

2024 - 2025 Obama Foundation Leaders

[Africa](#), [Asia-Pacific](#), [Europe](#), and the [United States](#)



LEADERS AFRICA

BOTSWANA

Olerato Keegope

**Senior Advocacy & Communications Officer, Sentebale Organization
Botswana**

Olerato Keegope is currently the senior advocacy and communications officer at Sentebale, an organization that works in Lesotho and Botswana to provide and enable holistic care to young people living with HIV/AIDS and mental health challenges. Sentebale also provides vocational training and entrepreneurial skills to at-risk youth. At Sentebale, Olerato coordinates "Let Youth Lead," a program that provides young people with a platform to voice their challenges and propose solutions by meaningfully engaging with relevant policymakers and stakeholders. She strongly believes in active citizenship and meaningful youth engagement as key components for sustainable development.



CAMEROON

Njeke Joshua Egbe
Founder and Executive Director, Peace Crops
Cameroon

Njeke Joshua Egbe is the founder and executive director of Peace Crops, an organization dedicated to working with war-affected communities, displaced orphans, marginalized women, schools, and other entities to carry out agriculture projects that promote peace and adopt environmental conservation practices. Through organic farming campaigns, he uses agriculture as a peace-building tool by equipping community members with the knowledge to combat hunger, unemployment, and climate change. Njeke is passionate about addressing malnutrition in poor, rural Cameroonian communities, and developing projects that focus on practical mindset transformation and provide diverse, environmentally friendly livelihood options for communities.

Ngwepekem Eunice
Survivor Case Manager, Survivors' Network
Cameroon

Ngwepekem Eunice is a survivor case manager at the Survivors' Network, an organization that provides comprehensive support and services for victims of human trafficking and modern-day slavery. Eunice has worked in the humanitarian field for more than seven years, helping victims reestablish their livelihood following human trafficking, gender-based violence, and associated abuses. She leverages professional resources to offer psychological first aid, psychosocial support, and temporary shelter to more than 2,000 vulnerable women and girls and has ensured their reintegration into society by co-founding the Survivor Leadership Academy.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Katia Kuseke
Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Fresh Afrika
Democratic Republic of the Congo

Katia Kuseke is the founder and chief executive officer of Fresh Afrika, a company dedicated to creating a virtuous and transparent food system from farm to fork in Africa. As the granddaughter of farmers with firsthand experience in rural areas, she intimately understands the challenges faced by farmers in Africa. Her passion for cuisine and commitment to a fairer world drive her mission to leverage technology for progress and sustainability. Through Fresh Afrika, she addresses food waste and empowers small farmers by providing them with access to markets, fair prices, and essential resources. Katia's innovative approach to agricultural food systems, food



waste management, and blockchain technology has contributed significantly to her success in establishing Fresh Afrika.

EGYPT

Sahar Albazar

Deputy Chair of the Foreign Relations Committee, Egyptian Parliament

Egypt

Sahar Albazar is an Egyptian who serves as a member of parliament and as the deputy chair of the Foreign Relations Committee at the Egyptian House of Representatives, the country's legislative authority. She is also the former president of the forum of young parliamentarians, representing more than 24,000 young parliamentarians in 178 countries.

Ali Abdo

Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer, The Ride to 2030

Egypt

Ali Abdo is the co-founder and chief executive officer of The Ride to 2030, a dynamic and evolving initiative dedicated to tackling climate change and promoting sustainable development across Africa and the Middle East by empowering youth as agents of change. Ali has spent the last 18 years traveling on electric motorcycles in an effort to educate youth about climate change and fuel his passion for a greener future. As an Ambassador of Sustainable Development named by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development in Egypt in 2024, Sustainable Development Goals expert, and climate activist, he is committed to fostering an equitable world by 2030 through making climate work more accessible and inclusive.

ERITREA

Sirak Tesfamariam Habtemikael

Product Evaluation and Registration Unit Head, National Medicines and Food Administration

Eritrea

Sirak Tesfamariam Habtemikael is the product evaluation and registration unit head at the National Medicines and Food Administration, where he assesses the safety and efficacy of pharmaceuticals, vaccines, and medical devices prior to marketing in the country. As a pharmacist, clinical and public health researcher, and medical products regulator, he serves as a World Health Organization focal point in Eritrea, ensuring access to quality-assured medicines. He is experienced in designing and conducting various research methods, with a special focus on antimicrobial stewardship, rational medicine use, and medicine safety. Dedicated to volunteerism and strengthening the



landscape for strong pharmaceutical practices that meet livelihood needs, he also serves on several boards.

ETHIOPIA

Betelhem Dessie Chief Executive Officer, iCog Ethiopia

Betelhem Dessie is the chief executive officer of iCog, a social enterprise dedicated to offering youth digital literacy skills for the 21st century. Faced with financial constraints and the absence of a formal education pathway, she utilized her curiosity for technology to teach herself everything from HTML to robotics and in turn taught her peers computer skills as well. A self-taught technologist, Betelhem nurtured her interest in technology, which blossomed into a movement empowering over 30,000 Ethiopian youth through the world of coding and the democratization of tech. Betelhem is a self-starter who has channeled her curiosity into building a large civil society organization for youth job creation and skill-building in Ethiopia.

Dr. Eyerusalem Kumalo Public Relations and Communications Officer, Children's Heart Fund of Ethiopia Ethiopia

Dr. Eyerusalem Kumalo is the public relations and communications officer at the Children's Heart Fund of Ethiopia, which provides free, life-saving heart treatment procedures to children with heart disease. Her journey began with a childhood fascination with the human body, leading her to pursue a medical degree. With unwavering dedication and excellence in the clinical realm, Eyerusalem discovered a passion for raising awareness about health issues through creating engaging educational materials. Currently, Eyerusalem serves as the vital bridge between the Children's Heart Fund and the public, raising awareness about crucial health issues and advocating for patient well-being. Eyerusalem's focus on educating Ethiopian communities on the prevalence and prevention of childhood heart diseases has had a significant impact on increasing thriving livelihoods.



GHANA

Kofi Debrah **Co-Founder and Partner, OKO Group** **Ghana**

Kofi Debrah is the co-founder and partner of OKO Group, a company that works with farmers to create economic and regenerative agroforestry systems. A community-building entrepreneur with over 20 years of experience, he is passionate about creating and implementing business systems that raise the incomes of tropical rural farming households while regenerating biodiversity. Kofi has worked with leading institutions on high-impact projects for farmers and farmer cooperatives in Ghana. Kofi is an advocate for tropical rural farming communities, using a listening-first approach to design and implement solutions. Over the past three years, Ghanaian families that partnered with OKO Forests have seen a 40% growth in their incomes, leading to a significant improvement in their livelihoods.

Abel Ofoe-Osabutey **Flight Lieutenant, Ghana Armed Forces** **Ghana**

Abel Ofoe-Osabutey is an experienced flight lieutenant in the Ghana Armed Forces with nearly a decade of service. His distinguished career in the Ghanaian military is marked by active engagement in peacebuilding and humanitarian efforts. Dedicated to safeguarding lives, upholding fundamental human rights, and fostering societal well-being both in Ghana and internationally, Abel seeks to continue amplifying his impact to drive positive change in the humanitarian and military sectors.

Vera Osei-Bonsu **Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Eat Smart Foods** **Ghana**

Vera Osei-Bonsu is the founder and chief executive officer of Eat Smart Foods, an organization that exists to empower caregivers to make nutritious meals from local food ingredients to combat child malnutrition. Vera is on a mission to raise the standards of children's diets in Ghana and Africa. In 2018, she wrote the first infant and toddler recipe book to empower caregivers of African children, "Start Right. Through her work, Vera empowers caregivers to give children healthy meal alternatives that are sourced from locally grown crops.



KENYA

Brian Waswani Odhiambo
Partner, Novastar Ventures
Kenya

Brian Waswani Odhiambo is a partner at Novastar Ventures, a leading global venture capital firm focused on entrepreneurial ventures in Africa. As the head of the West Africa practice in Lagos, Brian leads Novastar to invest in transformative businesses that generate sustainable financial, social, and environmental value in Africa. Previously, he was part of the management team that started Jumia, a leading and award-winning e-commerce platform across Africa.

Philile Linda Shongwe
Founder and Executive Director, Govuka
Kenya

Philile Linda Shongwe is the founder and executive director of Govuka, a nonprofit that trains and mentors peer educators in high schools to co-generate a data-informed sexual health curriculum aimed at reducing new HIV infections and early and unintended adolescent pregnancies in the Kingdom of Eswatini. Through a peer-driven curriculum, Govuka's goal is to reach and educate 20,000 girls between the ages of 11 to 19 by 2026 about the risks associated with intergenerational relationships. An experienced development consultant, Philile has generated evidence to help NGOs and governments in Zambia, Malawi, and Senegal improve the social impact of their programs. She is dedicated to promoting youth civic engagement through her work and envisions an Eswatini where young people have access to information and support to reach their full potential.

Elvin Walela
Co-Founder and Chief Operations Officer, Axesfin
Kenya

Elvin Walela is the co-founder and chief operations officer at Axesfin, a firm dedicated to empowering African social enterprises and nongovernmental organizations through strategic fundraising and project management. His expertise in cultivating donor relationships and streamlining operations with an emphasis on the localization of community-driven initiatives has been instrumental in the firm's growth.



MADAGASCAR

Koloina Lalatiana Ratsimbazafy
Vice President, One Way for Change Association
Madagascar

Koloina Lalatiana Ratsimbazafy is the vice president of One Way for Change Association, an organization comprised of hundreds of Malagasy volunteers striving to bring positive change within their community and promote volunteerism in Madagascar. In her role, she is primarily responsible for the association's major events and has pioneered initiatives that have helped more than 100 high school and university students by providing them with career guidance and personal development. She firmly believes in the capacity of young people to innovate and to contribute to societal advancement, especially when they are provided with opportunities to unleash their full potential and receive due recognition by their elders.

MALI

Ramata N'Diaye
Associate Director of Programs and Partnerships, Impact Hub Bamako
Mali

Ramata N'Diaye is the associate director of programs and partnerships at Impact Hub Bamako, the first French-speaking establishment in Africa comprising the largest network of incubators and innovation centers. Ramata's expertise in startup management and innovation has solidified her as a significant figure in Mali's entrepreneurial ecosystem, and she is a strong advocate for women's entrepreneurship. Her contributions have led to the planning and execution of more than ten impactful programs, benefiting more than 2,000 young people and facilitating financing for local entrepreneurs in Mali. Ramata is committed to the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion, which she sees as more than just moral imperatives but a game-changing strategy.

MAURITANIA

Cheikh Mohamed Elkarachi
Chief Executive Officer and Chairman, Rim Foam (Maucit)
Mali

Cheikh Mohamed Elkarachi is the chief executive officer and chairman of Rim Foam (Maucit), the largest furniture company in Mauritania. After transitioning from a career in international relations to the business world, Cheikh has played an instrumental role in establishing the firm as the market leader. Cheikh has helped a significant number of unhoused individuals in Mauritania through investments in public housing development



projects. He has also improved the environment through the development of eco-friendly mattresses. Recognized for his commitment to social responsibility and passion for the “dignity of sleep,” Cheikh utilizes Rim Foam to advance housing development initiatives in Mauritania through engagement in social impact work with local nongovernmental organizations. With a keen focus on driving economic growth and societal progress for his fellow Mauritians, Cheikh is shaping the future of the business landscape in Mauritania through the implementation of strong corporate-nonprofit partnerships.

MOROCCO

Laila Berchane

**Co-Founder and President, LOOP for Science & Technology
Morocco**

Laila Berchane is the co-founder and president of LOOP for Science & Technology, an organization that promotes Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) learning and robotics programs in Morocco and in several other African nations. A pioneering STEM entrepreneur, she has helped bring to Morocco some of the best-known STEM programs, including the *First*[®] LEGO[®] League and World Robot Olympiad. These programs have benefited public schools and young learners in underserved populations and rural areas. As the recipient of exchange programs and partnerships that aim to advance women in STEM, she has a particular focus on empowering girls in rural areas through STEM and impactful education. Laila’s successful leadership in implementing STEM programs for young girls in local Moroccan schools has led to an 80 percent school retention rate, enhancing school participation and positively supporting attendance.

MOZAMBIQUE

Gold Chinder

**National Officer for Environmental Education Programs, National Administration of
Conservation Areas
Mozambique**

Gold Chinder is the national officer for environmental education programs at the National Administration of Conservation Areas. For the past three years, Gold has dedicated his time to designing, coordinating, and monitoring environmental education programs across more than a dozen of Mozambique’s national parks and national reserves, including the implementation of seven environmental education programs. Under Gold’s leadership, over 80,000 people benefit annually, ranging from children of the surrounding schools to community members, natural resources management committees, and teachers. Gold is dedicated to addressing the pressing issues of environmental education and conservation in Mozambique. Recognizing the critical



role education plays in fostering a sustainable future, he continues to spearhead projects aimed at integrating environmental awareness into school curricula and community engagement programs. With extensive experience running a high volume of environmental education programs across Mozambique, Gold has made a significant impact on both residents and visitors alike.

NIGERIA

Chinasa Collins-Ogbuo

Advocacy & Communications Lead, Enhancing Financial Innovation and Access Nigeria

Chinasa Collins-Ogbuo is the inclusion for all advocacy & communications lead at Enhancing Financial Innovation and Access. Through this initiative, she advocates for policy and regulatory changes to dismantle the multifaceted barriers that exclude the most vulnerable Nigerians from formal financial services. Leveraging reliable data, evidence-based recommendations, data visualization, and storytelling, Chinasa spearheads issue campaigns that drive positive change and action in Nigeria. Chinasa's leadership focuses on building clear pathways for poor and marginalized Nigerians in financial inclusion, working collaboratively with public sector officials to build successful advocacy campaigns, such as supporting fellow citizens to obtain formal documentation to establish bank accounts.

Tolulope Opeyemi Olukokun

Chief Executive Officer, ThinkBikes Nigeria

Tolulope Opeyemi Olukokun is the chief executive officer of ThinkBikes, an organization committed to providing affordable and sustainable last-mile transportation using electric cargo bikes for goods in urban and rural areas. He is a renowned social entrepreneur and innovator in the micro-mobility sector. As a visionary in sustainable mobility, Tolulope is a solutions-oriented thinker who is driving positive change and positioning ThinkBikes as a leader in creating a greener future in Nigeria.

SOMALILAND

Lucky Othman Kassim

Chairperson, Somaliland Women's Resource Centre Somaliland

Lucky Othman Kassim is the chairperson of the Somaliland Women's Resource Centre, a woman-led nonprofit organization that empowers young women by developing strategies to further their education, career development, and gender equality. Through



her unwavering commitment to women's rights advocacy, she has connected 1,400 women to vital resources, and 75 percent of the graduates from her “Women Mentoring Women” initiative secure job placements or internships aligned with their career goals. Lucky’s deep passion for justice and equality drives her to continue fostering positive change, empowering individuals to embrace their rights, and shaping a more inclusive society for the future. Lucky’s leadership in Somaliland has provided women with significant and meaningful career development opportunities through founding her organization.

SOUTH AFRICA

Tendai Chisirimunhu Kathemba Founder, AbantuLives South Africa

Tendai Chisirimunhu Kathemba is the founder of AbantuLives, a think tank focused on enhancing psychological wellbeing through African Indigenous Knowledge Systems. Committed to addressing mental health from a decolonial perspective, Tendai’s work is deeply rooted in the lived experiences of South Africans and Africans. She has facilitated mental health sessions, presented on rural public mental health in South Africa, and used films and documentaries to shift narratives around brain health and the importance of prioritizing mental health. Tendai believes in collaboration, healthy community structures, and strong networks for transformative change and optimal thriving. Passionate about enhancing the wellbeing of Africans beyond solely Western modalities of care, Tendai integrates knowledge systems that are ethically appropriate and locally based.

Mbali Hlongwane Founder, Pink Codrs Africa South Africa

Mbali Hlongwane is the founder of Pink Codrs Africa, an organization with a mission to empower one million African women with in-demand tech skills by 2030. Mbali is driven by her personal experiences as a systems engineer. Under her leadership, over the past five years Pink Codrs Africa has successfully helped more than 2,000 women and provided training to over 700 aspiring coders. Mbali plans to extend Pink Codrs into at least three other African countries this year. In addition to her role with Pink Codrs, Mbali serves as the Tech Lead at Womhub, contributing to the advancement of women in technology. Mbali’s approach to building a formidable tech skills acquisition hub for women has provided a strong pathway towards livelihood development and a clear employment pipeline in South Africa.

