



IFIT GLOBAL FORUM ON DEPOLARIZATION (2025)

PARTICIPANT BIOS

ALEXANDRA TOMA

Alexandra Toma brings 20 years of leadership experience in politics, advocacy, and philanthropic organisations to her role as Executive Director of the Peace and Security Funders Group (PSFG). In recognition of her leadership in the peace and security philanthropic sector, Inside Philanthropy recognised Toma as the “Affinity Group Head with the Most Hustle.”

Prior to joining PSFG in 2013, Toma was Executive Director of the Connect U.S. Fund, a donors’ collaborative focused on incentivising collaboration as a tool to meet today’s global challenges. While a Director at the Ploughshares Fund, she founded the Fissile Materials Working Group, a coalition that she grew to 80 organisations providing action-oriented policy solutions to combat nuclear terrorism. Before her nonprofit experience, Toma served as a foreign policy and defense advisor to Congressman Stephen F. Lynch of Massachusetts.

Toma serves on the boards of the Compton Foundation and Welcoming America, and is an advisor to the Colombe Foundation and Outrider Foundation. She earned her M.S. in Foreign Policy and Security Studies from Georgetown University and a B.A. in International Affairs and Psychology, with a minor in French, from the University of Virginia. When not immersed in peace and security philanthropy, she enjoys reading fiction and traveling the world (she’s been to over 60 countries). Toma is also a proud refugee.

ANA PAULA HERNÁNDEZ

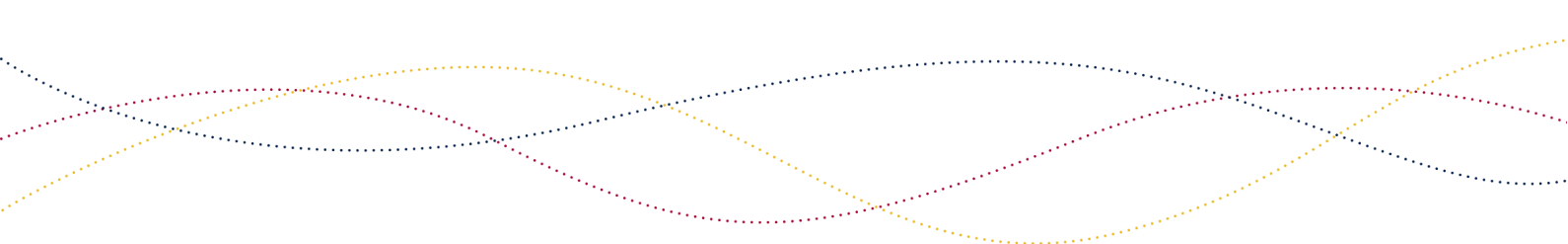
Dr. Ana Paula Hernández is a Mexican expert in peacebuilding and restorative justice. She has implemented peace and justice projects in more than 300 secondary schools in violence-affected areas throughout Mexico and worked with over 100,000 students, teachers, and principals to reduce levels of violence and achieve horizontal relationships, incorporating a gender perspective.

Currently, Dr. Hernández is part of a joint effort to strengthen municipal police in México and Latin America through mediation, negotiation, and alternative conflict resolution mechanisms. She designed and coordinates the Diploma in Peace Education and Human Rights at the Universidad Iberoamericana and the Memory and Tolerance Museum in Mexico. She is also the coordinator of the National Dialogue for Peace, which aims to establish the conditions for building peace in Mexico through an interdisciplinary and multi-sectoral approach to four central themes: social fabric, justice, security, and the prison system.

Dr. Hernández holds a Master’s Degree in Human Rights from the Universidad Iberoamericana and a Ph.D. in Social Responsibility from the Universidad Anáhuac Mexico Norte. She has numerous publications on violence, democracy, human rights, and peace education. She is a member of the IFIT Depolarization Community of Practice.

ANDREA CORNELIA IFF

Andrea Iff is an experienced policy advisor and academic, currently serving as Deputy Head of the Democracy Section at the Peace and Human Rights Division at the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA).



She is an expert in strategic management, policy design, and multilateral engagement, with a focus on democracy promotion, governance and peacebuilding. Previous roles include serving as Deputy Head of Peace, Governance, and Equality Section at Swiss Development Cooperation, and as Head of Business & Peace at swisspeace.

