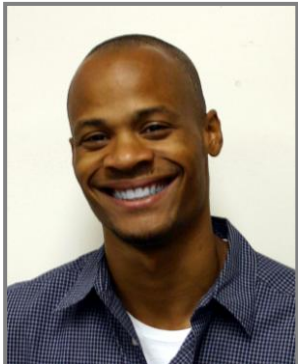


Zithri Ahmed Saleem Director of Education



I've seen education from just about all sides; in elementary school I flunked one year and then had straight A's for two; in middle school I skipped my own classes to help high school dropouts get their GED; through my adolescence, teachers and peers labeled me a prodigy, but I registered as a failure by all administrative reports; and at the age of fifteen, I dropped out of high school and decided to start college early.

Fast-forward a decade or so.

Now, in my role as TAF Director of Education, I work to help others realize that our society can't afford to relegate some of our most creative minds to menial tasks because they aren't positioned – based more on class, inheritance and social structure – to complete the “traditional” path to education. The traditional ideas that define what it means to be educated unfairly discredit and devalue others' intellectual capacity and lived experience, and far too often predictably exclude certain groups from social participation and making much needed contributions. The worst part is these ideas blatantly ignore the true dynamics by which real learning and social contributions have taken place in our society, and we need not look deep into history to find ample cases where we've all benefited from the ideas and contributions of those deemed unfit and unqualified by traditional standards.

Education should expose and cultivate the brilliance in individuals' minds to benefit us all rather than limit the participation of those who don't fit a highfalutin criterion – the status quo model – of what it means to be educated. Granted, I wouldn't want a surgeon who doesn't have proper medical training or an accountant who doesn't know tax law; I'm simply calling for a re-evaluation of the methods and assumptions by which we work to develop those capacities in individuals.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Responsible for defining and developing academic pedagogy, models, and curriculum for all TAF programs.

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*Preparing underserved children of color for higher education and professional success
by providing a rigorous and relevant K-12 education.*