Thami Nkadimeng Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Thami Nkadimeng Group



South Africa

Thami Nkadimeng is the founder and chief executive officer of the Thami Nkadimeng Group, which conceptualizes, creates, and delivers messages to a wide range of audiences. Renowned as “The Message Architect,” she is a voice with a global impact dedicated to imparting positive change in the spheres of finance, mining, construction, tourism, IT, science, business, and humanitarian affairs. With expertise across a multitude of sectors, she engages with presidents, leaders, and corporations worldwide, driving impactful conversations with a special interest in narrowing social disparities. A resolute force, her talent allows her to strategically shape conversations and initiatives that drive lasting change across industries and societies around the globe. She has honed a unique approach, blending her communication expertise with the art of crafting compelling and relatable messages.

SOUTH SUDAN

Lodu Victor Jacob

**Co-Founder and Vice President, Impact Driven Mission
South Sudan**

Lodu Victor Jacob is the co-founder and vice president at Impact Driven Mission, an organization committed to a peaceful, united, and transformed South Sudan. He creates opportunities that foster social cohesion through sport. Lodu also equips youth to become advocates of peace and to champion unity, diversity, resilience, and transformation in their respective communities. Through the formation of peace and leadership clubs, he has reached more than 2,000 youth refugee leaders with messages of hope and healing. Lodu’s leadership in peacebuilding work with South Sudanese youth refugees has supported critical skills and spaces for young leaders to contribute towards peacebuilding.

TANZANIA

Miriam Loivotoki-Elisha

**Founder and Executive Director, Buyegi Trust Fund and Unique Child Academy
Tanzania**

Miriam Loivotoki-Elisha is the co-founder and managing director of Buyegi Trust Fund, an organization that empowers children and youth to unleash their full potential through inclusive and innovative learning techniques and methods. Miriam has built a world-class education academy in Tanzania, training teachers in neurodivergent approaches to learning. Through the Unique Child Academy, children are granted access to relevant extracurricular activities and a safe environment to learn and flourish through neurodevelopmentally diverse teaching methods and implementation. Miriam



has dedicated her life to advocating for social justice and quality education for girls and individuals with neurodevelopmental diversity such as autism.

Debora Maboya
Head of Operations and Programs, Tai Tanzania
Tanzania

Debora Maboya is the head of operations and programs at Tai Tanzania, a youth-led organization that uses the transformative power of storytelling and technology to inspire social and behavioral change among young people. She is committed to finding innovative solutions to address social stigmas through the development of content such as 3D animations, comics, and radio drama. Debora also creates messaging for social development, focusing on the protection and inclusion of young people and women to ensure their access to education and health services. Debora has significant leadership experience, taking social impact organizational programs from ideas to successful implementation.

THE GAMBIA

Emily Joof
Chief Executive Officer and Founder, The Mbife Foundation
The Gambia

Emily Joof is the chief executive officer and founder of the Mbife Foundation, a nonprofit established to meet the critical need of increasing literacy and access to books for children in The Gambia. Inspired by her childhood as a third-culture kid and her own children, she founded Mbife Books, a micro-publishing company that creates inclusive children's books celebrating the West African diaspora. Emily's impactful leadership in authoring and publishing children's books that celebrate West African culture has enhanced the diversity of literature for Gambian children.



UGANDA

Ariokot Faith Patricia
Founder and Team Lead, Faith in Trees
Uganda

Ariokot Faith Patricia is the founder and team lead at Faith in Trees, an environmental organization that promotes innovation through tree planting. She has engaged with over 50,000 children in 12 districts across Uganda, helping them discover their own power to effect change through their actions. Through Faith in Trees, Faith created an innovation called the boom pencil, a plantable pencil that serves as a tool to teach children about the benefits of planting trees. To date, 10,000 pencils have been distributed, 11 schools have been reached, and more than 5,000 students have become tree planters.

ZAMBIA

Zenge Simakoloyi
Producer, Africa 4 Dummies Podcast
Zambia

Zenge Simakoloyi is the producer of the podcast “Africa 4 Dummies,” which engages young Africans in political-economic discussions. Evolving from a passion project and inspired by his upbringing in three African countries, the podcast has hosted more than 40 expert guests across 40 episodes, addressing topics from gambling addictions among youth to the Church in Africa and radical pastors. Zenge’s vision is to equip young Africans with independent, credible information to foster informed discussions and simplify African politics for his audience. Zenge’s ability to engage subject matter experts in timely discussions on critical issues across Africa has played a central role in cultivating new perspectives and informing young individuals across southern Africa and beyond.

ZIMBABWE

Nkosana “Dexter” Butholenkosi Masuku
Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Sciency Learning
Zimbabwe

Nkosana “Dexter” Butholenkosi Masuku is the founder and chief executive officer at Sciency Learning, an organization helping parents equip their children with essential, future-ready skills through engaging, hands-on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education. With years of teaching experience in rural areas, Dexter is a fervent advocate for STEM education in Africa and works passionately toward



democratizing STEM education through innovative STEM and robotics kits. Dexter envisions a future where every child has access to quality STEM education and aims to nurture the next generation of innovators by breaking down educational barriers. His leadership through STEM curriculum and implementation has cultivated an innovative approach to creating engaging learning opportunities across southern Africa.



LEADERS ASIA-PACIFIC

AUSTRALIA

Nicole Dyson

**Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Future Anything
Australia**

Nicole Dyson is the founder and Chief Executive Officer of Future Anything, an award-winning education company transforming what teaching and learning looks like in Australian classrooms. Nicole has impacted over 65,000 students and educators through curriculum programs, teacher professional development, and workshops that aim to create future-ready schools. Nicole passionately believes that youth-led ideas have the power to bend the future and supports educators, schools, and systems to design and deliver future-focused learning that unlocks young people's passion, potential, and agency. Nicole is rapidly scaling Future Anything by leveraging shared company values and drawing on her background as an experienced former school leader in the public education system in Australia.

Stacee Ketchell

**Co-Founder and Chair, Deadly Inspiring Youth Doing Good Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander Corporation
Australia**

Stacee Ketchell is the co-founder and chair of Deadly Inspiring Youth Doing Good Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation, a youth-led movement working to amplify the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Stacee designs and delivers programs that equip young people to navigate and excel in "two worlds," honoring their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage while thriving within the Western system. Stacee is a proud Wakaid and Meuram woman from the Maluligal and Kemer Kemer Meriam Nations of Zenadth Kes (Torres Strait), Australia, and served as a campaign coordinator for the 2023 Australian Indigenous Voice Referendum. Stacee recently joined Cape York Partnerships as General Manager of Operations.

Jeeven Nadanakumar

**Assistant Director, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Australia**

Jeeven Nadanakumar is an assistant director at the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. As a young diplomat, Jeeven helps shape Australia's response to global events and played a leading role during the Afghanistan non-combatant evacuation operation from Pakistan. Inspired by his family's experience of civil war in Sri Lanka, Jeeven is passionate about peacebuilding, preventing conflicts, and building a



more inclusive Australian foreign service reflective of the country's diversity. As a young career diplomat, Jeeven is advocating for democracy, peace, and international cooperation. Prior to joining the foreign service, Jeeven participated in a range of sustainable development and social cohesion initiatives, including on the sidelines of United Nations Leaders Week in New York.

CAMBODIA

Chanroeun Pa
Founding President, Cambodian Institute for Democracy
Cambodia

Chanroeun Pa is the founding president of the Cambodian Institute for Democracy, an independent think tank working to strengthen democracy in Cambodia. For over two decades, Chanroeun has collaborated with various sectors, including government, the private sector, and nonprofit organizations, to lead research, training programs, national dialogues, and stakeholder education on critical democracy and human rights issues in Cambodia. Chanroeun is passionate about creating a more democratic, peaceful, and flourishing society that is free and fair while inspiring others to take up the torch with him.

CHINA

Xi Ye
Senior Investment Manager, Mana Impact
China

Xi Ye is the senior investment manager of Mana Impact, an impact investment advisory firm that seeks to create a more circular and regenerative economic system. Xi manages investment due diligence, financial analysis, market research, and portfolio oversight for ocean health and agriculture. Earlier in his career, he worked with the Asian Venture Philanthropy Network and Singapore International Foundation to catalyze social investments in Asia. He is passionate about identifying opportunities at the intersection between business and society.

FIJI

Dr. Kapil Swamy
Senior Medical Officer, Ministry of Health and Medical Services
Fiji

Dr. Kapil Swamy is the senior medical officer of the Ministry of Health and Medical Services for the Government of Fiji. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Kapil was the team lead for a major isolation facility in central Fiji, overseeing clinical management,



social well-being and reintegration, and training junior staff. Kapil has worked in the public health sector for more than seven years and is a dedicated emerging leader in the nation's health ministry, currently leading a team of 120 medical professionals in the remote town of Navua. Kapil is passionate about improving the health of all Fijians and enhancing health equity in Fiji and globally.

GUAM

Artemio "Ricky" Hernandez
Deputy Executive Manager, Guam International Airport Authority
Guam

Artemio "Ricky" Hernandez is the deputy executive manager of the Guam International Airport Authority, where he directly manages all divisions to ensure the safe and secure operation of the island's sole commercial airport, while striving to find the balance between economic and environmental sustainability. Of Chamoru descent, Ricky is inspired by his parents' lifetime of public service and desire to always do what is right and what is good. Ricky's public service includes serving as adjunct faculty at the University of Guam in accounting and public administration, treasurer for the GovGuam Retirement Fund Board of Trustees, and member of the Research Corporation of the University of Guam Board of Directors.

HAWAI'I

Aimee Elise Keli'i Barnes
Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Hua Nani Partners
Hawai'i

Aimee Elise Keli'i Barnes is the founder and chief executive officer of Hua Nani Partners, a Hawai'i-based company focused on seeding and scaling the next generation of equitable climate solutions through policy, strategy, and advisory services. Through Aimee's leadership, Hua Nani Partners has helped governments implement innovative climate policies, advised philanthropies on investment sourcing, and built coalitions across geographies and sectors. Aimee also founded Powerwomen, a database of leading women in climate and energy, and Bright Spot Network, which supports parents facing cancer while raising young children. Aimee gains inspiration for her work from the natural world and her Native Hawaiian heritage. Aimee is working to advance inclusive climate and energy policy at local, national, and international levels.



Jamila Jarmon
Manager of Growth Strategy for Electrification of Transportation, Hawaiian Electric Company
Hawai'i

Jamila Jarmon is the manager of growth strategy for electrification of transportation at Hawaiian Electric Company. Jamila facilitates the execution of the company's electrification strategic roadmap, innovative pilots and programs, policy strategy, customer support, and strategic partnerships. Jamila champions justice and equity in all her work, including serving on nonprofit boards such as that of the Pōpolo Project, an organization working to redefine what it means to be Black in Hawai'i. She is committed to ensuring that all community stakeholders are involved in decision-making processes and that long-term solutions, not quick fixes, are prioritized.

Nalu O'Connor
Program Leader, The Pacific Internship Programs for Exploring Sciences at the University of Hawai'i-Hilo
Hawai'i

Nalu O'Connor is the program leader of the Pacific Internship Programs for Exploring Sciences (PIPES) program at the University of Hawai'i-Hilo. PIPES nurtures future aloha 'āina leaders in Hawai'i through place-based internships, mentorship, and strategic partnerships. Nalu equips young leaders to embrace leadership as a marathon, not a sprint, through a capacity-building framework that follows four values and relationships of Hawai'i: Na'au, 'Āina, Kaiāulu, and Ka'ao. Nalu is committed to exploring the ideas of reconnecting people, place, and practice with the ultimate goal of 'āina momona, or abundant ecosystems and thriving communities.

HONG KONG

Tynna Mendoza
Director of Programs, Enrich HK
Hong Kong

Tynna Mendoza is the director of programs at Enrich HK, Hong Kong's leading nonprofit empowering migrant domestic workers through financial literacy and personal development programs. Born and raised in the Philippines, Tynna is the daughter of migrant workers and knows first-hand the complex challenges these communities face. At Enrich, Tynna leads programs that help migrant workers transform their lives and thrive while in Hong Kong, creating a successful future for them and their families. As the need for care services rapidly grows in Asia due to aging populations, Tynna aspires to scale services that help these communities in Hong Kong and across the region.



INDONESIA

Ketty Lie

**Co-Founder and Senior Vice President of Business Development, ErudiFi
Indonesia**

Ketty Lie is the co-founder and senior vice president of business development at ErudiFi, an education financing platform operating in Indonesia and the Philippines. ErudiFi's mission is to make education affordable and build a better future for youths in Southeast Asia. With her background in microfinance and impact investing, Ketty has led ErudiFi's expansion, working with more than 200 school partners and serving nearly 45,000 students. Ketty is passionate about lowering the barrier to education and helping increase the talent pool in Southeast Asia.

Aries Setiadi

**Executive Director, Indonesia FinTech Association
Indonesia**

Aries Setiadi is the executive director of the Indonesia FinTech Association, a forum that enhances national fintech industry competitiveness through technological innovation and policy advocacy. Previously, Aries worked at the Ministry of Finance, where he gained valuable insights into public finance and policy. Passionate about financial inclusion and literacy, Aries is also an adjunct lecturer at Politeknik Keuangan Negara STAN, where he teaches microeconomics, macroeconomics, budgeting, and public policy. Aries brings extensive experience influencing policy and fostering cross-sector collaboration to promote financial inclusion and literacy.

JAPAN

Naho Kawashima

**Social Innovation Coordinator and Global Partnership Coordinator, Entrepreneurial
Training for Innovative Communities
Japan**

Naho Kawashima is the social innovation coordinator of Entrepreneurial Training for Innovative Communities, one of Japan's largest social entrepreneurship networks and ecosystem builders. Founded in 1993, its ultimate goal is to establish ecosystems where every individual unleashes their entrepreneurial potential. Naho supports emerging social entrepreneurs in developing their business plans and impact models while fostering their personal growth and resilience. Passionate about diversity, equity, and inclusion, Naho also designs and leads programs that provide targeted support to female entrepreneurs across the Asia Pacific.



Robin Takashi Lewis
Co-Founder and Co-Chief Executive Officer, Social Innovation Japan
Japan

Robin Takashi Lewis is the co-founder and co-chief executive officer of Social Innovation Japan, an organization empowering people across all parts of society to take social and environmental action. In this role, Robin leads social innovation training programs for corporations, government offices, and changemakers. He also co-founded Mymizu, a movement reducing plastic waste through refillable water stations and cross-sector collaborations. Robin serves as an advisor for a range of mission-driven organizations and is a guest lecturer at several universities, including the University of Tokyo. Robin is passionate about empowering and building others to become better leaders and part of the change they wish to see.

KIRIBATI

Taati Eria
Director of Planning and Development Division, Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources
Kiribati

Taati Eria is the director of planning and development division at the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources, which aims to build a sustainable and vibrant economy in Kiribati through the development of fisheries and marine resources. Taati administers community-based fishing programs and develops initiatives to support women in establishing small-scale businesses. Taati is passionate about empowering villagers, particularly women, as agents of change. As a civil servant, Taati has dedicated nearly a decade of her career to driving gradual change within government ministries.

MALAYSIA

Gavin Chow
Co-Founder and Executive Director, People Like Us Hang Out
Malaysia

Gavin Chow is the co-founder and executive director of People Like Us Hang Out, an organization that supports LGBTQ+ people in Malaysia through community building, rights awareness, and advocacy campaigns. Gavin has pioneered initiatives like Malaysia's first inclusive shelter and the first queer-affirming mental health referral service. As an activist, Gavin is skilled at facilitation, workshop training, and design and has a special interest in intersectional movement building, communal resilience, and safety. Gavin is inspired by the activist community he works with and dedicated to cultivating social change movements that prioritize mental health.



Zoel Ng
Director of MySDG Academy, APPGM-SDG
Malaysia

Zoel Ng is the director of MySDG Academy at the All Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia-SDG, a bipartisan initiative of the Parliament of Malaysia dedicated to the implementation of the country's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Zoel currently works with more than 100 parliamentarians and more than 500 organizations, bridging government and grassroots efforts to localize the SDG agenda and promote community-based solutions. Passionate about youth and community development, Zoel began as a nonprofit leader and rose to key government roles to lead over 50 cross-sector impact projects. Zoel brings nearly two decades of experience in cross-sector youth and community development and is passionate about localizing global impact.