She has a PhD on peace-preserving federalism obtained at the University of Bern and has conducted post-doctoral research on economic power sharing at the University of Pennsylvania. She is an experienced lecturer at the University of Zurich, Basel and Fribourg, recognized for innovative teaching and a trained facilitator.

ANDREAS SCHEDLER

Andreas Schedler is a Senior Research Fellow at the Democracy Institute of the Central European University (CEU) in Budapest where he leads the Research Group on De- and Re-Democratisation. He is also a Visiting Professor at CEU Vienna.

Before joining the CEU, Schedler was a Professor of Political Science at the Center for Economic Teaching and Research (CIDE) in Mexico City. A leading comparative scholar of democracy, democratisation, and authoritarianism, he has published numerous articles in scholarly journals including Comparative Political Studies, Perspectives on Politics, Journal of Democracy, European Journal of Political Research, Party Politics, Journal of Political Philosophy, Political Research Quarterly, and Political Science Quarterly.

He is also author of “The Politics of Uncertainty: Sustaining and Subverting Electoral Authoritarianism” (Oxford University Press, 2013) and “In the Fog of War: Citizens and Organized Criminal Violence in Mexico” (CIDE, 2nd ed. 2018, in Spanish). His current research focuses on political polarisation and the destruction of basic democratic trust. He is a member of the IFIT Depolarization Community of Practice.

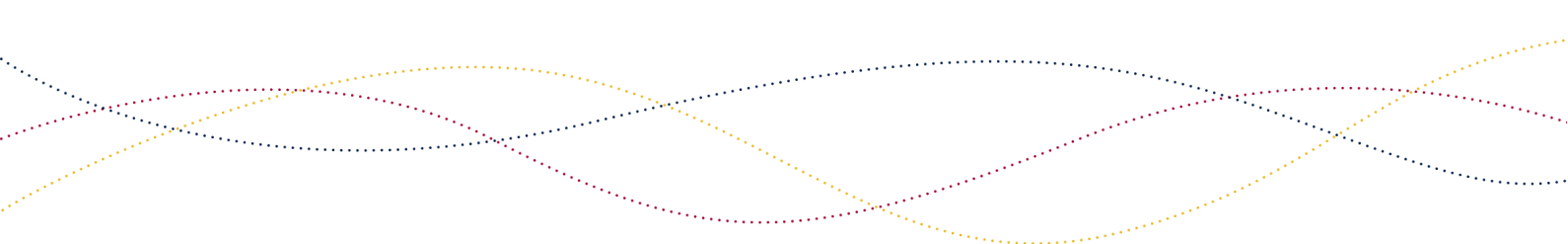
ANGELIKA RETTBERG

Angelika Rettberg is the dean of the School of Social Sciences and a professor at the Political Science Department at Universidad de los Andes (Bogotá – Colombia). Her research has focused on the private sector as a political actor and, specifically, on business behavior in contexts of armed conflict and peacebuilding. She has also been involved in research about other aspects of the political economy of armed conflict and peacebuilding, such as the relationship between legal resources, armed conflict, and crime as well as the dynamics of transitional justice and reconciliation.

In 2018 she served as a negotiator for the Colombian government in the peace talks with the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN). She regularly contributes to the public media on topics related to the Colombian peace process. She has also been a regular advisor and commentator on issues related to peace and peacebuilding at a global level. She is co-Editor-in-Chief at World Development journal (with Jampel Dell'Angelo). She is a member of the IFIT Depolarization Community of Practice.

ANNA CHRISTINA NASCIMENTO

Anna Christina Nascimento is Brazilian and holds a degree in International Relations from PUC/MG and a Master's degree in Development Management from Ruhr Universität Bochum, Germany. She has been working at Porticus since 2019, initially as Education Programme Manager, and since the



end of 2023 has been Regional Director for Latin America, responsible for all the organisation's philanthropic activities in Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and Peru.

Nascimento has worked for 20 years on social development and project management to guarantee the rights of the most vulnerable groups, particularly children and adolescents, having worked in numerous non-governmental organisations, social responsibility institutes and international organisations.

