

From the Executive Director, Anita St. Onge

PAE students are back for in-person learning this fall! After 18 months of remote learning and with very strict Covid protocols, we opened two schools in September. During the week of September 13, more than 265 students attended a two-day orientation that included book and device distribution, new student ID cards, and a new platform for remote learning. That week was preceded by summer planning, teacher professional development and lots of extra effort on the part of teachers and staff, particularly our Department Chairs who all worked tirelessly to make the week a success.

The following week we started all over again, welcoming 625 students for in-person classes. Students were greeted outside by staff and volunteers to tell them where to go and to ask Covid screening questions in multiple languages. With the help of our multi-lingual outreach team,

Assistant Director Liz Love and I stopped

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Governor Mills Visits Our School

October 19 – Governor Janet Mills visited Portland Adult Education (PAE) this week to promote its work in providing job and workforce training opportunities for Maine people. As part of her tour, Governor Mills visited with students in English learning classrooms, joined a virtual classroom, and participated in a discussion with former students who have graduated from PAE programs and are now in the workforce.

During the governor's Oct. 19 visit, immigrant students in a beginning English class took turns explaining to her why they're learning English – reasons such as being able to get better jobs and to understand more about the culture in which their children are growing up. One student said she was thrilled that Mills had shaken her hand as they both were enter-

ing the building. "I'm so happy," she said to the governor.

"Maine welcomes you with all our heart," Governor Mills told the students. "Maine has been grappling with a workforce shortage for decades now, and the pandemic has only made it worse," continued Governor Mills. "Adult education is a critical component in our efforts to address that serious problem and strengthen our workforce. Not only does adult education equip more people with the skills needed to get a good-paying job, but it also allows them to put down roots, raise families, and live a rewarding life while contributing to the overall growth of our economy. It was a pleasure to visit Portland Adult Education, meet with its incredible students and staff,

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Bank of America Donates \$60,000

Friends of Portland Adult Education has received \$60,000 from Bank of America to enhance Portland Adult Education's workforce training programs and career services for its diverse students. The generous donation will help provide skilled, talented employees to meet Maine's workforce needs and promote racial equity.

"Bank of America is partnering with Portland Adult Education as part of our \$1.25 billion five-year national commitment to advance racial equality and economic opportunity, with a particular

focus on helping create opportunities for people and communities of color," said Bill Williamson, Maine president for Bank of America. "In Maine, we are committed to supporting organizations that help people get the skills they need to achieve their goals and contribute to economic growth."

Portland Adult Education (PAE) serves about 2,000 students in its academic and workforce programs each year. Students are racially and linguistically diverse with approximately 77% of students

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Governor Mills Visits



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and see firsthand the important work they are doing every day to make Maine a better place.”

“It was great to have the Governor acknowledge the incredible work of our staff and students,” said PAE Executive Director Anita St. Onge. “Adult education programs throughout the state are working to provide education for students seeking a high school diploma, preparing students for college, and providing training to strengthen Maine’s workforce. We are also working with foreign-trained professionals to provide education and advice with workforce issues and licensing, enabling them to reach their highest potential.”

“We were happy to welcome Governor Janet Mills to Portland Adult Education,” said Portland Public Schools Superintendent Xavier Botana. “PAE is a wonderful resource to Portland and a major source of economic development.”

“I appreciate Governor Mills’ recognition of this and look forward to working with her and the adult education community to maximize the value of PAE and direct the appropriate resources to support their growth and development.”

Bank of America Donates \$60,000

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identifying as Black or African American, with 45 primary languages spoken, and nearly 70 nationalities represented.

“PAE students are incredibly motivated, and have a wealth of knowledge and skills that can benefit Maine,” said PAE Assistant Director Elizabeth Love. “Bank of America’s support will expand economic opportunities for our students and the community as a whole.”

Bank of America has been foundational to this effort. Executive Director Anita St Onge explained, “Bank of America has been a strong and consistent partner of PAE for many years, providing funding, support

with classroom instruction and mock interviews for job class students, as well as advocating for PAE within the business community.”