MONGOLIA

Suvd-Erdene Demberel
Founder, Wings of Healthy Life
Mongolia

Suvd-Erdene Demberel is the founder of Wings of Healthy Life, an organization that aims to improve public health education, provide free medical check-ups for under-resourced communities, and enhance collaboration in the medical community. Building a movement of doctors, Suvd-Erdene has grown the organization to more than 100 members in five years. Suvd previously served as project manager for the Novartis Access Program, which enhanced the availability of qualified medicines for non-communicable diseases in low-and middle-income regions. After a decade of working as a nephrologist, Suvd-Erdene has transitioned beyond a clinical setting to expand her impact. Suvd's goal is to enhance preventive medicine and improve healthcare operations for sustainable health improvements across Mongolia.

MYANMAR

Nay Chi Win
Program Director, Joy House Community Center
Myanmar

Nay Chi Win is the program director of the Joy House Community Center, an organization based in the border town of Mae Sot that supports those displaced by the ongoing political crisis in Myanmar. Nay Chi Win provides psychosocial support through art therapy, wellness classes, and enhanced education. Nay Chi Win provides frontline care to displaced members of the civil disobedience movement, and she is balancing the urgency of meeting immediate community needs while building a shared



vision of her community's return. She is committed to establishing a sanctuary for the Burmese community and nurturing a mental health support system to sustain their resilience, both now and upon their eventual return to Myanmar.

NIUE

Alana Richmond-Rex
President, Oma Tafua
Niue

Alana Richmond-Rex is the president of Oma Tafua, a nonprofit that addresses the lack of data, research, and education on marine mammal protection and their heritage in the South Pacific. As a community leader, Alana advocates for Indigenous rights and leads environmental protection efforts across a diverse range of initiatives. She also co-founded Niue Entrepreneurial Women, an organization dedicated to empowering female entrepreneurs and amplifying the strength of women's groups in Niue. Of Niuean descent, Alana is a leader who wears many hats to protect the people and natural resources of Niue, a small island nation of less than 2,000 people.

NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Thomas A. Manglona II
Chief Regional Correspondent, KUAM News
Northern Mariana Islands

Thomas A. Manglona II is the chief regional correspondent at KUAM News. From the island of Rota, Thomas is a native Chamorro multimedia journalist covering government, environment, and social justice issues for the TV station. He also teaches media, democracy, and current events at the Northern Marianas College. He is a member of the Indigenous Journalists Association and Asian American Journalists Association (AAJA). At AAJA, he founded the Pacific Islander Journalism Task Force to advocate for journalists and coverage across Oceania. Believing his work builds on a lineage of storytellers, Thomas is passionate about representation in media and hopes to uplift and amplify the next generation of Indigenous storytellers and narratives.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Evengelyn Kove
Founder and Director, Resilient Peers
Papua New Guinea

Evengelyn Kove is the founder and director of Resilient Peers, a social enterprise dedicated to utilizing local talent to tackle rural sustainability challenges. Evengelyn integrates Indigenous knowledge to lead environmental and community development



through a “think global, act local” approach. Evengelyn brings over a decade of expertise in biodiversity conservation, climate change, and sustainable community livelihood projects in Papua New Guinea. She also serves on the board of Partners With Melanesians, Inc.

PHILIPPINES

Charles Fredricksson de Belen

Legal and Legislative Head, Congressional Committee on Senior Citizens Philippines

Charles Fredricksson de Belen is the legal and legislative head of the Congressional Committee on Senior Citizens. Charles’ work in the Philippine Congress helped pass landmark pieces of legislation that doubled pensions for more than five million indigent senior citizens, created the National Commission of Senior Citizens, and expanded and strengthened the rights of senior citizens. Charles also co-founded GoodGov PH, an organization dedicated to youth empowerment through education, training, and advocacy. As a lawyer, author, professor, and policymaker, Charles champions bottom-up change, advocating for active youth participation in governance and senior citizens’ rights in the Philippines.

Dr. Dexter Galban

Assistant Secretary, Department of Education Philippines

Dr. Dexter Galban is assistant secretary at the Department of Education, overseeing all national programs for school health, youth development, physical fitness, and child rights protection. As a young public servant, Dexter focuses on improving the lives of more than 28 million students through national campaigns and policy reform. He aims to empower youth leadership, advocate for youth inclusion in decision-making, and drive positive change in education and public health through government initiatives. With over 15 years of experience leading nonprofits, government agencies, and businesses, he serves as one of the youngest assistant secretaries and one of the few non-elected executives under 35 in the Philippine government.

SAMOA

Asuao Malaki Iakopo

Assistant Chief Executive Officer, Water Resources Division, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Samoa

Asuao Malaki Iakopo is the assistant chief executive officer of the water resources division at the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment. Malaki implements



programs in partnership with communities, with a particular focus on the sustainable management of water resources in Samoa. A public servant since 2003, Malaki brings experience in building trust among local villages and government institutions. He currently serves as the chairman for the Pacific Hydrology Panel under the Pacific Meteorological Council and is Samoa's Hydrological Adviser to the World Meteorological Organisation. Malaki is passionate about building the resilience of local villages to climate change by promoting sustainable development pathways such as agroforestry, agrotourism, and green jobs.

SINGAPORE

Mathilda D'Silva Chief Executive Officer, Ocean Purpose Project Singapore

Mathilda D'Silva is the chief executive officer of Ocean Purpose Project, a social enterprise that promotes ocean conservation and turns ocean plastics into hydrogen. Mathilda works with low-income communities, Indigenous groups such as the Orang Laut, and scientists to drive innovative and inclusive sustainability strategies. Mathilda was formerly a TV producer and competitive dragon boater until an ocean pollution incident in 2015 adversely impacted her skin, hair, and immune system. As the granddaughter of a fisherman, she is passionate about empowering coastal communities throughout the Asia Pacific.

Edward Yee Co-Founder, Givfunds Singapore

Edward Yee is the co-founder of GivFunds, an impact fund that provides debt financing to social enterprises, particularly those in rural areas and smaller cities. A serial social entrepreneur, Edward also co-founded Nsave, providing those in distressed economies with a safe place to save through offshore savings accounts. Edward is passionate about catalyzing systemic change throughout Southeast Asia's impact financing ecosystem and aims to bend finance toward justice. A Rhodes Scholar, Edward has an impressive track record and strategic acumen that can be seen through the success of his enterprises.



TAIWAN

Eddy Lin

**Co-Founder, Taiwan Youth Association for Democracy
Taiwan**

Eddy Lin is the co-founder of the Taiwan Youth Association for Democracy, Taiwan's first nonpartisan youth engagement nonprofit. Eddy has long advocated for lowering the voting age in Taiwan from 20 to 18, which led to the first-ever national referendum in 2022. He also organizes Youth Presidential Election Forums, enabling young voters to have direct dialogue with candidates. Eddy takes a grassroots, intergenerational, and nonpartisan approach to change while empowering other young leaders and building global connections. Eddy also leads Amazon's public policy team in Taiwan and serves on the board of the Lee Teng-Hui Foundation, honoring Taiwan's first president, post-democratization. Eddy is passionate about empowering the next generation of leaders to amplify their own voices.

THAILAND

Suchart Charles Klaikaew

**Program Lead, IKI JET Thailand, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Thailand**

Suchart Charles Klaikaew is the program lead for IKI JET Thailand at Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, the main German development agency. Suchart leads the Just Energy Transition in Coal Regions Project, supporting and accelerating just transitions to renewable energy and other sustainable economic activities. He also teaches courses on cities, sustainability, and climate change, and has supported a leadership program for 700 administrative officers, benefiting over 2,000 students in Thailand. Suchart is passionate about enhancing access to high-skilled green employment opportunities and fostering positive change during Thailand's transitional phase, ensuring that no one is left behind.

TIMOR-LESTE

Joaninha Vitoria Ximenes

**Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights and Women and Girls Participation Project
Manager, Plan International Timor-Leste
Timor-Leste**

Joaninha Vitoria Ximenes manages the sexual reproductive health and participation project at Plan International Timor-Leste. Joaninha works on community development and girls' rights and empowerment at the municipal level, using a multi-sectoral



approach, by coordinating and working closely with the local communities and village leaders, local implementing partners, and government stakeholders at the national level. Joaninha is passionate about building a Timor-Leste that is safe and supportive for girls and women, and she hopes to grow as a policymaker, advocating for laws that integrate their needs into the national agenda. Joaninha brings a grand and hopeful vision for Timor-Leste, one in which gender equality and youth issues are prioritized.

TONGA

Rose Lesley Kautoke

**Senior Crown Counsel and Head of the Legal Advice and International Law Division,
Attorney General's Office, Government of the Kingdom of Tonga
Tonga**

Rose Lesley Kautoke is senior crown counsel and head of the legal advice and international law division at Tonga's Attorney General's Office. Rose focuses on treaty ratification, implementation, and management through Tonga's Central Treaty Archive. Rose has navigated difficult conversations at the local, national, and regional levels in order to uplift values close to her heart, and in the interest of her nation and community. Rose is dedicated to aiding her fellow citizens, advocating for smaller nations in international environmental law, and promoting public understanding of both domestic and international law.

TUVALU

Naima Te Maile Fifita

**Founder and Director, Moana Tasi Project
Tuvalu**

Naima Te Maile Fifita is the founder and director of the Moana Tasi Project, an environmental nonprofit that supports Pacific communities facing climate change displacement. Naima documents the lived experiences and traditional ecological wisdom of Pacific Islanders facing climate-induced displacement, while contributing to the legal discourse on this issue in the Pacific. She is also a member of the Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law Secretariat and a Council Member for the World Future Council. Her Pacific Islander and multicultural upbringing and world-embracing views have motivated her engagement in numerous environmental spaces, particularly environmental justice and nonprofit work, legal research, and policy transformation. Naima is dedicated to creating space for painful but restorative conversations about loss, belonging, and identity.



VIETNAM

Christian Tran

**Founder and Developer, The ASEAN Green Steel Fund Initiative
Vietnam**

Christian Tran is the founder and developer of The ASEAN Green Steel Fund Initiative (AGSF), an organization that aims to decrease greenhouse gas emissions from both the agriculture and steel industries. In his role, Christian manages project portfolios and strategic partnerships. Previously, Christian contributed to the first fintech social startup in Vietnam that enables users to donate to a cause of their choice while shopping online - an initiative that raised more than USD \$540,000. Inspired by his parents' work in farming, Christian is passionate about improving conditions for agricultural workers by finding an innovative link between sustainability and agricultural practices across Southeast Asia.



LEADERS EUROPE

BELGIUM

Carine Kanimba
Spokesperson, World Liberty Congress
Belgium

Carine Kanimba is a spokesperson for the World Liberty Congress, the largest global movement of pro-democracy leaders who represent 60 countries ruled by autocratic governments. A survivor of Rwanda's 1994 genocide, Carine lost both parents to ethnic violence and was adopted by a humanitarian who saved 1,200 lives during the genocide, inspiring the movie "Hotel Rwanda." In 2020, when her father was unjustly imprisoned, she and her family led an international campaign that secured his release in 2023, and worked with the World Liberty Congress to develop a handbook for other families working to free political prisoners. Carine testified before the U.S. House Intelligence Committee and the European Parliament in 2021, advocating for regulation of the spyware industry.

Kim Smouter
Executive Director, European Network Against Racism
Belgium

Kim Smouter is the executive director of the European Network Against Racism, through which he collaborates with lawmakers, institutions, and civil society organizations across Europe to advocate for racial equality and foster cooperation among anti-racism groups. Prior to this, Kim held senior leadership roles in the European Parliament, the European Network of National Civil Society Associations, and ESOMAR (formerly known as the European Society for Opinion and Marketing Research). Kim is particularly interested in leveraging innovative partnerships between civil society and investment finance to reduce race and ethnicity-based wealth disparities in Europe. Kim brings a wealth of cross-sector experience to the cohort and has demonstrated success in shifting conversations on racism across the continent.

CROATIA

Filip Koprčina
Founder and CEO, Energy Shift
Croatia

Filip Koprčina is the Founder and CEO of Energy Shift, a company dedicated to democratizing the energy sector and promoting active participation in the transition to renewable energy. Through a blockchain-powered platform, Energy Shift enables individuals, regardless of financial background, to jointly invest in and co-own solar



farms and wind turbines. Before founding Energy Shift, Filip worked at a solar installation company and advised large corporations on transitioning to sustainable energy. He also contributed to the United Nations' High-Level Dialogue on Energy as a working group member, providing recommendations on achieving sustainable development goal targets. Filip is committed to "revolutionizing the energy sector" and was recognized with the Sustainable Energy Award in the Young Trailblazer category by the European Commission and Forbes 30 Under 30 for Europe in 2022. Filip has shown an eagerness to disrupt traditional systems in order to make impactful progress by putting individuals in the driver's seat when it comes to the energy transition.

CZECH REPUBLIC/CZECHIA

Bára Stárek

**Chairwoman and Fundraiser, Díky, že můžem, z.s.
Czech Republic/Czechia**

Bára Stárek is the chairwoman of Díky, že můžem—meaning "Thanks to you, we can." The organization is dedicated to the belief that every individual should live freely within a democratic framework. In her role, Bára focuses on strategic planning and partners with vocational high schools and training institutes to empower students and engage young people in discussions about human rights, freedom, and democracy. Prior to this work, Bára served as an advisor to the councilor for education, sports, science, and business support at the Prague City Hall and to the councilor of culture in Prague. Bára is committed to bridging the gaps between young people and decision-makers in business and politics and believes that mutual understanding between the two groups is essential for safeguarding democratic principles.

DENMARK

Mads Qvist Frederiksen

**Executive Director, Arctic Economic Council
Denmark**

Mads Qvist Frederiksen is the executive director of the Arctic Economic Council, a business membership group dedicated to promoting long-term economic growth for communities in the Arctic. He previously served as a senior advisor at the Confederation of Danish Industry's Global Trade and Investment unit, where he was in charge of Arctic business development and policy. Mads has a background in journalism and worked earlier in his career as a communication advisor for the Danish Manufacturing Academy, a journalism instructor in Kabul, Afghanistan, and as a journalist for the Danish Department of Defense. He is passionate about mitigating the effects of climate change in the Arctic and is dedicated to supporting Indigenous communities and empowering local populations in all of his endeavors. Mads has a



deep commitment to helping often-forgotten communities in the Arctic and building bridges between the member states of the Arctic Economic Council.

ESTONIA

Hanah Lahe
Member of the Parliament, Parliament of Estonia
Estonia

Hanah Lahe is a Member of Parliament in Estonia. Elected at the age of 23, she became the youngest member of parliament in the nation. Hanah formed the parliament's Circular Economy Support Group, bringing together members from all political parties to support the ministry's waste management activities. She is also leading the development of a law to establish the conditions and legal framework for industrial water reuse and recycling in Estonia. Previously, Hanah served as a political advisor for the Reform Party, where she strengthened the party's environmental and climate change programs. Passionately committed to advancing ambitious and internationally enforceable climate policies, Hanah believes that meaningful systemic change begins with fair and inclusive governance.

FRANCE

Sebastien Gros
Government Affairs Director, Europe, Middle East, and Africa, Apple
France

Sebastien Gros is Apple's Government Affairs Director for Europe,, leading a team that handles relations in 50 countries. In this role, he focuses on transatlantic relationships, addressing challenges posed by globalization and geopolitical tensions, particularly regarding the impact of technology and regulation. Before entering the private sector, Sebastien served in different roles in French politics both in elected and appointed positions. Notably, he was also the chief of staff for the Prime Minister of France during the 2015 terrorist attacks, working at the forefront of the crisis alongside other heads of state on a strategic national response. Sebastien values democracy, freedom, and justice and is proud to serve as an operational reserve officer in the French Army.

Lumir Lapray
Organizer, Démocratiser la Politique
France

Lumir Lapray is a community organizer specializing in rural communities. She leads the Démocratiser la Politique (Democratize Politics) initiative, a cross-partisan project addressing barriers for French working-class citizens running for office. Lumir is



dedicated to developing a network of trained, organized, and funded rural changemakers in a country where extremism dominates in many villages. In addition to her organizing work, Lumir is part of a weekly radio segment on a popular French radio station where she discusses current affairs and amplifies marginalized rural perspectives. Her first book, “Who Will Fight For Us?”, a narrative nonfiction investigation exploring how to reclaim support from extremists’ voters, will be published later this year. Lumir bases her work on lessons learned from labor organizing in the United States.

GEORGIA

Ana Tavadze

Project Manager and Development Officer, Tbilisi Pride

Georgia

Ana Tavadze is a frontline activist fighting for human rights and democracy in Georgia. She currently serves as project manager at Shame Movement, the largest civil society organization in Georgia, which focuses on protecting human rights, advocating for fair and free elections, and raising civil awareness. She also works as a project manager at Tbilisi Pride, a nonprofit that organizes the annual Tbilisi Pride Week and champions LGBTQ+ rights and visibility in Georgia. In 2019, Ana joined GrlzWave, a feminist and queer multimedia platform that engages young Georgians on issues of feminism and queer rights. With a background in journalism, Ana has worked with Forbes Georgia, Business Media Georgia, and the Economic Policy Research Center. She is particularly interested in the effects of the digital era on political decision-making and is committed to fostering a more inclusive and knowledgeable society.