ARIES A. ARUGAY

Aries A. Arugay is Professor of Political Science at the University of the Philippines Diliman. He is also Editor-in-Chief of *Asian Politics & Policy*, a Scopus-indexed academic journal published by Wiley-Blackwell and the Policy Studies Organization and a Visiting Senior Fellow and Coordinator of the Philippines Studies Programme of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies-Yusof-Ishak Institute (Singapore).

He teaches undergraduate and graduate courses on comparative politics and international relations. He is one of the first members of the Democracy Erosion Consortium, a global initiative to commonly offer a university-level course on democratic erosion around the world. Since 2024, Arugay is also a member of the Global Challenges to Democracy Working Group established by the Toda Peace Institute.

Arugay has conducted research on democratisation and democratic erosion for the past two decades. His research interests include civil-military relations, populism, polarisation, electoral politics, and foreign policy. He obtained his PhD in Political Science from Georgia State University (United States) in 2014 as a Fulbright Fellow and his MA and BA (cum laude) in Political Science from the University of the Philippines-Diliman. He is a member of the IFIT Depolarization Community of Practice.

AUGUSTINE MAGLOWONDO

Dr. Augustine Magolowondo is a seasoned governance and democracy expert with over 25 years of experience in international development, focusing on elections, political party strengthening, political dialogue, and conflict management across sub-Saharan Africa. Until May 2025, he served as Regional Director and Head of Programmes for Democracy Works Foundation, and as Chief of Party for a USAID-funded regional political parties and elections programme covering seven Southern African countries.

Dr. Magolowondo has provided strategic advisory support to political parties, parliaments, EMBs, and civil society actors. He previously held senior leadership roles with the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD), where as African regional representative and Senior Expert (Political Parties and Elections) he provided expert leadership and oversight on initiatives aimed at promoting inter-party dialogue, political parties strengthening and elections.

He has also worked with GIZ in Malawi as an expert on decentralisation, conflict management, and dialogue promotion. He has contributed to seminal tools including the International IDEA/NIMD Facilitators' Guide for Political Dialogue among others. He holds a PhD in Political Science, an MA in Development Management (from Ruhr University of Bochum, Germany) and BA in Public Administration (University of Malawi). He has published extensively in his field of work. He is a member of the IFIT Depolarization Community of Practice.



AVILA KILMURRAY

Avila Kilmurray has worked on social justice and peacebuilding issues in Northern Ireland since 1975. She was a founder member of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition and a member of its negotiation team for the Good Friday Agreement (1998).

Kilmurray is currently Programme Director with Social Change Initiative (SCI) and a Honorary Professor in the Mitchell Institute, Queens University Belfast. She is currently chairperson of the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust Peace & Security Grantmaking Committee and an active member of the Foundations for Peace Network.

She has written extensively on women and peacebuilding as well as on the contribution of philanthropy. She is a member of IFIT Transition Assistance Practice Group and the IFIT Depolarization Community of Practice.

CLAUDIO CESARANO

Claudio Cesarano is Senior Program Manager at Civitates, where he leads strategic development and grantmaking for the Tech and Democracy subfund that is focused on tech regulation and improving online public discourse. Before Civitates, Cesarano was part of the Tech and Society team of Open Society - Europe and Central Asia working on disinformation and platform regulation.

He has worked in several NGOs (Access Info Europe, Diritto Di Sapere, ALTER-EU) on freedom of information, lobby transparency and corporate influence on decision making. He has further supported the Italian Government on the development of the 3rd National Action Plan on open government.