“Thank you to Bank of America for being such a great partner to PAE, which is part of the Portland Public Schools,” said Superintendent Xavier Botana. “PAE plays a vital role in Portland’s continued viability. I always remind our community that every dollar we invest in adult education is not just a dollar invested in PAE students. It is a dollar invested in their children, in their families, and in our whole community. Bank of America clearly understands that, and we are extremely grateful for all their support.”

From the Executive Director

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in to each class to welcome students to PAE, provide information about our school and its mission and values, and explain our health and safety protocols. Our in-person classes are primarily lower-level English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) classes. Most of our Workforce classes are being taught remotely, based in large part on feedback from our students that remote learning allowed them to pursue their education while working full time and caring for children.

We continue to see many new and

returning students. We conducted intake and testing of 575 students in the summer and fall. Our waiting list for English classes is higher than it has ever been.

On October 19, Governor Janet Mills visited PAE. Greeted by Supt. Botana and PAE staff, Gov. Mills toured the building, attended in-person and remote classes and spoke with staff and former students about the role that PAE plays in helping people achieve their goals.

As you will see from other articles in this newsletter, PAE continues to expand its workforce offerings and to offer the foundational education that we have done for over 150 years. Thanks to the Friends of Port-

land Adult Education, we hired a consultant to help us bring together a group of community leaders, staff and students to look at issues of racial equity. Additionally, we are able to offer professional development for all staff as part of Portland Public Schools’ equity goal. Thanks to a grant from the Lennox Foundation and the work and creativity of Anja Hanson, Maryann Murray, David Wood, and our design team, both PAE and FPAE have new logos.

With ongoing support from FPAE we hope to increase our ability to provide information to students and the community to further our work. Lots more to do. Thank you for your continued support.

Remembering Roger Severance, Citizenship Tutor



Roger Severance pictured with PAE student Nyabore Luak

We are saddened to report that Roger Severance passed away on July 28, 2021.

Roger was a true gentleman, a champion of literacy, and a consummate citizenship tutor for Portland Adult Education.

Roger joined our school nearly two decades ago. From the beginning he found a niche with immigrants who desired to become U.S. citizens. Of course Roger already knew the civics content but he quickly learned the naturalization process. Due to his great empathy and patience, he

soon became the go-to person when our volunteer coordinator sought a deft hand for a low-level ESOL adult learner. Over the years he worked with students from Somalia, Sudan, Burundi, Congo, Iran, and

Iraq. Scores of immigrants have become citizens due to his efforts.

FPAE has accepted donations in Roger's honor; those funds will be used to support our tutors and their students.

Jane Arlaud Retires

After 36 years, Jane Arlaud pulled anchor and set sail for a well-deserved retirement.

Jane started with Portland Adult Education in 1984 as the Evening Receptionist for the Adult Education office at Portland Regional Vocational Center (Now PATHS). She helped the staff learn ClarisWorks 1 and started the first student database. Jane kept the financial books straight, even as PAE went from cash/check transactions to credit cards, federal grants, and agency contracts. Whatever the issue, she always figured out how to get it done, assisting hundreds of teachers and thousands of learners



during her tenure.

Join us and wishing Jane well as she and her husband take numerous cruises to the near and distant horizons.

From the F.P.A.E. Chair, Rob Wood



The 2022 School Year has begun! And, as always, the PAE staff and students have shown amazing skills, determination, and flexibility. More than 500 new student intakes were conducted during the summer and early September. As many students stated they preferred virtual classes due to family or work obligations, more than 20 of the September courses are being delivered remotely.

As PAE proved its flexibility

and creativity during the past 18 months, the Friends of PAE have increased its support.

Since January 2021, FPAE has contributed more than \$121,000 to fund many educational efforts.

Students are putting to good use the 680 purchased tablets and 300 hotspots, all of which have been distributed and are maintained by the dedicated technology staff of Rod Mahoua, Yunus Ibrahim, and Aswif Aunali.

Nearly 100 students benefited from nearly 300 course scholarships.

Finally, FPAE acted as the fiscal agent for a \$60,000 Bank of America grant for workforce development programming, while TDBank and Norway Savings contributed smaller amounts for a Teller Training Program.