GERMANY

Benedikt Bösel

Founder and Managing Director, Gut und Bösel and Finck Foundation

Germany

Benedikt Bösel is the founder and managing director at Gut und Bösel, an innovative agricultural project dedicated to regenerative and multifunctional land use. After a career in finance, in 2016 he took over responsibility for his family farm, which is located in one of the driest areas of Germany. He has since transformed the 3,000-hectare farm into one of Europe’s most well-known living labs for regenerative agriculture and built the Finck Foundation for research and education. Benedikt is dedicated to transforming perceptions of agriculture and forestry and showing their potential as solutions to climate change, biodiversity loss, and rural development. He starred in the Disney+ series “Farm Rebellion” and wrote a bestselling book of the same name to inspire hope for the future. Benedikt is deeply passionate about systems-change work, particularly regarding climate change and agriculture.



Madina Katter
Co-Founder and CEO, Grains
Germany

Madina Katter is the Co-founder of Grains, the first-of-its-kind nonprofit hospitality school that supports displaced persons in navigating crises through free professional education. She was also the Founder of Bulletproof Ukraine, a charity that produced bulletproof vests for civilians and journalists in Ukraine. Alongside the physical school in Kyiv, Madina is developing an interactive learning app to assist displaced individuals globally start careers in hospitality. Previously, Madina worked as a venture developer, building impact-driven tech ventures in Europe and the Middle East. Born in Kazakhstan with Uyghur roots, Madina is also passionate about her hobby project, 1-06, a cultural development lab in Berlin that hosts immersive live experiences centered around art. Madina has a unique approach to changemaking work, combining her background in law with passion for entrepreneurship.

GREECE

Kyra Kapi
Communications Director, Office of the Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic
Greece

Kyra Kapi is the communications director in the Office of the Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic. In this role, she develops and implements storytelling campaigns to promote civic participation and awareness. In 2023, Kyra successfully managed an award-winning digital campaign on TikTok that enabled the Prime Minister to communicate and connect more effectively with the younger population. The campaign received global attention with over 42 million views. She also designed and led a video campaign that depicted the experiences of LGBTQ+ people, playing a crucial role in garnering public support for the Greek Gay Marriage Bill that was passed by the Hellenic Parliament in February 2024. Kyra is passionate about women's rights and autonomy and aspires to contribute to a world where women possess a heightened sense of self-worth.

IRELAND

Karolina Attspodina
Co-Founder and CEO, WeDoSolar
Ireland

Karolina Attspodina is the co-founder and CEO of WeDoSolar, a green-tech startup dedicated to providing accessible solar energy solutions, particularly for urban environments. Their flagship product is a solar panel system for balconies, designed to



reduce grid dependence, lower CO2 emissions, and decrease electricity costs. Karolina also serves on the board of the Green Tech Alliance, supporting companies that prioritize the planet over profit. Originally from Ukraine, she immigrated to Ireland at the age of nine. Karolina is deeply committed to mentoring aspiring entrepreneurs, especially women, to empower the next generation of changemakers. Karolina is a people-focused changemaker; she is looking to make systemic change on the individual level by providing renewable energy to households.

Tammy Darcy
Founder and CEO, The Shona Project
Ireland

Tammy Darcy is the founder and CEO of The Shona Project, a multi-award-winning social enterprise dedicated to educating, empowering, and inspiring Irish girls to become strong, confident, and curious young women. The Shona Project has delivered workshops across Ireland and hosts the award-winning Shine Festival, which gathers thousands of girls each year to hear from inspirational female role models. The organization is a tribute to Tammy's sister Shona, who passed away in 2023 after a long illness, and has supported over 100,000 girls in her name to date. In 2021, Tammy was named the Irish Red Cross Humanitarian of the Year, and received the European Citizens' Award in November 2023. Tammy is passionate about ensuring that every girl in Ireland achieves her potential, whatever that means for her. Drawing inspiration from Mrs. Obama, Tammy has built up an ecosystem to uplift underprivileged young women across Ireland.

Leon Diop
CEO, Black and Irish
Ireland

Leon is the CEO of Black and Irish, an organization dedicated to creating a more equal and inclusive Ireland and improving the quality of life for Black and mixed-race people in Ireland. Leon promotes civic engagement and democratic involvement among minorities in Ireland through voter registration drives, public town halls, and the publication of an Irish politics guidebook. Leon also hosts the Black and Irish podcast in collaboration with RTE, Ireland's national public broadcaster, and co-authored the award-winning book "Black and Irish: Legends, Trailblazers, and Everyday Heroes." He sits on numerous community boards, including Work Equal, which promotes gender equality, and the Childhood Development Initiative and South Dublin County Partnership, which support children and families.



LATVIA

Liza Ateh

**Head of Economic Opportunity, Google.org Europe, Middle East, and Africa
Latvia**

Liza Ateh is head of economic opportunity at Google.org, where she leads their economic opportunity portfolio across Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. During her tenure, Liza has developed the first comprehensive strategy for Central and Eastern Europe, focusing on digitally upskilling underserved women and youth in remote areas, and fostering a culture of civic engagement across the region. She also organized the Social Leaders Labs, the first leadership bootcamp for community leaders in Central and Eastern Europe, promoting regional collaboration and knowledge exchange. Liza is passionate about mentoring young women and speaks regularly on social impact, digital skills, and philanthropy in the region.

LITHUANIA

Rugile Butkeviciute

**Co-Founder and Director, Ribologija
Lithuania**

Rugile Butkeviciute is the co-founder and director of Ribologija, the first non-governmental organization in the Baltic states focused solely on the prevention of sexual violence. A lawyer by trade, Rugile has spent over a decade providing free legal aid to survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking. She also helped establish the first online rape crisis center in Lithuania and authored a book for pre-school children on preventing sexual violence. As a renowned expert on gender equality in Lithuania, she annually trains thousands of youth and professionals on gender-based violence and is committed to bringing gender equality concerns to the forefront of public discourse.

NORTH MACEDONIA

Vidjilenca Abazi

**Co-Founder and Executive Director, European Whistleblowing Institute
North Macedonia**

Vidjilenca Abazi is the co-founder and executive director of the European Whistleblowing Institute, an organization dedicated to protecting and supporting whistleblowers across Europe. Under her direction, the institute collaborated extensively with stakeholders, including researchers, policymakers, and civil society organizations, to create and advocate for the European Union Whistleblower Directive. This regulation established a comprehensive legislative framework aimed at protecting



whistleblowers and promoting accountability. Born in Croatia and raised in North Macedonia, Vigjilena is of Albanian ethnicity. Her diverse background and personal experiences inspired her to empower women and girls in the Western Balkans by also co-founding Stella, a nonprofit dedicated to gender equality through education and economic empowerment. Coming from an academic background, Vidjilena is passionate about protecting democracy through holding institutions accountable.

MALTA

Vladyslava Kravchenko
Treasurer, Malta Paralympic Committee
Malta

Vladyslava Kravchenko is the treasurer of the Malta Paralympic Committee, which she helped establish in 2018. The committee advocates for social change through sport, striving to increase sports participation among people with disabilities. In this role, Vladyslava worked to integrate parasport into the national curriculum at primary and secondary levels through the I'mPOSSIBLE educational program, providing specialized training to educators and coaches and reaching over 1,500 students. A two-time Paralympian and award-winning parasport advocate, Vladyslava made history in 2016 as Malta's first female swimmer to compete at the Paralympic Games, repeating the achievement in Tokyo in 2021. She also serves on the International Paralympic Committee's Athletes' Council and consults on sporting projects and events.

POLAND

Daniel Di Giusto
Co-founder and Executive Director, Tech To The Rescue Foundation
Poland

Daniel Di Giusto is the co-founder and executive director of Tech To The Rescue, a global platform that connects tech companies with civic organizations for pro bono projects. To date, they have united over 1,400 companies from more than 60 countries, initiating over 600 projects that have provided \$8 million worth of IT services to nonprofits. In 2022, Daniel launched TechForUkraine, enabling over 150 nonprofits to receive professional tech services to support Ukrainian communities. A social entrepreneur, Daniel also led Hive53, one of the earliest event series in Poland for startups, and founded Impact.Tech, a community of entrepreneurs and other innovators focused on making social impact through technology. Driven by courage, openness, and ownership, Daniel is passionate about advancing digital inclusion.



Margaret Amaka Ohia-Nowak
Co-Founder and Advisory Board Member, Alliance for Black Justice in Poland
Poland

Margaret Amaka Ohia-Nowak is the co-founder of the Alliance for Black Justice in Poland, an organization dedicated to promoting racial equality and advocating for the rights of Black, African, and Afro-descendant communities in Central and Eastern Europe. She also serves on the organization's advisory board and established Poland's first School of Anti-Racist Practice, a political education and mentoring program. Margaret is committed to addressing the complexities of social justice, and her academic research focuses on anti-Black racist discourses and media portrayals of Black Africans in Poland. Margaret, the daughter of a Nigerian father and a Polish mother, grew up in both Europe and Africa, which piqued her interest in how race, gender, and ethnicity shape individual and community experiences.

Joanna Talewicz
Co-Founder and President, The Foundation Towards Dialogue
Poland

Joanna Talewicz is the co-founder and president of the Foundation Towards Dialogue, dedicated to creating a future in Poland where the Roma community is treated equally. She established the Roma Community Center in response to the discrimination Roma refugees faced upon arriving from Ukraine and served as a spokesperson on behalf of the community, advocating, and training other international NGOs. An active member of the Polish delegation in the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, she was also nominated by the U.S. Embassy in Poland for the inaugural Secretary Antony Blinken Award for Global Anti-Racism Champions. Talewicz is proud to be a Roma woman and is committed to passing down her language and cultural heritage, while strengthening action for her community. Noting that stereotypes are based on fears and a lack of knowledge, Joanna is trying to build education systems and leverage empathy to seek greater recognition and rights for the Roma community in Poland.

PORTUGAL

Ricardo Baptista Leite
CEO, Health AI: The Global Agency for Responsible AI in Health
Portugal

Ricardo Baptista Leite is the CEO of Health AI: The Global Agency for Responsible AI in Health, a nonprofit dedicated to helping countries develop regulatory frameworks for artificial intelligence in health care. He is also the founder and president of the UNITE Global Parliamentarians Network for Global Health, which connects policymakers from 110 countries. Ricardo is a city councilor in Sintra and previously served four terms as a member of Parliament in Portugal, where he contributed to the health and foreign



affairs committees. Committed to community service, Ricardo volunteered as a medical doctor during the COVID-19 pandemic at his hometown hospital in Portugal and joined a humanitarian mission at the Lviv Regional Hospital in Ukraine during the first summer of the war.

SLOVENIA

Peter Matjašič
Executive Director, Investigate Europe
Slovenia

Peter Matjašič is the executive director of Investigate Europe, a unique permanent cross-border journalistic cooperative, where he helps develop long-term strategies to reach broader audiences, alongside managing operations and finances. Prior to joining Investigate Europe, Peter spent more than eight years at the Open Society Initiative for Europe, focusing on grant-making to achieve social change, particularly supporting whistleblower rights in Europe. He also coordinates the “My Voice, My Choice” campaign, the European citizens’ initiative on abortion rights and voting that former Europe Leader/Scholar Nika Kovač leads. Earlier in his career, Peter was involved in youth work, starting with the Young European Federalists and culminating as president of the European Youth Forum.

Lenart Žavbi
Member of Parliament, National Assembly of Slovenia
Slovenia

Lenart Žavbi is a member of the Slovenian National Assembly. At the time of his election in 2022, he became the youngest person in Slovenia’s history to hold this position. He is the Vice-Chair of the Committee on European Union Affairs and a member of the Finance, Foreign Policy, and Health committees. Known for his active participation in parliamentary debates, Lenart advocates for solutions to social and environmental problems. He is committed to maintaining public trust in the National Assembly through transparent and inclusive governance practices. Additionally, he is finishing his master’s degree on the development and balance of power in Slovenia’s middle class.

SPAIN

Luis Alvarado
Head of GAEA - Giving to Amplify Earth Action, World Economic Forum
Spain

Luis Alvarado Martinez is the head of the GAEA - Giving to Amplify Earth Action program at the World Economic Forum, which focuses on aggregating philanthropic capital to



de-risk and unlock public-private investments in climate and nature systems, particularly in underrepresented communities of the Global South. Luis also oversees strategic philanthropic, public, and private partnerships at the World Economic Forum's Center for Nature and Climate. Working at the intersection of business, climate, and finance, Luis has been able to shift thinking at some of the world's biggest institutions towards more climate-friendly actions. He is passionate about facilitating investments for local communities to enable a just and accelerated transition.

Matías Roca
Co-Founder and CEO, Kuorum
Spain

Matías Roca is the co-founder and CEO of Kuorum Social, a startup specializing in online voting technologies for the private sector. His mission is to enhance democratic values and reduce the environmental impact of legally binding voting events, such as shareholders' meetings and union elections. Before founding Kuorum, Matías worked for multinational companies Siemens, Danone, and E.ON. Matías's commitment to fostering democracy, particularly in the private sector, is inspired by his father's migration from Equatorial Guinea to escape a dictatorship and the disparities in opportunities between his relatives in Africa and Europe. In his pursuit to make private business more democratic, Matias believes that "democracy is the basis of development."

SWEDEN

Omar Alshogre
Director of Detainees Affairs, Syrian Emergency Task Force
Sweden

Omar Alshogre is the director of detainees affairs at the Syrian Emergency Task Force. He is a Syrian refugee and human rights advocate known for his personal experience with torture and starvation during three years of detention by the Syrian government. Omar is one of the few survivors of Syria's prisons; he was smuggled out of detention with the help of his mother in June 2015. Today, Omar is a Swedish resident and dedicates his life to legal prosecutions against war criminals in Syria and liberating political prisoners around the world. He travels globally to speak on leadership during a crisis and is proud to be Syrian.

Jonathan Ilicki
Principal, Industrifonden
Sweden

Jonathan Ilicki is a principal at Industrifonden, a Swedish state-founded venture capital foundation that invests in life science companies that positively impact society.



Jonathan coaches startup and scaleup CEOs, and serves on the boards of tech companies addressing societal challenges. His mission is to advance health care through scalable science and technology. Previously, Jonathan worked as a physician, conducted research, and lectured on evidence-based medicine. An entrepreneur at heart, he also co-founded a medtech startup, scaled operations for Sweden's first collaborative digital health care provider, and led internationalization for a major Northern European healthtech scaleup. With a rich and varied background across medicine and venture capital, Jonathan is a systems-level thinker.

Arba Kokalari
Member, European Parliament
Sweden

Arba Kokalari has been a member of the European Parliament since 2019, representing Sweden and the Moderate Party, a center-right coalition. She focuses on legislation for Europe's digital and green transition, particularly in tech, digital services, AI, circular economy, and sustainable products. Arba was the European People's Party Group's lead negotiator for the Digital Services Act, advocating for platforms to remove illegal content on social media. As rapporteur for the Istanbul Convention on combating violence against women, she successfully pushed for the European Union's ratification of the legislation. Arba also strongly advocates for the European Union to act against authoritarian regimes. Born in Albania under communism, Arba moved to Sweden as a child. She is committed to freedom, democracy, women's rights, free trade, and strong transatlantic cooperation.

UKRAINE

Gulsanna Mamediieva
CEO, Digitality GovTech Center of Excellence
Ukraine

Gulsanna Mamediieva is the CEO of Digitality GovTech Center of Excellence, a Brussels-based nonprofit working to enhance digital transformation in the public sector. From 2019 to 2023, Gulsanna served as the Director General for European and NATO Integration at the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine, where she led strategic planning and integration efforts for Ukraine's digital sector. She and her team developed and successfully implemented the strategy for Ukraine's integration into the Digital Single Market of the European Union. Gulsanna is proud to be an Indigenous Crimean Tatar and is committed to ensuring that their stories, struggles, and perspectives are heard on the international stage.