DANIEL F. WILHELM

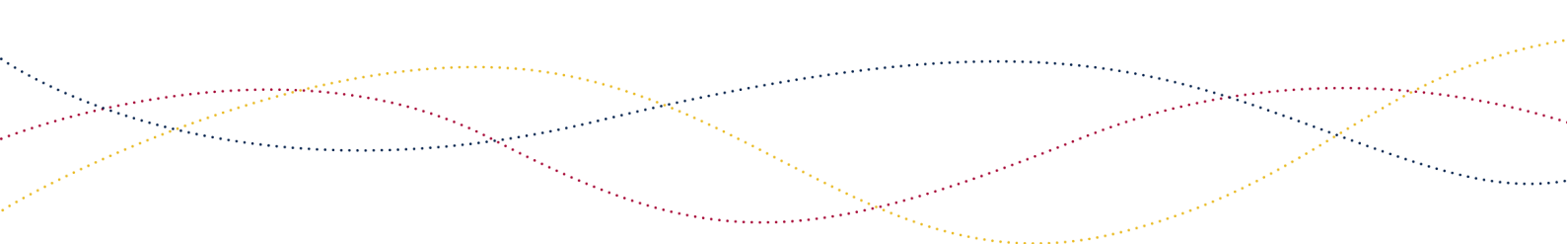
Daniel F. Wilhelm is President of The Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation, a leader in developing and disseminating knowledge on violence in its many forms, including war, crime and human aggression. Guggenheim research and programs aim to understand the causes, manifestation, and control of violence in the United States and across the globe to advance scholarship and to inform policy, practice, and public discourse.

Wilhelm previously served as Vice President and Chief Program Officer of the Vera Institute of Justice, a non-governmental organisation in New York working to improve systems of justice. There he was responsible for developing and overseeing the institute's work with the government on victimization, sentencing and corrections, prosecution, juvenile justice, and other areas.

Earlier, Wilhelm practiced law at Sidley & Austin and served as law clerk to U.S. District Judge Frederic Block in Brooklyn, N.Y. He is a founding director of the Council on Criminal Justice, has advised university and philanthropic research initiatives, and has written and testified widely on crime and justice policy. Wilhelm is a graduate of Northwestern University School of Law, Harvard Divinity School, and the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University.

DELOISE DE FÁTIMA BACELAR DE JESUS

Deloise de Fátima Bacelar de Jesus is a professional inspired by decolonial approaches to achieving social justice, professional well-being, and systemic coherence. She holds a degree in Public Policy Management from the University of São Paulo and a degree in Human and Social Sciences from the Federal University of ABC, with a focus on social justice and systemic change in the exercise of power.



With over 15 years of experience, she has worked in academia, the public sector, and the nonprofit sector. As a professor, consultant, and member of national organizations in Brazil, she has supported the development of leadership, public policies, and systemic change with a focus on management, education, and racial equity.

Bacelar de Jesus is the founder of Batukee, an impact-driven business dedicated to supporting power-shifting processes, with a focus on increasing diversity in decision-making roles and promoting healthier decision-making practices. Through Batukee, she offers career mentoring, strategic consulting, and leadership development.

Currently, Bacelar de Jesus serves as the Executive Director of B-WEL (Black Women in Executive Leadership), where she supports global strategies aimed at co-creating Afro-diasporic approaches to equity and justice in the exercise of power for social change. Additionally, she works as a professor and content producer for podcasts, sharing insights on leadership, equity, and systemic transformation.

DICKY SOFJAN

Dicky Sofjan, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor in the Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies (ICRS) in the Graduate School of Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) in Yogyakarta. His research focuses on religion and politics, Islam, religious literacy and social justice, nature and culture, as well as sustainability and spirituality. He currently serves as Vice President of Globethics in Geneva, Switzerland.

Dr. Sofjan has received research grants from the Ford Foundation, Templeton Foundation, Partnership for Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD), Nippon Foundation, Henry Luce Foundation, European Union, US State Department, Carnegie Council, Greenpeace, UNDP and other international organisations and development agencies. He was a Visiting Professor and Fellow in Japan, Malaysia, Bulgaria, Italy and Iran.

