donation drives, and negotiated with book suppliers to secure lower prices for educational materials.

Perhaps the most impressive aspect of Michael's leadership was his ability to foster a sense of community and purpose among our team. Michael consistently went out of his way to ensure that every team member's voice was heard, and he was always open to feedback. During one critical juncture in the project, when we encountered logistical challenges in transporting books to remote areas, Michael facilitated a brainstorming session that encouraged creative problem-solving. Rather than imposing a solution, he empowered each of us to contribute our ideas, ultimately leading to the development of a partnership with a local transportation company that helped overcome the logistical hurdles. His collaborative approach ensured that the team remained motivated and invested in the project's success.

Michael's empathy and commitment to social equity are qualities that set him apart from other leaders I have worked with. He brings a deep understanding of the systemic issues that communities in Africa face and approaches every challenge with a thoughtful and compassionate perspective. I recall one particular moment when we were conducting community outreach in a rural village to raise awareness about the importance of education. Michael took the time to listen to the concerns of parents who were hesitant about sending their children to school due to financial constraints. Rather than dismissing their concerns, Michael worked with the local school board to develop a scholarship program that would allow more children to access education without placing an undue burden on their families. This initiative, which Michael personally led, has since enabled dozens of children in the community to attend school.

Beyond his leadership and empathy, Michael's work ethic and organizational skills are second to none. He consistently demonstrates an unwavering commitment to seeing every project through to completion, often going above and beyond what is expected of him. His attention to detail, combined with his ability to think strategically, allows him to manage complex tasks with ease. During our work on a project to provide clean water to rural communities, Michael meticulously coordinated the logistics for installing water filtration systems, ensuring that the project was completed on time and within budget.

In summary, Michael is an exceptional individual whose leadership, empathy, and dedication to social justice make him an invaluable asset to any team. His ability to inspire those around him, coupled with his deep understanding of the challenges facing communities in Africa, uniquely positions him to succeed in your graduate program. I wholeheartedly recommend Michael Osei for admission to Columbia University's program in International Relations, and I have no doubt that he will make significant contributions to both your academic community and the world at large.

Sincerely,  
Signature  
First and Last Name  
Project Coordinator  
African Youth Diplomacy Network (AYDN), Ghana