Svitlana Romanko
Founder and Director, Razom We Stand
Ukraine

Svitlana Romanko is the founder and director of Razom We Stand, an independent Ukrainian movement focused on defending Ukraine from Russian aggression and promoting a sustainable, green future. She launched and coordinated the Stand With Ukraine campaign to ban fossil fuel imports from Russia and end the war in Ukraine. A former university professor and expert in environmental, energy, and climate law, Svitlana led climate campaigns across Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia with 350.org. In 2021, she coordinated the largest faith institutions' fossil fuel divestment, worth over \$6 billion, with the Laudato Si Movement. An environmental lawyer, Svitlana was awarded the Rose Braz Award for Bold Activism in 2022. Svitlana is an action-oriented changemaker who has proven she is not afraid to take on big challenges.

Oleksii Zhmerenetskyi
Member, Parliament of Ukraine
Ukraine

Oleksii Zhmerenetskyi is a member of Parliament in Ukraine. He established the "Strategic Foresight" parliamentary caucus with the National Democratic Institute, the United Nations Development Program, and the British Parliament. The caucus conducts research on future scenarios, helps establish foresight units, and is drafting a law for strategic policy development. Previously, Oleksii was the deputy director of a state enterprise in Ukraine, responsible for the regulatory framework for technological and industrial parks. He believes in catalyzing positive change through forward-thinking initiatives.

UNITED KINGDOM

Mete Coban
Deputy Mayor of London for Environment and Energy
United Kingdom

Mete Coban is Deputy Mayor of London for Environment and Energy and a founding member of the Board of Trustees of My Life My Say, a youth-led, non-partisan charity amplifying youth voices and engaging young people from underrepresented communities in decision-making. He was the youngest-ever elected councilor in the London Borough of Hackney and served as a cabinet member for climate change, environment, and transportation, leading Hackney Council's response to the climate crisis. Previously, Mete worked on the campaign for the Mayor of London, focusing on youth engagement. Born in Northern Cyprus to asylum-seeking parents, Mete moved



to the United Kingdom as a child. His journey as an asylum seeker drives his commitment to giving marginalized groups a voice in democracy.

Heta Fell
Director of Social and Community Impact, Nike
United Kingdom

Heta Fell is the director of social and community impact at Nike, focusing on increasing girls' participation in sports. Under her leadership, Nike partnered with Spotify to create the Nike x Spotify Make Moves Fund, which awards \$25,000 grants to ten organizations in the United Kingdom with innovative, girl-first proposals combining music and movement for mental well-being. Previously, she managed complex multi-stakeholder impact projects with brands such as Gucci, Meta, and Headspace. Heta is a proud second-generation immigrant to Britain, with Indian and Kenyan heritage. She finds joy in seeing more women who look like her rise into leadership positions. Outside of her professional work, Heta mentors young women from underrepresented backgrounds to grow their networks and follow their dreams.

Nikita Thakrar
Co-Founder and CEO, Included VC
United Kingdom

Nikita is the co-founder and CEO of Included VC, an organization dedicated to creating opportunities for individuals from diverse communities that are often overlooked or excluded by providing access, opportunity, and knowledge into the world of venture capital. Under her leadership, Included VC has attracted applicants from 150 nationalities and over 600 cities globally. The fully funded fellowship has a success rate of more than 80%, with fellows breaking into the global VC ecosystem across 25 countries. Previously, Nikita led Imperial College London's entrepreneurship efforts, managing deep science ventures focused on innovative technologies in water, new materials, robotics, and energy. Nikita is passionate about blending entrepreneurship with science and innovation across various industries and supporting women in STEM.



LEADERS USA

ALABAMA

Akiesha Anderson

**Advocacy and Partnerships Manager, Represent Justice
Corona, CA Montgomery, Alabama**

Akiesha Anderson is the advocacy and partnerships manager for Represent Justice, a nonprofit using films to disrupt systems and narratives surrounding mass incarceration. Raised in Alabama, Akiesha was the policy and advocacy director for Alabama Arise, a statewide, member-led organization advancing public policies that improve the lives of Alabamians who are marginalized by poverty. Previously, she served as the associate director of admissions for UCLA Law, where she played a pivotal role in achieving the school's highest number of Black enrollees in 25 years, following the enactment of California's affirmative action ban. In addition to her work at Alabama Arise, Akiesha remains engaged in education and runs Anderson Admissions Academy, which helps underrepresented students gain admission to law school.

Josh Coleman

**Deputy Director of the Division of Social Justice, City of Birmingham Mayor's Office
Birmingham, Alabama**

Josh Coleman is the deputy director of the City of Birmingham's Division of Social Justice. In his role, Josh serves as the city's first-ever LGBTQ+ liaison, acting as an ambassador and advocate for both the city and the LGBTQ+ community. Appointed in 2018, Josh established the Mayor's LGBTQ+ Advisory Board, which guides the administration in shaping public policy and advancing pro-equality measures for the city. Under his leadership, Birmingham has experienced a 200 percent increase in Pride sponsorship and record-breaking attendance at Pride events, contributing more than \$3.6 million to the city's economy. In 2021, Josh became president of Central Alabama Pride, the state's largest Pride organization.

Telitia Fountain

**Executive Director, The Yellowhammer Fund
Birmingham, Alabama**

Telitia "Jenice" Fountain is the executive director of the Yellowhammer Fund, an abortion advocacy and reproductive rights organization serving Alabama and Mississippi. Jenice was chosen to lead the organization in 2022, against the backdrop of legal changes that impacted the organization's ability to provide financial assistance, safe clinic transportation, and support for mothers facing legal barriers to care, while



also conducting educational outreach for the community. In addition to her work at the Yellowhammer Fund, Jenice is the founder of Margins: Women Helping Black Women, a local community aid organization that addresses the reproductive, financial, and material needs of low-income Black mothers and their children.

ALASKA

Emily Edenshaw
President and CEO, Alaska Native Heritage Center
Anchorage, Alaska

Emily Edenshaw is the president and CEO of the Alaska Native Heritage Center, the only statewide cultural and educational center dedicated to celebrating all cultures and heritages across Alaska. In this role, Emily redefines what a cultural institution can be and do, recently focusing on homelessness in the Alaska Native community and extending center programming into new physical spaces to meet members of their community where they are. Outside of work and public service, Emily is a Ph.D. student in Indigenous Studies at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, researching Alaska Native boarding school experiences as a rare Indigenous researcher shaping the discourse on this topic.

ARIZONA

Zujaila Ornelas
Program Manager for the English Learner and Migrant Education Services (ELMES),
WestED
Litchfield Park, Arizona

Zujaila Ornelas is a program manager for the English Learner and Migrant Education Services at WestEd, a nonpartisan organization dedicated to advancing educational outcomes and opportunities for all learners. In this role, Zujaila is committed to ensuring migratory students reach challenging academic standards that prepare them for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment. Prior to joining WestEd, she was the state director at the Arizona Department of Education, where she used a data-forward approach to build consensus for systems change among leaders across school districts, as well as parents and community members to meet the needs of migratory students.

José Patiño
Vice President of Education and External Affairs, Aliento
Phoenix/Gilbert, Arizona

José Patiño is the vice president of education and external affairs at Aliento, a nonprofit dedicated to supporting undocumented, DACA, and mixed-immigration



status families. In this role, he advocates for justice for undocumented immigrants, works to halt deportations, and champions for immigration reform. José oversees Aliento's leadership development program, reaching more than 1,000 students each year, and organizes annual education days for 250 attendees to educate public officials on school access issues and trends for the DACAmented community.

CALIFORNIA

Kamala Avila-Salmon
Head of Inclusive Content, Motion Picture Group, Lionsgate Entertainment
Los Angeles, California

Kamala Avila-Salmon is the head of inclusive content at Lionsgate Entertainment, where she helps drive creative, marketing, and business decisions to build a film slate that reflects a globally diverse audience and drives greater commercial success through inclusive storytelling. Kamala developed a pioneering framework for inclusive production, defining best-in-class representation, now embedded across all Lionsgate processes. As a result of her leadership, inclusion-related feedback is a key business criterion for studio investment decisions.

Lisa Mae Brunson
Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Wonder Women Tech Foundation
Long Beach, California

Lisa Mae Brunson is the founder and chief executive officer of Wonder Women Tech Foundation (WWTF), where she champions professional development and community building for underrepresented groups in STEAM and innovation fields. In addition to her work with WWTF, Lisa Mae has launched Junior Innovation Camps for underserved children and STEAM workshops for deaf and hard-of-hearing people. She is also the chair of the Commission for Technology and Innovation for the City of Long Beach, where she works across business, government, and community groups to advise local government on policies related to issues such as the use of facial recognition technology by police.

Eisha Buch
Head of Teaching and Learning, Common Sense Media
San Diego, California

Eisha Buch is the head of teaching and learning at Common Sense Media, an organization dedicated to ensuring all kids have access to affordable, quality technology to thrive in a rapidly changing digital world. With 15 years of experience in the education sector, Eisha leads Common Sense Education's K-12 Digital Citizenship Program, a free curriculum used in more than 85,000 schools nationwide. She guides young people in understanding and navigating technology's impact on their well-being,



social connections, and civic engagement. Prior to her current role, Eisha served as a middle school teacher and administrator with New York City Public Schools.

Ryan Easterly
Executive Director, WITH Foundation
San Francisco Redwood City, California

Ryan Easterly is the executive director of the Working for Inclusive and Transformative Healthcare (WITH) Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to promoting comprehensive health care for adults with developmental disabilities in the United States. Ryan leads initiatives to develop advocate advisory committees, enhance the contributions of disabled medical professionals, create resources for inclusive medical curricula, and support disabled individuals in curriculum evaluation.

Azalia Gomez-Camacho
Resident Engagement Manager, Lift to Rise, California Housing Partnership Corporation
Coachella, California

Azalia Gomez-Camacho is the resident engagement manager at Lift to Rise, part of the California Housing Partnership Corporation. Lift to Rise is committed to increasing housing stability and economic mobility in the Coachella Valley. Azalia coordinates efforts to secure approval for new affordable housing developments and community amenities, ensuring that residents' voices are represented in decision-making processes. Her work led to securing \$15 million for the Coachella Valley Housing Catalyst Fund, which supports affordable housing initiatives in the region. Azalia is dedicated to fostering community involvement and enhancing the quality of life for residents in the Coachella Valley.

Elissa S. Lee
Senior Advisor, California Volunteers, Office of the Governor, State of California
Berkeley, California

Elissa S. Lee is the senior advisor for community engagement of California Volunteers, a program housed in the California Governor's Office. In this role, she oversees the neighbor-to-neighbor initiative, fostering social connections in California neighborhoods to enhance community health and resilience. As both a researcher and a clinician, Elissa has led various physical and mental health initiatives across sectors, including awareness and action health campaigns for Lady Gaga's Born This Way Foundation. She has designed chronic care and homelessness prevention programs for the Medicare Advantage Plan and the Senior Care Action Network. Elissa is also an accomplished author, having published a book and several articles on health disparities in underrepresented, LGBTQ+, immigrant, and disabled communities.



Raymond López-Chang
Director of Advocacy and Planning, Great Public Schools Now
Altadena, California

Raymond “Ray” López-Chang is the director of advocacy and planning at Great Public Schools Now, a nonprofit focused on improving public education in Los Angeles. Ray runs the Digital Equity Los Angeles initiatives, addressing disparities such as limited access to technology and internet for students and schools, including during the COVID-19 pandemic. Previously, he worked for the Los Angeles Unified School District’s board of education and the United Way of Greater Los Angeles. In 2010, Ray became California’s youngest elected official, serving on Los Angeles’ Historic Cultural Neighborhood Council. He sits on several community boards, including the Asian Democrats of Los Angeles County and the YMCA Southeast Los Angeles.

Smita Rajmohan
Senior Counsel for Artificial Intelligence Platform, Autodesk, Inc.
San Jose, California

Smita Rajmohan is senior counsel for the Artificial Intelligence Platform at Autodesk, where she works in AI governance and manages the responsible development and deployment of AI systems. She authored several AI policies for the engineering and business teams and spearheaded the establishment of a governance committee for generative AI. Smita also serves on the Technology and Scholars Advisors Committee for the California Initiative for Technology and Democracy, which is a bipartisan organization that seeks state-level solutions to combat the spread of election disinformation by proposing several bills before the California legislature that, if passed, will require social media companies to be proactive in tackling deep fakes while respecting the First Amendment and platform laws. Smita’s concern for how AI could potentially disrupt elections is one of the many reasons she works hard to ensure that AI is ethical and lawful.

Lindsay Schubiner
Director of Programs, Western States Center
California

Lindsay Schubiner is the director of programs at the Western States Center, where she leads efforts to defend inclusive democracy and counter the rise of extremism in five states by implementing strategic initiatives, advocating for policy changes, and supporting community resilience. Previously, she ran an initiative focused on the civil rights impacts of anti-Muslim bigotry in law enforcement, drawing on her own experiences with anti-Semitism. Lindsay is passionate about strengthening communities and institutions against bigotry and working across faith, ideology, class, urban-rural divides, and race to build broad coalitions.



George Wang
Co-Founder, SIRUM
Menlo Park, California

George Wang is the co-founder of Supporting Initiatives to Redistribute Unused Medicine (SIRUM), a nonprofit organization that expands health care access by donating unused medicine to patients in need. George oversees the logistical processes, forms medical partnerships, and handles legal consultations to prepare and distribute surplus drugs to underserved patients at no cost. Under his leadership, SIRUM has provided over two million prescriptions worth \$200 million to more than 150,000 patients. Prior to SIRUM, George completed a Ph.D. in Biology from Stanford University and even discovered a gene for neural plasticity (grld-1).

Kathryn Hawkins
Program Director, Outdoor Alliance
Truckee, California

Kathryn “Katie” Hawkins is the program director for Outdoor Alliance, an organization that mobilizes outdoor enthusiasts to protect public lands and waters. Katie works at the intersection of climate change, grassroots community building, and urban planning to ensure America’s public lands and waters are safe and accessible to all. Katie established the Recreate Responsibly California coalition that brought together the long-competing motorized and non-motorized communities with the outdoor industry to help pass The Great American Outdoors Act, historic bipartisan legislation to preserve and enhance the country’s public lands. Katie was appointed by Governor Gavin Newsom to his outdoor recreation commission and by Secretary Wade Crowfoot to coordinate for the California Natural Resources Agency.

COLORADO

Sheldon Spotted Elk
Senior Director of Judicial and National Engagement, Casey Family Programs
Denver, Colorado

Sheldon Spotted Elk is the senior director of judicial and national engagement at Casey Family Programs, an organization focused on improving the well-being of children and families, especially those in the foster care system. Sheldon collaborates with legal officials to promote best practices in child welfare, including family preservation and reunification strategies. He also provides specialized training to 20 Indian Child Welfare Act courts to improve outcomes for Indian families. Sheldon, an alumnus of the University of New Mexico School of Law, has also taught adjunct courses and delivered



lectures at law schools across the United States about improving the judicial system's approach to child welfare. Sheldon is a member of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe, one of the 574 tribal sovereign nations in the United States.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Alex Grant

**National Outreach Director, U.S. Global Leadership Coalition
Washington, District of Columbia**

Alex Grant is the national outreach director at the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition (USGLC). In this role, Alex utilizes targeted outreach campaigns and training to bring communities together to promote American values globally through international development and diplomacy. He created and implemented a metrics-driven approach to measure and analyze the impact of USGLC's advocacy efforts and formalized a partnership with USGLC and the U.S. Conference of Mayors to engage mayors on policy issues. Alex's mission is to raise awareness of the beneficial impact of U.S. global leadership on the American economy, security, and values.

Alex Holland

**Co-Founder and CEO, Atlas Community Studios
Washington, District of Columbia**

Alex Holland is the co-founder and CEO of Atlas Community Studios, a firm whose mission is to inspire action and advance the development of communities across the country. Alex started Atlas Community Studios after noticing a dearth of federal programs and resources to support rural communities. Previously, Alex was the Director of Policy and Community Development at a Midwest-based civil engineering company, and served in various capacities at the Delta Regional Authority.

Elizabeth Rule

**Deputy Secretary for First Nations for New York Governor Kathy Hochul
Washington, District of Columbia**

Elizabeth Rule is the Deputy Secretary for First Nations for New York Governor Kathy Hochul, the highest-ranking Indigenous affairs role in the state. In this role, Elizabeth supports Indigenous self-determination and well-being and fosters diplomatic relations between the state and the nine Indigenous nations within its borders. She is currently implementing three policy initiatives that will assess and redress derogatory depictions of Indigenous peoples in the State Capitol, introduce new rules for child welfare proceedings, and expand health care resources for clinics located on Indigenous nation territories.