In the near future there will be a resurgence of asylum seekers arriving from Afghanistan, Haiti and Central Africa. I have total confidence that PAE will meet these challenges and offer high quality educational programming to these new community members. FPAE will assist in every way possible.

Volunteering Continues During COVID 19

Wonderful PAE volunteers continued to support students, classes, and programs during the continuing Covid 19 crisis through the last academic year. Approximately 40 classroom aides helped teachers with breakout rooms during Zoom or called individual students at home

for extra English practice.

Of course, online learning is not perfect. Students had difficulty hearing and often missed the physical expressions and gestures that help promote understanding. One volunteer commented, "I feel for students because they aren't face to face, but

Zoom is working well." In fact, classroom aides reported that working remotely was a "joy" and "rewarding and inspiring" and that PAE teachers were "impressive."

Online tutoring was also successful during the school year. Nearly 140 online tutors worked through Zoom, Whatsapp, Facetime, and other programs to support students in Citizenship, the Certified Nursing Assistant program, ESOL classes, conversation, writing, math, commercial driver's licenses, medical terminology, science, teller training, and social studies.

Challenges continue, however, as many students still had children at home who needed care or were completing their own remote learning. Illness, housing issues or job insecurity also prevented some students from consistently connecting with tutors. One volunteer noted that a student had a "tough time sticking to a schedule for calls...too much going on with COVID." But the majority of tutors remarked that online learning was a success; that PAE students were "working hard and gaining more confidence." Volunteer descriptions of the PAE student were "hardworking," "always on time," "fun," "engaged," "eager to learn," "progressing well," and "awesome."

PAE volunteers continued their own lifelong learning this year, since PAE switched to Google Meet and Google Classroom instead of Zoom. Volunteers, students, and teachers are supporting each other in tackling this new online challenge.

This September some volunteers have entered the PAE building again as classroom aides. We thank all of our volunteers and are deeply grateful for their flexibility, compassion, patience, and creativity during this difficult time.



ELL Child Development Training

In February of 2021, Portland Adult Education partnered with the Opportunity Alliance and The United Way of Greater Portland to launch an English Language Learner Child Development training. The Child Development Association (CDA) Credential is recognized nationally as the quality standard in the training of professional early childhood teachers. CDA training helps teachers work effectively with infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and their families in either a center-based or family child care setting.

This five-month training program was co-taught by a Certified CDA Instructor from the CDA Development Center at The Opportunity Alliance and supported by an instructor from Portland Adult Education. Students received 120 hours of CDA instruction as well as support in English language,

portfolio development, test-taking skills, and digital skills.

As part of the CDA certification, applicants must complete and document 480 hours of working with children before being eligible to take their CDA exam. As part of this program, students were matched with partnering childcare facilities for a practicum to begin serving these hours. Each person's fieldwork schedule differed depending on availability.

The ELL CDA program ran from February through June. All 12 students completed the CDA class and are in the process of completing the necessary fieldwork hours, as well as finishing their portfolios with the support of their PAE teacher and specially trained tutors. To date, seven of the twelve graduates found positions at local childcare centers as a result of this training.

Training Students to Enter—and Succeed—in the Healthcare Field

Portland Adult Education continues to innovate as we respond to the healthcare industry's need for qualified workers and create meaningful employment pathways for students. We expect healthcare to continue to be an area of growth for the school as the workforce needs expand in the region.

In response to the growing demand, PAE's healthcare offerings have grown over the years and benefit from strong employer partnerships including Northern Light, MaineHealth, the Barron Center, New England Rehabilitation, First Atlantic Healthcare, and more. PAE strives to meet students where they are and offers advising, training, and education support classes for those interested

in becoming certified nursing assistants, patient service representatives, and medical assistants.

In addition, PAE's New Mainers Resource Center offers intensive advising to foreign-trained health professionals looking to work in healthcare in the United States. To enhance countywide coordination and expand opportunities, PAE, in partnership with adult education programs across Cumberland County, recently launched the Bridges to Advancement project through a grant from the Maine Department of Education. Collectively, Cumberland County partners are offering Personal Support Specialist, Pharmacy Tech, and MA pathways at no cost to eligible county

residents.

