

Russlynn Ali

Chief Executive Officer, XQ Institute

Managing Director, Education, Emerson Collective (*on loan to XQ Institute*)

Russlynn believes that education is the cornerstone to self-reliance.

It's why she served as assistant secretary for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Education from 2009 to 2012, acting as Secretary Arne Duncan's lead advisor on equity and civil rights, and leading over 600 attorneys as they revitalized civil rights enforcement in education.

It's why, prior to her work in the Obama Administration, Russlynn served as vice president of the Education Trust in Washington, D.C. and founded and ran Education Trust-West, in Oakland.

It's why, today, Russlynn has served as Emerson Collectives' thought leader and ambassador on educational quality. As Managing Director at Emerson, she has shaped investments in and partnerships with other organizations to advance educational equity in the U.S.

And, it's why Russlynn founded and serves as a board member and CEO of XQ Institute, a collaboration dedicated to rethinking school in America. XQ Institute's mission is to develop new learning opportunities for young people that open up the possibilities of the wider world. Its first initiative, XQ: The Super School Project, is an open call to America's students, teachers, administrators, civic leaders, businesses, entrepreneurs, artists and designers to meet the challenge of preparing our students for the future by designing the next American high school.

All of Russlynn's work reflects her previous experience as a teacher, attorney, liaison for the president of the Children's Defense Fund, assistant director of policy and research at the Broad Foundation, and chief of staff to the president of the Los Angeles Unified School District's Board of Education.

Russlynn is also a frequent speaker on issues related to civil rights and educational equity. She received her J.D. from Northwestern University School of Law and her bachelor's degree from American University. She also attended Spelman College.