Tyler J. Smith
Deputy Regional Director, Everytown for Gun Safety
Washington, District of Columbia

Tyler Smith is the deputy regional director for Everytown for Gun Safety, where he advocates for communities that are marginalized in mainstream media conversations around violence. His work is informed by his personal experiences losing loved ones to gun violence. At Everytown, Tyler builds coalitions of survivors and legislators across the South to increase government engagement, supports volunteers in their advocacy efforts, and collaborates with activists across the ideological spectrum to find common ground.

FLORIDA

Tanvi Chaturvedi
Founder and CEO, Endor Capital
Miami, Florida

Tanvi Chaturvedi is the founder and chief executive officer of Endor Capital where she advises entrepreneurs on energy transition and consumer technology. Previously, Tanvi was the chief revenue officer at EVgo, one of the largest public fast-charging networks for electric vehicles in the nation. Tanvi has spent over a decade working to improve the lives of millions of consumers by promoting sustainable choices through technology-enabled solutions, such as electric vehicle charging infrastructure. Before joining EVgo, she worked at Google as a consumer technology executive, where she helped 10 million households save energy daily with self-learning Nest Thermostat devices.

Mahogani Chery
Head of Transformation, Engagement, and Belonging in North America, Bacardi
Miramar, Florida

Mahogani Chery is the head of transformation, engagement, and belonging at Bacardi, the world's largest privately held spirits company. She established the first diversity and inclusion platform in Bacardi's 162-year history and focuses on enhancing economic opportunities for underrepresented groups, women in leadership, and the LGBTQ+ community. Her leadership has led to the establishment of more than 35 strategic external business partners, the implementation of more than 75 programs internally and externally, and more than \$2 million invested in local communities, including initiatives aimed at rebuilding growth at minority businesses and retailers in the spirits industry post-COVID.



Abby Kinch
Chief of Staff, Student Veterans of America
Tallahassee, Florida

Dr. Abby Kinch is the chief of staff for Student Veterans of America (SVA) and a veteran of the U.S. Air Force. In her role, she oversees research focused on understanding and combating the opportunity gaps inherent in military service, particularly for enlisted forces. Her career journey with SVA, from chapter member to chapter president at Florida State University and then staff to executive, demonstrates her deep commitment to improving educational outcomes for student veterans. She has represented SVA at the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Education, and the White House and is committed to advocating for women in the military with the Department of Defense.

Shobana Powell
Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Shobana Powell Consulting
Palm Coast, Florida

Shobana Powell is the CEO and founder of Shobana Powell Consulting, a firm that provides training and technical assistance to support victims of human trafficking. She developed the Survivor Equity and Inclusion Framework, a model for how organizations can ensure their work is ethically and sustainably led by the communities they serve. Under her leadership, her team has trained more than 5,000 professionals and consulted on over 60 projects across the United States. She also has more than 15 years of experience leading programs to address gender-based violence across rural and urban communities in New York, California, and Louisiana. Shobana draws on her own family's experience facing discrimination to inform her work to advocate on behalf of other communities. She is committed to supporting trafficking victims with a lens on systems change through large-scale training that increase the resilience of those serving survivors.

Olajuwon White
Director of Levy County Veteran Services, County Board of County Commissioners
Gainesville, Florida

Olajuwon White is the director of Levy County veteran services at the County Board of County Commissioners office, where he bridges the gap between veterans in rural areas and the Department of Veteran Affairs to ensure they receive their earned benefits related to service-connected compensation, education, survivors benefits, and health care. Olajuwon effectively led a public education campaign addressing the lack of understanding among veterans about their eligibility for VA benefits. This work resulted in an increase in the number of Levy County rural veterans and their families initiating their first claim for earned VA benefits.



GEORGIA

Michael Belles
Co-founder and Manager, Catalyze
Atlanta, Georgia

Michael Belles is the co-founder of Catalyze, which works to democratize access to capital, networks, and resources for entrepreneurs. In his role, he manages annual convenings for first-time fund managers, Catalyze's Runway Fund, and cultivates external partnerships. He also developed the Innovative Finance Playbook, a digital resource that aims to make information surrounding innovative and non-traditional financing methods more accessible to a greater diversity of entrepreneurs. Before Catalyze, he held various roles in impact-focused investment organizations, including at a private equity investment firm focused on opportunity zones and a community development finance institution.

Han Pham
Executive Director, Her Term
Decatur Atlanta, Georgia

Han Pham is the executive director of Her Term, an organization created to encourage women to pursue public office at the state level. She joined Her Term as a volunteer in 2017 and has advanced to Executive Director. Recognizing that women face greater scrutiny and also often have to balance caregiving responsibilities and public service, she realized that increasing skills and mindsets around resilience and wellness could help recruit more individuals and prevent current officials from leaving service after one term. Through her leadership, she recruits and manages volunteer therapists to support female candidates and started a weekly candidate support group with a licensed counselor.

HAWAI'I

Sergio J. Alcubilla III
Executive Director, The Hawai'i Workers Center
Honolulu, Hawai'i

Sergio J. Alcubilla III is the executive director of the Hawai'i Workers Center, a nonprofit organization that supports workers as they organize for their own social and economic well-being. As part of his role, Sergio has led initiatives advocating for paid sick leave, mandatory paid breaks, and the elimination of the "tip penalty." Previously, he served as the Director of External Relations and staff attorney at the Legal Aid Society of Hawai'i. In that role, Sergio worked to expand access to affordable housing



solutions for immigrant community members and advocated for social benefits for underserved populations.

Sheila Raha Sarhangi
Vice President, Strategic Communications, Hawaii Community Foundation
Founder and Chair, Pacific Remote Islands Coalition
Honolulu, Hawai'i

Sheila Raha Sarhangi is the vice president of strategic communications at the Hawaii Community Foundation, an organization committed to delivering meaningful progress in Hawai'i by providing resources, funding opportunities, partnerships, and advocacy. In her role, Sheila is responsible for fundraising and ensuring transparency on how resources are spent. She is also the founder and chair of the Pacific Remote Islands Coalition, where she leads a diverse coalition made up of fisherpeople, scientists, cultural practitioners, politicians, and others to advocate collectively to preserve a healthy Pacific.

Cheri Souza
Hawai'i Postsecondary Success Program Officer, Stupski Foundation
Mililani, Hawai'i

Cheri Souza is the Hawai'i postsecondary success program officer for the Stupski Foundation. She works to strengthen Hawai'i's social infrastructure, empower young people to reclaim Native culture, and ensure that every student can live, work, and thrive in their own community. Throughout her career, she has been a steadfast advocate for increasing equitable access to educational opportunities and career exposure for Hawai'i's young people. She was raised and currently resides in Mililani, and brings deep roots in her community and a lifelong dedication to preserving Hawai'i's culture.

ILLINOIS

Ciera Bates-Chamberlain
Executive Director, Live Free Chicago - Live Free Illinois
Dolton, Illinois

Reverend Ciera Bates-Chamberlain is the founder and executive director of Live Free Chicago - Live Free Illinois, an organization that mobilizes Black churches to improve public safety and transform the criminal justice system. She is a born and raised South Sider dedicated to advancing safety and economic opportunity by building the power and leadership of faith communities and clergy. In her work, she has convened statewide coalitions of clergy and nonprofits dedicated to peace and justice, developed violence reduction strategies, and designed innovative programs related to gun violence reduction and incarceration.



Jeffery Beckham
Chief Executive Officer, Chicago Scholars
Chicago, Illinois

Jeffery “Jeff” Beckham is the chief executive officer of Chicago Scholars and co-chief executive officer of Reach Pathways. He has created AI-enabled platforms and professional development programming for over 6,000 first-generation and low-income high school students to access higher education and economic mobility. He created the Chicago Scholars’ Emerge Summer Career and Leadership Program, which partners with local schools, community organizations, and local government to increase career readiness among youth through professional development. He also serves on the boards of directors for 100 Black Men of Chicago, the Arose Foundation, and Building Better Futures.

Rebecca Birger
Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Initiatives, Moving Traditions
Chicago, Illinois

Rebecca “Beckee” Birger is the director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Initiatives at Moving Traditions, a national organization dedicated to empowering Jewish youth through experiential education, systems change theory, and community organizing programming. She created “Kumi: An Anti-Oppression Teen Leadership Experience,” featuring curriculum on civics education and community organizing to help teenagers across race, gender, and socioeconomic status feel more comfortable and better equipped to navigate disagreement and difficult conversations. She has cultivated her passion for social justice through a variety of positions, including serving as a special education attorney, an AmeriCorps program manager, and a career advisor at an education nonprofit.

William Collins
Chief External Affairs Officer, Surge Institute
Matteson, Illinois

William “Will” Collins is the chief external affairs officer at the Surge Institute, a nonprofit dedicated to educating and developing leaders of color for positive community change. Will has secured more than \$30 million for the institute since 2018 and played a key role in growing the Surge Fellowship, a one-year program for emerging leaders of color in education that has trained 400 leaders and impacted more than 3.4 million students across the United States. He brings a background in nonprofit



crisis management and experience as a Chicago Public School teacher, where he integrated curriculum on race, culture, and diversity.

Sodabeh Etminan

**Senior Director of Oral Health, University of Illinois Mile Square Health Center
Chicago, Illinois**

Sodabeh “Sue” Etminan is the senior director of oral health at the Mile Square Health Center in Chicago, where she focuses on increasing access to oral health care for vulnerable populations. Under her leadership, clinic accessibility has increased, and special programs for children as well as patients with intellectual and developmental disabilities and cancer have been implemented. She also launched a food pantry for food-insecure patients and a certification program for dental assistants that recruits students from low-income communities, enabling a more diverse health care workforce for better health outcomes. Originally from Iran, Sue moved to the United States as a child.

Jordan Hatcher

**Program Director, Illinois Contraceptive Access Now
Chicago, Illinois**

Jordan Hatcher is the program director for Illinois Contraceptive Access Now (ICAN!), a statewide contraceptive equity initiative that brings together diverse stakeholders to de-silo and normalize birth control as basic health care. She connects communities to birth control care and coverage and manages training and technical assistance for 15 health centers and more than 70 clinics to integrate birth control as a routine part of primary care. Prior to joining ICAN!, she worked with the United Nations Foundation to advance national family planning goals in 13 countries. From a young age and through international travel and work, Jordan learned the value of bodily autonomy as a pathway to education and economic mobility. Jordan now aims to work with those who disagree with her to transform the movement for women’s health care and reproductive rights from social media activity to community building and activism.

Nam Hoang Hoai Nguyen

**Crisis Counselor, Crisis Text Line
Chicago, Illinois**

Nam Hoang Hoai Nguyen is a crisis counselor for the Crisis Text Line, providing risk assessment, crisis de-escalation, and active listening to people struggling with mental health crises. Since May 2020, Nam has dedicated more than 400 hours to supporting over 500 texters. Nam has dedicated his career to supporting those suffering from mental health crises. Nam now leads the training of new volunteers and is seeking additional leadership skills to broaden his impact in the mental health space.



Patricia Miller
Chief Executive Officer, M4 Factory
Crystal Lake, Illinois

Patricia Miller is the chief executive officer and chief revenue officer at M4 Factory, a product design and manufacturing company based in Woodstock, Illinois. Through M4 Factory's mission to redesign product manufacturing, Patricia is contributing to a new circular economy model by making manufacturing responsible, sustainable, innovative, and a gateway for upward mobility for the middle class. She spearheaded her factory's Design Lab to innovate with over 100 alternative plastics and created local initiatives for the Chicago community to bring artist residencies and entrepreneurial programs for local high schools to the factory, including donations of 3D printers and sustainable manufacturing materials. Patricia is committed to making supply chains more socially responsible and working across sectors to expand her business outside of Woodstock.

Hannah Mesouani
Director of Mission and Equity Consulting, YWCA McLean County
Bloomington, Illinois

Hannah Mesouani is the director of mission and equity consulting at YWCA McLean County. She focuses on desensitizing DEI conversations and centering immigrants, formerly incarcerated women, and survivors of sexual assault. She has also made it a priority to mend fraught relationships with local law enforcement through personal engagement to find human connection and areas of convergence. Originally from Tangier, Morocco, Hannah pulls from her multifaceted experiences to strengthen interfaith dialogue and bridge alliances across differing viewpoints.

Marrissia Rochelle Jones
Director of Program Management, SHE Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

Marrissia Rochelle Jones is the director of program management at SHE Chicago, a nonprofit organization focused on empowering inner-city teen girls, particularly those who are Black, Brown, and transgender. The organization provides young women with social and emotional learning, community service opportunities, and college and career counseling. Schools that partnered with SHE Chicago saw a 95 percent decrease in disciplinary infractions and 80 percent of program participants who attended college tours and fairs are now enrolled in two- or four-year universities, with 100 percent acceptance into selective colleges. A first-generation college student, Marrissia is committed to providing equitable and diverse education experiences that nurture leadership and responsibility in marginalized communities and strengthening a culture of democracy by helping girls become civic leaders.



Ben Schornack
Director of Sport for Good Chicago, Laureus Sport for Good Foundation
Chicago, Illinois

Ben Schornack is the director of Sport for Good Chicago at the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation, an organization founded under the patronage of Nelson Mandela that uses the power of sport to disrupt violence, discrimination, and disadvantage. Ben is working to expand opportunities and create programming for the 70 percent of kids who drop out of playing sports by the time they are 13.

Teirra Scott
Executive Director, GODDESS Mentoring
Chicago, Illinois

Teirra Scott is the executive director of GODDESS Mentoring, an organization committed to empowering young girls and nurturing well-rounded individuals by helping them overcome societal barriers, foster their personal development, and promote community engagement. As part of her portfolio, Teirra created a curriculum aligned with national and state social-emotional standards, addressing students' pressing issues that would otherwise hold them back from advancement and academic success. This work led to a 37 percent decrease in middle school suspension rates for African American girls at the Chicago-based schools she was working at and was expanded to city-wide youth conferences serving over 300 girls across nine schools. Tierra envisions establishing youth centers as safe havens, fostering sustainable, empowering spaces for Black and Brown children in underserved Chicago communities.

INDIANA

Nikki King
Chief Executive Officer, Alliance Health Centers, Inc.
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Dr. Nikki King is the chief executive officer for Alliance Health Centers, Inc. Her work serves both urban and rural populations and is focused on substance abuse, communities underserved in health care, affordable housing, and economic development. Before working in the health care industry, she worked for the Center of Business and Economic Research, studying models of sustainability in rural communities. Growing up as a first-generation college student in Appalachia, she brings lived experience of rural communities and approaches her work in health care as pivotal in breaking the cycle of poverty.



KENTUCKY

Rob Collins

**Innovative Programs Consultant, Kentucky Department of Education
South Shore, Kentucky**

Rob Collins is the innovative programs consultant at the Kentucky Department of Education. He coordinates the Kentucky Innovative Learning Network, a coalition of 43 school districts implementing innovative strategies to improve student achievement. Rob manages the Kentucky Innovative Teacher Fellowship, a program he created that leads teachers nationwide in classroom management and career advancement. Inspired by educators, Rob believes free public education centering equity is the key to a larger, bolder life. Rob works in rural areas and has a background as a high school teacher. He is also a doctoral candidate studying asset-based community development and how to improve rural teacher retention at Eastern Kentucky University through participatory action research.

Ashley Lamb-Sinclair

**Founding Partner, 2892 Miles To Go
Louisville, Kentucky**

Ashley Lamb-Sinclair is a National Geographic Explorer and a founding partner of 2892 Miles To Go, an educational technology organization that provides opportunities for youth storytellers to collaborate with local leaders, educators, advocates, and changemakers to reclaim community histories and stories together through narrative and geospatial tools. Prior to her current work, she served as the inaugural educator-in-residence with the Kentucky Department of Education, where she organized educators and legislators across differing viewpoints to make education reform more representative. She has written for *The Atlantic* and *The Washington Post* and published a book about community-led change.

MARYLAND

José Emmanuel Alfaro

**Executive Director, Community Justice Action Fund
Takoma Park, Maryland**

José Emmanuel Alfaro is the executive director for the Community Justice Action Fund and advocates for communities that are disproportionately impacted by gun violence. Prior to his current role, Jose served as the Director of Latinx Leadership and Engagement at Everytown for Gun Safety. He has advocated on behalf of Latinx communities and for increased access to reproductive justice. His career began in Baltimore as a community educator, and he worked in various roles focused on underrepresented youth and gang members. He traveled for a year on a listening tour



across 11 cities and interviewed 154 Latines to understand the experience of gun violence in Latinx communities and strengthen Everytown's Latinx engagement strategy.

Matthew Johnson

**Police Lieutenant, University of Maryland | Baltimore Police Department
Baltimore, Maryland**

Matthew Johnson is a Lieutenant with the Baltimore Police Department stationed at the University of Maryland. As a native of Baltimore with over 17 years in community policing, Matthew has led transformative community programs, fostered positive police-community relationships, mentored youth, and implemented crisis intervention programs. He also created a community police academy to facilitate direct feedback from community members to the Police Department. He strives to refine the programs he leads to eventually scale them up to achieve national-level impact.