Furthermore, PAE and its partners are piloting a Medical Assisting pathway that includes a prep course and a supported MA program as well as the launch of a TOEFL and nursing entrance exam preparation courses at PAE. The program also supports part of a new partnership with Northern Light to provide advising, academic, and training support for Northern Light Environmental Services employees to advance in the healthcare field.

Portland Adult Education, as ever, is committed to preparing students to enter and succeed in health care careers that fill an urgent need in our community.

Smart Cookies: C. Love Cookie Academy Graduates

The inaugural class of the C. Love Cookie Baking Academy graduated with pastry and baking certificates in hand on August 24, 2021.

During the three-month program, students acquired commercial kitchen knowledge, pastry and baking skills, recipe structure comprehension, and safe kitchen practices. They even worked on English vocabulary. Students are able to take their pastry knowledge and apply it for work in the field, while some will continue on the C. Love journey, investing their skills and knowledge towards future classes.

To find out more about the Academy, please visit: www.c-lovebakingacademy.com.

To make a donation towards future classes, please visit: www.friendsofpae.org/funders and click on "C. Love Baking Academy" under tab "Donor Designation."



C. Love founder Katherine J. Slevin instructs students Natacha Uwimana, Bertille Miabeto, Helena Vangu, Simane Ibrahim, and Beatriz Jose, all of whom successfully completed the three-month program.

Beata Vest Scholarship for Outstanding Women

The Beata Vest Scholarship honors an outstanding young woman who found a niche at PAE. Beata was full of love, compassion, intelligence, humor and imagination, a world traveler and student of French and Arabic. She welcomed newcomers to Portland, spending time with families and students showing them around her city and helping them learn English. The \$1,000 Scholarship is awarded at the Portland Adult Education graduation to an immigrant, refugee, or asylum-seeking student who showed perseverance and integrity in pursuing their college aspirations.

The 2021 Beata Vest Scholarship recipient was Roseline Souebele Mayinga.

Many PAE students have a dream



to enter nursing, but few have pursued this goal with such efficiency, excellence, and speed as Roseline Souebele Mayinga. She took every science and medical course offered by PAE as well as joining high level writing and technology classes because she recognized that she'd

need confidence with those skills to be successful as a nurse. Her teachers describe her as an excellent student and a great asset to the class. Having been a teacher and HIV Counselor in the Republic of Congo, Roseline knows that meticulous preparation for nursing is necessary.

Roseline is continuing to challenge herself through work as a CNA while attending classes at Southern Maine Community College. She shares her wisdom with others by volunteering at Hope House and writing an occasional column for Amjambo Africa. PAE is proud of her and her willingness to embrace opportunities wherever she finds them with verve and independence.

New Workforce Training Department

Portland Adult Education is proud to have responded to the needs of both students and local employers by creating meaningful career pathways for students that help address regional workforce shortages. As a result, our workforce-related programs have grown significantly, with new sector-specific initiatives and employer partnerships.

To manage this growth we have created a formalized Workforce Training Department to best support our students, teachers, and the broader community.

With Geneva Meserve and Bridget Kahn as Co-Chairs, the new department will include all of the workforce-related programs at PAE, including job skills classes, Job Class A, CNA, and sector-specific programs. The New Mainers Resource Center (NMRC), led by Sally Sutton, will work closely with the Department on

program development and to provide career services: advising, credential evaluations/licensing pathways, job referrals, long-term career planning, networking opportunities, and more, for both workforce students and foreign-trained professionals seeking individual support.

Examples of sector-specific programs launched in recent years by the NMRC, specific grant projects, or Job Skills include:

- The Education Academy
- New Mainer Teller Training Program
- Bridge to Healthcare
- Commercial Driver's License Permit Prep
- ELL Child Development Associate
- MaineHealth endorsed Healthcare Office and Patient Service (HOPS) Certificate
- Additional CNA programs
- ELL CNA

A new Medical Assisting Prep course is planned for the fall.