Bree Jones

**Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Parity Homes
Baltimore, Maryland**

Bree Jones is the founder of Parity Homes, an innovative equitable development company based in West Baltimore. Parity creates upfront demand for affordable homeownership opportunities by opening up pathways for existing residents and social collectives to purchase formerly abandoned homes as a means of community-building and wealth-building. Her organization leverages storytelling and taps into social networks to make her majority Black homebuyer base financially prepared and invested in the social fabric of the neighborhood. Prior to launching Parity, she had a successful career in finance, alternative investments, capital raising, and predictive analytics.

Jessica E. McClain

**Chief Financial Officer, Girl Scout Council of the Nation's Capital
Brandywine, Maryland**

Jessica E. McClain is the chief financial officer at Girl Scout Council of the Nation's Capital, the largest Girl Scout Council in the country. She oversees the organization's finance and accounting, risk management, property, product program, and business operations. She also uses her financial background to support several nonprofit boards and accounting committees and mentor students. As an executive at Girl Scouts, Jessica plays an important role in empowering girls through transformative education and leadership opportunities.



MASSACHUSETTS

Sal Parsa

**Project Leader, The Boston Consulting Group
Medford, Massachusetts**

Sal Parsa is a project leader at The Boston Consulting Group and focuses on transformation of the public sector to more effectively reach underserved communities. He also co-founded Predictim, an AI startup aimed at enhancing trust in the sharing economy. Originally from Afghanistan, his career began by supporting the U.S. military as an interpreter and analyst. He eventually moved to the U.S. to serve as a youth cultural ambassador. Outside of his professional career, he is dedicated to supporting his community, particularly Afghan refugees, by providing free resume writing and job interview training. He contributes to Project Citizenship, an organization that assists immigrants with naturalization.

Beth Pollack

**Research Scientist, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Watertown, Massachusetts**

Beth Pollack is a research scientist at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She leads research on a group of associated but understudied diseases that disproportionately affect women, including long COVID, ME/CFS, dysautonomia, lyme disease, and connective tissue disorders. She is also collaborating on three clinical studies, and leads a new arm of the largest clinical study in MIT history that she helped develop. Committed to social impact, she combines scientific research with her policy and political background to advance national progress on chronic illness and women's health.

MICHIGAN

Lottie Ferguson

**Vice President of Development and Donor Services, Community Foundation of
Greater Flint
Mount Morris, Michigan**

Lottie Ferguson is the vice president of development and donor services at the Community Foundation of Greater Flint. She works to connect donors with the needs of the community and elevate conversations on climate change response in urban communities, both locally and nationally. Prior to her current role, she served as the chief resilience officer for community partners where she led the development and implementation of the city's resilience strategies and raised more than \$25 million



dollars in grant funding. She was recently appointed to Governor of Michigan's "Growing Michigan Together" working group which focuses on developing infrastructure and strategies to increase the state's population. She has been personally affected by Flint's water crisis and her experience building consensus with community partners speaks to her cross-sectoral leadership in climate change, urban planning, and philanthropy.

MINNESOTA

Dustin Goslin

**Vice President of Business and Economic Development, Mille Lacs Corporate Ventures
Brainerd, Minnesota**

Dustin Goslin is the vice president of business and economic development at Mille Lacs Corporate Ventures, an enterprise established by the Mille Lacs Band of the Ojibwe tribal government. In his role, Dustin has overseen more than \$245.7 million in investments, connecting people and capital to drive sustainable growth in business, workforce housing, and infrastructure. Notably, he completed the business's first low-income housing tax credit project in 2020 and initiated a \$1 billion tribal broadband connectivity program. Dustin's efforts have significantly contributed to the economic development and improved quality of life for the Mille Lacs Band community.

Jerad Morey

**Director of Strategic Relationships, Minnesota Council of Churches
New Brighton, Minnesota**

Jerad Morey is the director of strategic relationships at the Minnesota Council of Churches. At the Council, he leads the Respectful Conversations Project, a peacebuilding initiative that aims to boost empathy, improve social cohesion, and strengthen democracy through structured, facilitated conversations among people with diverse beliefs. He is also a pastor and peacemaker who is passionate about leading people with differences to experience positive feelings toward one another and identify common ground to advance society. Jerad has dedicated his role as a clergy person to build bridges between diverse communities on controversial issues, especially across differing viewpoints to further the role of religious pluralism in strengthening democracy.



MISSISSIPPI

April S. Love
Policy Analyst, Alcorn State University
D'Iberville, Mississippi

April S. Love is a policy analyst for the Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Policy Research Center at Alcorn State University. In her role, she reviews agricultural policies and regulations to determine their impact on socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and then develops policy recommendations that will improve the success of historically marginalized farmers and ranchers. She began her career in public policy, government relations, and advocacy. She is a champion for agricultural reform, particularly with rural, minority farmers and worked to create alliances across traditional views in the agriculture sector.

MONTANA

Sharen Kickingwoman
Policy, Advocacy, and Organizing Director, American Civil Liberties Union of Montana
Missoula, Montana

Sharen Kickingwoman is the policy, advocacy, and organizing director for the American Civil Liberties Union of Montana. In her role, she built the first-ever community engagement program to address Indigenous justice and criminal legal reform. In her previous role as the legislative assistant for Senator Jon Tester, she was tasked with finding legislative responses to the missing and murdered Indigenous women crisis in Indian Country. In 2017, after the murder of an Indigenous woman, Sharen contributed to a bill later known as Savanna's Act, which holds law enforcement accountable to Native communities. While the bill did not pass, it was a critical entry point to other bills that addressed this issue. Sharen is a member of the A'aanii and Blackfeet tribes and conducts her work in rural areas.



NEBRASKA

Kelly Ross
Founder & Executive Director, ECHO Collective
Lincoln, Nebraska

Kelly Ross is the founder & executive director of ECHO Collective, an organization created to connect and empower refugee and immigrant women by providing opportunities through entrepreneurship and textile artisanship. Having launched a retail store that she chose to run as a cooperative with communal decision making, she promotes economic mobility and financial independence for immigrant women from 16 different countries. Kelly hopes to expand the impact of her cooperative beyond Nebraska and shape the future of local businesses creating social impact.

NEW JERSEY

Derick Dailey
Counsel, Crowell & Moring LLP.
Woodbridge, New Jersey

Derick Dailey is counsel for Crowell and Moring LLP where he handles litigation, trials and investigations, with a focus on State Attorney General, higher education, and racial equity issues.

He was previously senior counsel for the New Jersey Attorney General's executive leadership team, where he led the Department's Racial Justice Initiative and Voter Protection Initiative. Derick has also led a project called ARRIVE Together, the nation's first large-scale alternative response program that deploys mental health professionals rather than police to respond to people experiencing mental health crises. The program has helped reduce use of force and racial disparities in responses to mental health crises throughout New Jersey.

Brittany Giroux Lane
Director of Solutions, Results for America
Hoboken, New Jersey

Brittany Giroux Lane is the director of solutions at Results for America. In her role, she helps policymakers at various levels of government surface and spread successful interventions to urgent challenges within their communities by bringing successful interventions to scale. Brittany is also the Board Co-President of People Powered, a global hub for participatory democracy. Previously, Brittany worked with Open Government Partnership where she focused on improving transparency, accountability, and civic participation. Her leadership of the Solutions Accelerator at Results for America has resulted in an approximate investment of \$100 million by local governments to support evidence-based solutions for economic mobility.



NEW YORK

Quemuel Arroyo

**Chief Accessibility Officer, New York State Metropolitan Transportation Authority
New York, New York**

Quemuel Arroyo is the chief accessibility officer for the New York State Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the nation's largest transportation agency. As the first person to serve in this role, he is on a mission to redefine accessibility and rebuild the entire transportation network into a universally accessible system. Quemuel's personal experiences inspired him to pursue a career in universal design, accessibility, and public policy. In addition to his role at MTA, he also serves as a trustee of New York University and a board member of several nonprofits, including NYC Outward Bound Schools, Project Sunshine, and Hudson River Community Sailing. Quemuel wants to strengthen his ability to mobilize others around accessibility for MTA as a win for all.

Cole Benoit Mattox

**Co-founder and Co-chairman, First Generation Investors
New York, New York**

Cole Benoit Mattox is the co-founder and co-chairman of First Generation Investors (FGI), a nonprofit dedicated to teaching students from underserved communities about long-term investing. Since 2019, he has been instrumental in providing nearly 2,000 high school students with education, resources, and funding to begin long-term investment portfolios. Under his leadership, FGI has cultivated partnerships with some of the largest civil rights organizations, educational institutions, and financial firms in the country. Outside of his work with FGI, he is also the founder of North Tabor Capital, an investment fund that uses data to find historical patterns across a variety of assets.

Abdourahamane Diallo

**Founder and Chairman, Guineans Succeeding in America
Bronx, New York**

Abdourahamane "Diallo" Diallo is the founder and chairman of Guineans Succeeding in America, a nonprofit that fosters relationships between professionals and students of Guinean descent in the United States to promote their success. Diallo's advocacy includes securing resources and building policies relevant to the immigrant community, and addressing economic justice, quality education, language accessibility, social services, and job prospects. He also founded the African Support Center, which empowers individuals through educational resources, skill development, and a supportive community network.



Robert Fernandez
Executive Director, Científico Latino
New York, New York

Robert “Rob” Fernandez is the co-founder and executive director of Científico Latino, a nonprofit that promotes inclusivity in STEM and increases the number of scientists from minority backgrounds through mentorship, open-access resources, and professional development opportunities. As a scientist turned entrepreneur, Rob catalyzed an idea into an organization that helps historically disadvantaged students matriculate into graduate school in the sciences. Científico Latino’s Graduate School Mentorship Initiative provides resources, mentorship, and financial support for graduate school applicants in the sciences and has helped 450 students across the United States and globally get accepted to graduate school.

Kevin Ha
Founder and Executive Director, Asian American Dream
New York, New York

Kevin Ha is the founder and executive director of Asian American Dream, a nonprofit that empowers underserved first-generation Asian American and Pacific Islander undergraduates through career-centric mentorship and professional development opportunities. Under his leadership, the organization has served more than 1,000 students to date and built strategic partnerships with major companies to source mentors from employee resource groups, enhance corporate DEI initiatives, and build pipelines of undergraduate talent.

Akili Hinson
Chief Executive Officer, Juno Medical
New York, New York

Akili Hinson is the founder and chief executive officer of Juno Medical, a technology-powered medical practice that provides health care to under-resourced people and communities. When establishing Juno Medical, he prioritized medically underserved or health care provider shortage areas, ensuring their services were accessible and representative of the people they serve. Juno Medical started in Harlem and now includes locations in Brooklyn, East Atlanta, and the Greenwood District in Tulsa. Akili founded the practice believing that everyone deserves quality health care, regardless of where they live or their income, race, or sexual orientation. Having successfully provided services through the pandemic, Akili brings a unique perspective as a physician-by-training working to improve access to affordable health care and hopes to scale Juno Medical to additional overlooked communities across the United States.



Sarang Mani
Sustainable Growth Equity Associate, JPMorgan Chase
New York, New York

Sarang Mani is a sustainable growth equity associate at JPMorgan Chase where he invests in growth-stage companies developing solutions to decarbonize carbon-intensive industries. He helped manage JPMorgan Chase's investment in Arcadia, a company that enables access to community solar for people who cannot install it on their rooftops and allows them to save on their utility bills. He worked with Arcadia's executive team to analyze and strengthen their business plan, generate new commercial opportunities through partnerships, and raise nearly \$50 million of capital. He is energized by the potential of energy transition investments to create economic opportunity for underserved communities.

Dalourny Nemorin
Staff Attorney, The Legal Aid Society
Bronx, New York

Dalourny Nemorin is a staff attorney at The Legal Aid Society, an organization that provides legal aid, partners with community stakeholders, and pursues litigation to support underserved people in New York. In her role, she represents clients in appeals processes and supports clients' post-conviction proceedings such as parole advocacy. As a Bronx resident and a child of immigrants, she is passionate about defending and advancing the rights of marginalized communities. Dalourny also serves as the committee chairperson of policies, bylaws, and legislation for Bronx Community Board 1.

Jerrel Peterson
Director, Head of Global Content Policy, Spotify
Brooklyn, New York

Jerrel Peterson is the director and head of content policy at Spotify, where he leads a global team of experts focused on researching, writing, and enforcing policies that enable creative expression, while minimizing the potential for offline harm. He spearheads projects focused on child safety and ensures Spotify content recommendations are age appropriate, while also giving parents control over their child's experience. Recognizing the importance of direct engagement from parents, Jerrel successfully advocated for the inclusion of parent feedback and regional expertise on how Spotify is building its child safety strategy. Jerrel focuses on the intersection of technology, democracy, and online safety, and hopes to use his leadership position to broaden the reach of online safety.



Stephen R. Westby
Assistant Director of Student Veteran Transition & Success, New York University
Brooklyn, New York

Stephen "Steve" Westby is the assistant director of student veteran transition and success at New York University. A U.S. army veteran previously deployed to Iraq, Steve strives to guide fellow veterans and their dependents towards success in educational attainment. Steve is a case manager for more than 1,000 students at NYU and collaborates with external institutions to further his department's mission, including as co-chair of the Military Connected Standing Committee. As a veteran, Steve brings both lived experience and a keen understanding of the importance of mental and physical support for those who have served and their families.

NORTH CAROLINA

Michael Cooper
Senior Director of Advocacy, NC Child
Raleigh, North Carolina

Michael Cooper is the senior director of advocacy at NC Child, a nonprofit organization dedicated to advocating for policies that improve economic security and health for children in North Carolina. Michael grew up in the small town of North Wilkesboro, North Carolina, and he has dedicated his law practice to battling the opioid crisis and promoting local economic development across Appalachia. Michael launched NC Child's Youth Advocacy Council which uses storytelling for policy advocacy to address the youth mental health crisis. He has built common ground across diverse views through his work as a defense attorney and in leading broad-based coalitions to launch the first recovery center in his county. Michael uses his first-hand experience at the intersection of rising polarization and rural economic inequality to inform his leadership.

OHIO

Dustin Fuller
Financial Opportunity Center Manager, Habitat for Humanity of Findlay/Hancock
County
Ottawa, Ohio

Dustin Fuller is the financial opportunity center manager at Habitat for Humanity of Findlay/Hancock County. Dustin provides individualized, long-term employment and financial coaching to increase the financial health of vulnerable populations. He led the launch of a Financial Opportunity Center, the only Habitat affiliate that serves a rural community in the country, and provides financial and employment coaching to its clients. He also launched a digital navigation and coaching program that pairs families with access to laptops, tablets, and digital literacy courses. His team has served more



than 260 families in Hancock County.

Matthew Goldstein
Founder and CEO, Besa Community
Columbus, Ohio

Matthew “Matt” Goldstein is the founder and CEO of Besa Community, an award-winning nonprofit dedicated to uplifting communities by making volunteerism easy and impactful for individuals and businesses. Matt works with notable companies across the Midwest to increase community and civic engagement. His organization and its volunteers have made significant contributions to the community during emergency situations, including the distribution of more than 500,000 face masks during the pandemic and the disbursement of wellness payments to senior citizens who lost power during a summer blackout. Matt is currently transitioning from being a founder to a CEO who can share a bold vision and hire and manage the most effective team.

Derek Moore
Senior Brigade Logistics Officer, Ohio Army National Guard
Blacklick, Ohio

Derek Moore is the senior brigade logistics officer at the Ohio Army National Guard. A Columbus native, Derek is responsible for the management, training, discipline and welfare of more than 150 soldiers. Derek created a mentorship program that has helped over 200 underrepresented, incarcerated veterans transition out of the prison system. Derek now aims to strengthen the army’s recruitment efforts, particularly when it comes to attracting more diverse talent. As an active duty member in the U.S. Armed Forces, Derek is working to improve relations between the National Guard and his local community.

OKLAHOMA

Abigail Mashunkashey
Communications Director, Osage Nation
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Abigail “Abby” Mashunkashey is the director of communications for the Osage Nation. With expertise in storytelling, Abby amplifies the significant contributions of Tribal Nations to the communities within their Reservations. Her social marketing portfolio celebrates Indigenous culture throughout the country and ensures that Native and non-Native community members alike can celebrate the Osage Nation. Abby brings an important perspective through her work in Tribal government and can share her expertise as she effectively advocates to address inequities facing Tribal Nations.



Carlisha Williams Bradley
Founder and Executive Director, Women Empowering Nations
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Carlisha Williams Bradley is the founder and executive director at Women Empowering Nations (WEN), a nonprofit organization that accelerates the path to executive leadership for girls of color. As the first Black woman on the Oklahoma State Board of Education, an award-winning executive, former superintendent, and women's leadership coach, Carlisha champions education and women's leadership globally to alleviate the lack of diversity in the C-Suite. She has reached more than 9,000 Black girls through WEN's transformative programming and continues her changemaking work despite the introduction of HB 1775, a bill restricting discussions on race and gender in Oklahoma schools.

OREGON

Jonathan Johnson
Founder and CEO, Rooted School Foundation
Portland, Oregon

Jonathan Johnson is the founder and chief executive officer at Rooted School Foundation, an organization based in New Orleans that aims to support underserved youth in their path to higher education. A first generation college graduate himself, he launched a multiyear direct cash transfer to more than 1,600 high school seniors across four states to alleviate financial strain, bolster financial literacy, improve academic performance, and foster upward mobility. Jonathan has raised more than \$18 million in grants for his foundation.

PENNSYLVANIA

Idris Abdul-Zahir
Imam/Board Chair, Masjidullah: The Center for Human Excellence
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Idris Abdul-Zahir is the resident imam and Board Chair of Masjidullah: The Center for Human Excellence, one of the largest Muslim congregations in Philadelphia. He was appointed by Governor Josh Shapiro to serve on the Governor's Advisory Commission for African American Affairs and works to enhance the civic, educational, and economic status of the African American community in Pennsylvania. He also serves on the Board of CeaseFire PA, an organization dedicated to ending gun violence through education and advocacy. As a member of Multi-Faith Neighbors Network, Idris facilitates interfaith dialogue and addresses challenges prevalent in faith-based communities. Also an emerging filmmaker, Idris directed and produced "Ask A Muslim,"



challenging harmful Muslim stereotypes and demonstrating his commitment to dialogue and understanding across faith.

Fernando Cárdenas
Director of Multicultural Community Engagement, Culture & Language, Comcast NBCUniversal
Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania

Fernando Cárdenas is the director of multicultural community engagement, culture and language at Comcast NBCUniversal. Leading the company's Multicultural Community Engagement team, he mobilizes more than 3,000 volunteers to bring awareness to Comcast's connectivity solutions at the neighborhood level. He bridges the nationwide digital divide by facilitating internet and device access and delivering digital skills training. Previously, he launched the workplace accelerator program with Goodwill Industries International, supporting more than 12,000 jobseekers with the skills necessary for the digital workplace. Fernando executes inclusive campaigns through cross-company partnerships with entities such as Universal Pictures and Telemundo. A first generation college graduate, Fernando is inspired by economic mobility for all through increased digital access.

Ashley Lynn Priore
Founder & CEO, Queens Gambit
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Ashley Lynn Priore is the founder & CEO of Queens Gambit, an organization dedicated to addressing diversity and inclusivity gaps within the chess world. A chess prodigy since the age of four, she founded her organization at 14 and uses chess skills to transform the way youths acquire knowledge, while challenging perceptions of who can succeed in this space. Ashley serves more than 2,000 youth annually, ranging from first grade through senior year of high school. Through the Women and Girls in Chess Program, she sheds light on sexism in the chess world and promotes confidence in this population, both on and off the chessboard. She has seen how the valuable leadership lessons taught through chess provide a comprehensive approach to education and critical thinking that aid students throughout their academic careers and brings an innovative approach to youth engagement.



PUERTO RICO

Victoria Anastasia Belle
Director of Operations, P.T.I., Inc.
San Juan, Puerto Rico

Victoria Anastasia Belle is the director of operations at P.T.I., Inc., a general contracting firm specializing in housing, health care, educational, commercial food, and public works. Victoria also co-founded Stone and Marble New York and The Belle and Stone Foundation, which both work to increase access to housing, health care, education, food, and public works infrastructure. Victoria was born and raised in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and has over 25 years of experience working in construction. She led P.T.I., Inc. in constructing more than 2,536 homes throughout the United States, territories, and tribal nations, while scaling the organization nationally and growing revenue annually.

Anuchka Ramos-Ruiz
Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, Universidad del Sagrado Corazón
San Juan, Puerto Rico

Anuchka Ramos-Ruiz is the provost and vice president of academic affairs at the Universidad del Sagrado Corazón, one of the oldest and largest educational institutions in Puerto Rico. She created new arts, health and business academic schools as well as competency-based curricula and projects to include more Latinas in the fields of computing and science. She led the implementation of a reading program in the university library to improve access to books that has served 300 children and developed an after-school pilot program that offers pre-college summer programs to students. She also launched the Memoir Writing Project, which addresses loneliness experienced by older adults in Puerto Rico by teaching participants how to write down their memories and share them with their communities.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Julian Beaudion
Executive Director, The Hub SD
Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Julian Beaudion is the co-founder and executive director of The Hub SD, a nonprofit that shares sustainable business and professional resources to support the success of entrepreneurs and business professionals from underrepresented communities. Through his work with the Hub SD, Julian is helping 300 participants to move into leadership positions over the next five years. Julian is also the current executive director of the South Dakota African American History Museum, vice president of the local NAACP chapter, and the president of Juneteenth Sioux Falls. Julian spent over a



decade as a South Dakota law enforcement officer and through his recruitment efforts, he increased the number of women and people of color in uniform.

TENNESSEE

Cathryn Stout
Student, Candler School of Theology, Emory University
Memphis, Tennessee

Cathryn Stout is currently studying at the Candler School of Theology, Emory University. Cathryn was previously the chief of communications and broadcast services at Memphis-Shelby County Schools, Tennessee's largest school district. While managing her team's \$3 million budget, Cathryn led communications strategy and marketing as a storyteller and public historian. Prior to that role, she served as the Tennessee bureau chief for Chalkbeat, a news organization covering education nationwide, she used her journalistic skills to spearhead national coverage through the creation of an interactive Critical Race Theory legislation map that tracked restrictive legislation and focused on translating dense legislative jargon into clear, actionable explanations for readers.

TEXAS

Joseph Ceasar
Executive Director, Legacy Institute for Financial Education
Lufkin, Texas

Joseph "Joe" Ceasar is the founder and executive director of Legacy Institute for Financial Education, which is dedicated to improving financial stability in rural East Texas through financial coaching and workforce development initiatives. In this role, Joe is responsible for curriculum development, instruction, and fundraising. Joseph also created the Financial Opportunity Center, which provides income, financial, and employment coaching and operates a workforce development department with four apprenticeship training programs. Previously, Joe served as a portfolio manager at Semita Asset Management. This experience led him to found Legacy Institute after he observed a lack of sound financial advice available to underserved communities. Joe brings his leadership training from serving in the Army to his current nonprofit and now aims to grow his organization by expanding into other cities and states.

Mackenzie Feldman
Founder and Director, Re:Wild Your Campus
Honolulu, Hawai'i/Edinburg, Texas

Mackenzie Feldman is the founder and director of Re:Wild Your Campus, an organization that collaborates with students, administrators, faculty, and



groundskeepers to end the use of toxic pesticides on college campuses and promote organic land management. Her efforts have resulted in Re:Wild working with more than 75 schools and over 200 students, and she supported seven universities in attaining Re:Wild's Green Grounds Certification and committing to healthier, biodiverse campuses. Originally from Hawai'i, Mackenzie has successfully banned herbicides from every public school in Hawai'i and then used the momentum to get glyphosate banned across all ten University of California campuses. She prioritizes student-groundkeeper collaboration before reaching out to executive leadership and is committed to seeing every school in the nation go pesticide-free by 2030, ensuring community members have access to safe living and learning environments.

Denisce Palacios
Community Organizer in Rio Grande Valley, Texas
Brownsville, Texas

Denisce Palacios is a community organizer in the Rio Grande Valley, where she is dedicated to empowering young people and mobilizing community members to take an active role in the legislative process. In 2022, Denisce and her community successfully organized to stop the execution of Rio Grande Valley native Melissa Lucio, who was wrongfully imprisoned. Denisce also led efforts at the beginning of the pandemic to educate the community on COVID-19 by writing an op-ed in the *Rio Grande Guardian* and organizing a team that called and texted more than 27,000 people to do wellness checks and share life-saving prevention information in English and Spanish. While early in her career, Denisce has already made a significant impact on her community in the Rio Grande Valley.

Jonathan Pride
Vice President of Field Operations, NPower
Fort Worth, Texas

Jonathan Pride is the vice president of field operations for NPower, a national nonprofit that provides pathways to prosperity for veterans and young adults from underserved communities by helping them launch digital careers in information technology. Jonathan leads teams in Dallas, Fort Worth, San Antonio, and Houston to provide end-to-end free information technology training. Since Jonathan joined NPower, the organization has graduated over 80 percent of their students, and 85 percent of graduates have gone on to launch their digital careers, making on average \$60,000 a year. His leadership has poured more than \$27 million in real income back into the local economy and lifted 460 families out of generational poverty. Jonathan is a former Army military intelligence officer and combat veteran who believes that access to education is the key to championing American democracy and breaking the vicious cycle of poverty.



Craig Starcher
Principal Consultant, Front Line Advisory Group
Dripping Springs, Texas

Craig Starcher is a Marine Veteran and the principal consultant at Front Line Advisory Group, a program management consulting firm that services capital improvement bonds. Craig is passionate about helping local governments build communities through effective capital program management, resulting in more affordable housing, economic development, and the responsible spending of tax dollars. Craig supports local governments in accelerating their infrastructure permitting process, which speeds up housing development for populations in need. In the past year, Craig increased his organization's capacity by increasing the number of reviews, decreasing work queues, and saving the organization nearly \$100,000.

Jamila Thomas
Chief Development Officer, VolunteerNow
Cedar Hill, Texas

Jamila Thomas is the chief development officer at VolunteerNow, an organization that mobilizes more than 300,000 volunteers in North Texas. Jamila was previously the senior vice president of Big Brothers Big Sisters, a nonprofit organization that provides youth mentoring to children across the country. Jamila led DEI initiatives across local and national offices, nurtured relationships with corporate partners, ensured effective strategy execution, and developed sustainable funding structures. Prior to this role, Jamila created the Racial Equity Office at the Dallas Independent School District, where she developed culturally responsive policies and programs designed to close the achievement gap and build cultural intelligence among faculty and staff. From there, she wrote the African American Studies curriculum for the Texas State Board of Education and worked tirelessly with communities and trustees to ensure its unanimous passage.

VERMONT

Asha Carroll
Assistant Vice President of Community Campaigns, Shatterproof
Tinmouth, Vermont

Asha Carroll is the assistant vice president of community campaigns for the National Stigma Initiative at Shatterproof, a national nonprofit dedicated to reversing the addiction crisis. She leads statewide digital campaign strategy to reduce opioid addiction stigma and drive attitude change in California, Georgia, Kentucky, Michigan, and high-need regions across the United States. Asha leverages storytelling and a contact-based strategy to communicate that addiction affects everyone: friends, family, and neighbors. Before Shatterproof, Asha was the communications director and



spokesperson of the Vermont Democratic Party. Asha actively builds bridges between sociologists, public health experts, harm reductionists, and the communities she serves.

Gregory Tatro

**Co-Founder and Interim Co-Executive Director, Jenna's Promise
Johnson, Vermont**

Gregory Tatro is the co-founder of Jenna's Promise, a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating pathways to wellness for people with substance use disorders. Driven by the loss of a close family member to substance use, Gregory develops groundbreaking programs to address substance use in rural Vermont. His work includes spearheading local and national grassroots campaigns to cultivate community for Jenna's Promise, managing the organization's community center, and leading external affairs efforts to support its mission. Gregory uses a workforce program to help those in recovery get back on their feet, while also economic activity in an economically struggling rural community.

VIRGINIA

Ben Allen V

**Executive Director of the Equity Center, University of Virginia
Charlottesville, Virginia**

Ben Allen V is the executive director of the Equity Center at the University of Virginia (UVA), where he serves as a lecturer and also facilitates research practice partnerships in education, public health, community safety, affordable housing, and workforce development. He earned his Ed.D from the University of Virginia's School of Education and conducts research on culturally responsive leadership and establishing strong community partnerships. After a series of shootings in Charlottesville, Ben brought together police chiefs, community activists, and gun violence prevention specialists that coalesced around recommendations by both the city of Charlottesville and senior UVA leadership. Ben is also an Army Reserve Captain and served as a logistician, military police officer, and intelligence analyst.

WASHINGTON

Lylianna Allala

**Climate Justice Director, City of Seattle, Office of Sustainability and Environment
Seattle, Washington**

Lylianna Allala is the first ever climate justice director at the City of Seattle's Office of Sustainability and Environment. She collaborates across the public sector, private sector, academia, and nonprofits to implement policies and programs that advance



climate and environmental justice. She was previously responsible for environmental policy and outreach coordination for Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal, in addition to collaborating with a variety of other social change leaders. She is currently working on a citywide strategy to advance Seattle's Green New Deal that focuses on equitable climate pollution reduction, growing an inclusive green economy, and investment in climate adaptation measures in overburdened communities.

Shkëlqim Kelmendi
Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Housing Connector
Seattle, Washington

Shkëlqim Kelmendi is the founder and CEO of Housing Connector, a national nonprofit working to ensure that no unit sits vacant while people are in need of a home. Since launching in late 2019, Housing Connector has housed more than 6,000 people and expanded to include operations in Dallas, Denver, Portland, and Seattle. He works at the intersection of social services and technology, using data to track those who may be evicted. After experiencing the Kosovo War, Shkëlqim has a keen understanding of instability after he was impacted personally by a country in conflict. Shkëlqim serves on the Board of United Way of King County and is the founder of the Young Albanian Professionals network. Shkëlqim's work has impacted thousands of people, and he hopes to impact the housing supply from a systems change approach beyond short-term housing solutions.

Rhylee Marchand
Attorney, The Tulalip Tribes of Washington
Mukilteo, Washington

Rhylee Marchand is an attorney for The Tulalip Tribes of Washington and an enrolled citizen of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Indian Reservation. She works to show all communities that they are stewards of their land by promoting tribal sovereignty, economic development, and natural resources preservation and restoration. She works directly with clients to purchase land for salmon restoration and drafts policies that support Indigenous children. She has been practicing Indian law since 2015. Speaking regularly at law schools, Rhylee is committed to civic engagement and teaching students that democratic participation is their primary responsibility.



Nazune Menka

**Assistant Professor of Law and Faculty Director of the Center for Indian Law and Policy, Seattle University School of Law
Seattle, Washington**

Nazune Menka is the Denaakk'e (Koyukon Athabaskan) and Lumbee assistant professor of law at Seattle University School of Law, where her scholarship focuses on the self-determination of Native Nations and Indigenous Peoples. She was previously the executive director at the Center for Indigenous Law and Justice at UC Berkeley School of Law, where she oversaw educational programming, research development, and community-building initiatives to support Indigenous people. Nazune served as a supervising attorney at the Environmental Law Clinic, providing legal assistance and advocacy on projects that affirm the sovereignty of Native Nations and advance environmental justice. Her pro-bono legal efforts include helping tribes gain jurisdiction over water quality regulation on their reservations and adjacent areas.

Andrea Woods

**Associate Attorney, Civil Rights Practice, Budge & Heipt
Seattle, Washington**

Andrea Woods is the associate attorney for Budge & Heipt civil rights practice, where she works to protect the civil rights of incarcerated people nationwide. Despite the politicization of criminal justice reform, she designed and negotiated a large-scale change of Memphis's pretrial system to ensure no one waits years behind bars while they cannot afford bail. Andrea previously worked for seven years at the American Civil Liberties Union, where she sued jail officials across the country for unconstitutional practices, trained attorneys, and served as a media spokesperson. When COVID-19 struck, Andrea spearheaded the ACLU's litigation on behalf of medically vulnerable and disabled people in jail.

WEST VIRGINIA

Nathaniel Burke

**Assistant Professor of Economics, West Virginia University
Morgantown, West Virginia**

Nathaniel Burke is an assistant professor of economics at West Virginia University. His early research uncovered that people sacrifice self-promotion to better their respective communities. He took this one step further by founding the university's Behavioral Economics and Situational Testing Lab to expand his research and apply it across several states. Nathaniel oversees a team of primarily first-generation doctoral students and focuses on both educational accessibility and understanding and leveraging group identity dynamics. He has mentored hundreds of students who were



not otherwise considering college through the application and acceptance processes. Before joining academia, Nathaniel served honorably in the U.S. Army.