Additionally, employers are increasingly looking to PAE to partner on training initiatives that will diversify their workforce and offer pathways to advancement for current employees. Two examples include new partnerships with Northern Light and Hannaford. We expect our workforce training programs to continue to grow, adapt and respond to regional needs and student interest.

Both Geneva and Bridget have extensive experience developing, teaching, and coordinating workforce programs at PAE. Their new responsibilities in the Workforce Training Department will facilitate coordination, streamline operations, and enhance teacher/student support. We are grateful for their willingness to take on this new organizational structure and confident in their success.

The Secret Lives of PAE Instructors: Asata Radcliffe

What do the Maine Historical Society, a PAE Language Arts instructor, and a group of Black World War II soldiers have in common?

If you guessed art, you're right!

Last year, despite the pandemic that stopped the world, PAE Language Arts instructor Asata Radcliffe presented an exhibition in Portland's Maine Historical Society, titled *A Convenient Soldier: The Black Guards of Maine*.

Radcliffe's installation featured never before exhibited photographs of Black WWII army soldiers, known as Black Guards, who defended important Maine railways from terrorist attacks from 1941 to 1945. This exhibit, which ran from September 2020 to January 2021, included pictures, personal stories, and immersive objects to recreate the feeling

of defending Maine's railroads and bridges during the Second World War.

In addition to the physical challenges these soldiers faced living in boxcars during frigid Maine winters, the Black Guards served their country during a time of intense racial discrimination. Radcliffe's exhibit traces the varied and sometimes brutal reception these soldiers found in the Pine Tree State.

Radcliffe's interest in the role the Black Guards played in Maine's history began during her first Monson Artist Residency in the North Woods. She was researching Indigenous history at the Monson Historical Society when she first stumbled across an article about the Black Guards.

"I am drawn to the history of these soldiers as a person 'from away' who

is of Black and Indigenous heritage," Radcliffe wrote, explaining why she felt called to present this specific installation. "The isolation that I felt moving to a predominantly White state and going through my first winter in Maine was intense. I started to think, 'what was it like for them—the Black Guards? How did they survive harsh winters?'" Thanks to Radcliffe's exploration of the Black Guards and her exhibition, an important chapter in Maine's history has now been brought to light.

Although the physical exhibition is closed, photographs, newspaper clippings, and Radcliffe's insightful explanations can still be found online at the Maine Memory Network: www.mainememory.net/exhibits/convenientsoldier.

Getting into College, thanks to Portland Adult Education

By Beatrice Downs

I was dealing with a lot, and in 2014, things were looking up. I decided to go back to college to get my Bachelor's degree; it was my mother's dying wish. I knew college had changed and I needed to brush up on my academic and personal skills. I came to Portland Adult Education (PAE) to do both at the age of 37. I got so much more.

I was doing great in my classes but was shocked to learn I would not be getting any financial aid from the university. My teacher for College Writing and a few other staff members of PAE suggested I apply for other scholarships. With their support, I was awarded enough scholarships, including the Rockefeller, to pay for my first year at university.

During the application process I passed my College Writing class and



the teacher asked me to become her volunteer teacher's assistant. I was working alongside her and helping the staff as needed throughout my first year at university and was able to have this skill set added to my resume. I reapplied for and received

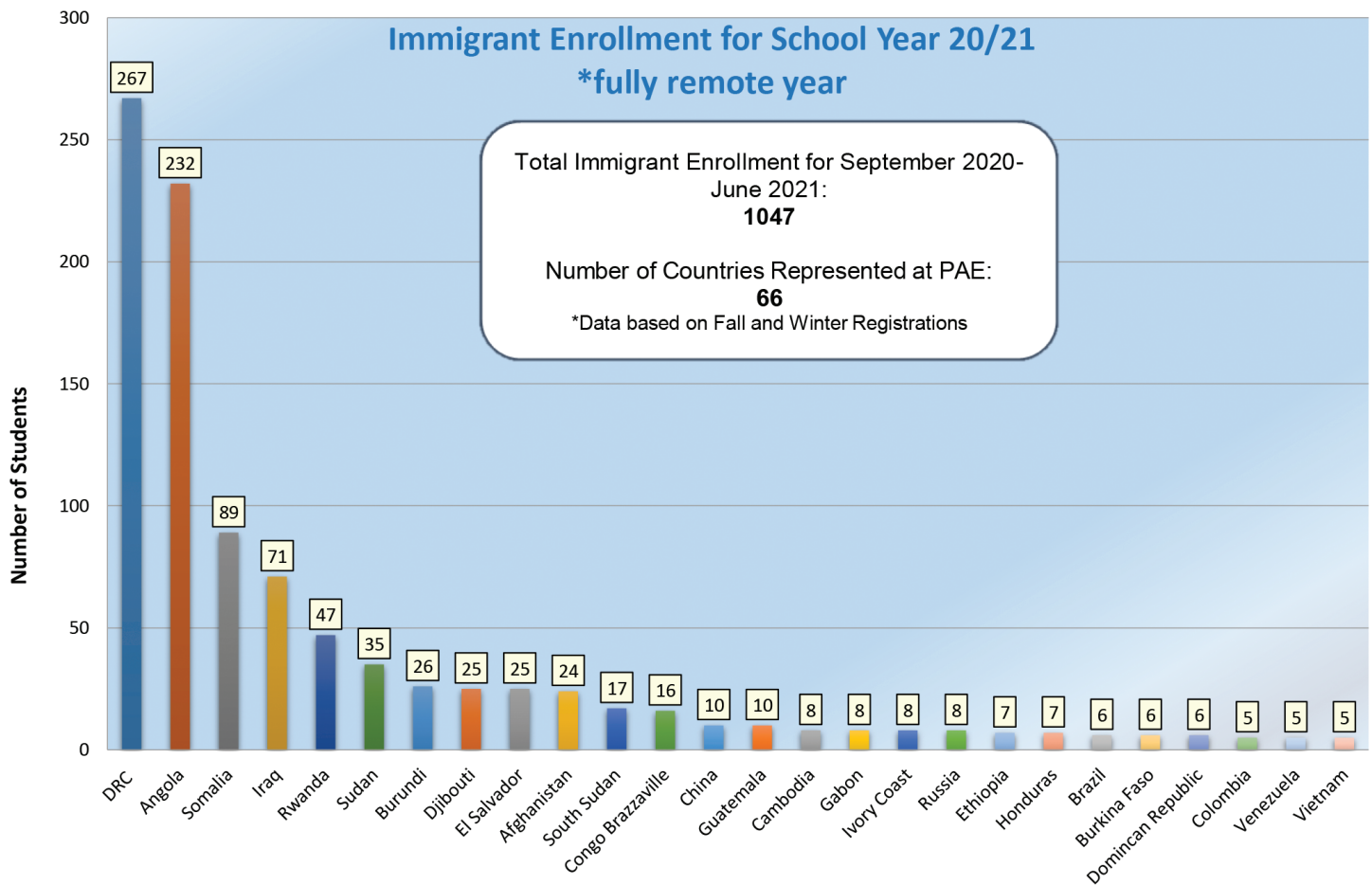
all the scholarships each time until I graduated.

I left PAE when I was accepted to graduate school. Thanks to the skills I acquired, I undertook a graduate aide position for one of my graduate program's professors. In addition to other scholarships, Rockefeller followed me to graduate school.

When I came back to reconnect with the school, one of the board members of the Friends of Portland Adult Education invited me to join the board. This is my second year on the Board and I am very happy to be part of a team that helps makes Portland Adult Education a thriving place—even during a pandemic.

Update: The pandemic might have slowed me down, but it did not take away my desire to finish my Master's degree, graduation is for this December.

PAE Enrollment By The Numbers



Countries with 4 or less students attending - Albania, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Cameroon, Canada, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Egypt, Eritrea, France, Ghana, Haiti, Hong Kong, India, Iran, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Kosovo, Kuwait, Lithuania, Mali, Mexico, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, South Africa, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Syria, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, and Zambia.



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