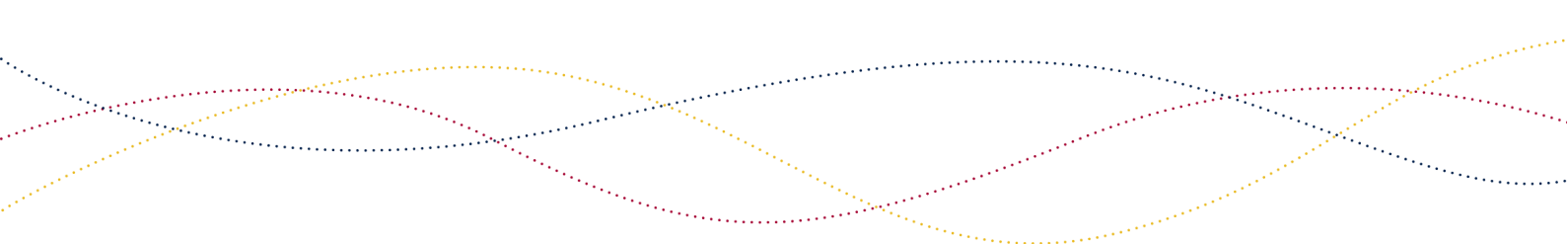
Dr. Sofjan's latest project includes designing and curating an inspirational and sustainable "Nglanggeran Eco-Village" located in Patuk, Gunung Kidul, where he brings together Indonesian social entrepreneurs and green investors to promote sustainable development.

Dr. Sofjan serves as ICRS Principal Investigator for a Religious Literacy Project with the Indonesian Institute of Academic Partnership (IIAP) and a Co-Principal Investigator for the Project on Polarization Mitigation through Social and Environmental Justice in Indonesia. He is a member of the IFIT Depolarization Community of Practice.

DION BAILEY

Dion Bailey is Co-founder and Chief Technology Officer at The News Movement: a digital media startup. He is also an Adjunct Professor at The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art.

Previously, Dion was VP, Head of Technology at the Wall Street Journal. In that role he provided executive leadership and strategic direction across the WSJ, and led the tech transformation of other Dow Jones entities, including their product, editorial, commercial, and acquisition strategies.



In the past, Dion also served as Executive Technical Product Manager at BBC, where he delivered an award-winning technology solution supporting the 2012 Olympics. In addition, he held lead roles at the BBC Future Media & Technology Division and served as Chief Architecture at News UK. He is a member of the IFIT Depolarization Community of Practice.

ELAD UZAN

Elad Uzan is a philosopher based at the University of Oxford. He was a Marie Curie Postdoctoral Fellow at the Faculty of Philosophy and a Junior Research Fellow in Philosophy at Corpus Christi College.

His research focuses on the intersection of moral, political, and legal philosophy. He was recently awarded the American Philosophical Association's Baumgardt Memorial Fellowship and will present the Baumgardt Memorial Lectures at the Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics.

ERIKA SANCHEZ SAEZ

Erika Sanchez Saez is a social communicator and researcher, currently the Executive Director of Instituto ACP (a Brazilian family foundation focused on strengthening civil society organizations through institutional development and core support). She serves on the steering committee of Plataforma Conjunta and the Sociedade Viva initiative, and sits on the boards of Funbea (Brazilian Environmental Education Fund), Move Social (a social impact consultancy), Arredondar (a micro-donation initiative), and CONFOCO (a federal council for philanthropy and civil society). She is the author of Collaborative Philanthropy and co-author of several publications on philanthropy and social investment in Brazil. Erika holds a degree in Social Communication from ESPM, a postgraduate specialization in Globalization, Global Governance and Systems from the Polytechnic University of Catalonia, and a Master's in Cooperation, Globalization and Development from the University of Barcelona.

FABIENNE HARA

Fabienne Hara serves as Deputy Director General of the Paris Peace Forum, a platform focusing on improving global governance of global commons and public goods challenges. With 25 years of professional experience, including 10 years in African conflict zones, she is an expert in peace and security, conflict management, African affairs, and global governance.

In 2006, Hara served as Acting Political Director at the United Nations Mission in Sudan, where she supported the implementation of the North-South Comprehensive Peace Agreement. From 2008 to 2014, she held the position of Vice-President for Multilateral Affairs and Director of the New York Office at the International Crisis Group as well as Africa Director. In 2014 and 2015, she played a key role in establishing the Dakar International Forum on Peace and Security in Africa, organising its first two editions in coordination with the French government. She has also held senior positions and coordinated special initiatives at the Open Society Foundations, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, The Elders Foundation, and Médecins Sans Frontières.

Additionally, she served as a professor at Columbia University and Sciences Po Paris for over a decade and has authored over 60 publications. Finally, she is a member of the ECFR Council, and SNF Fellow at the Tallberg Foundation.



FELIP ROCA

Felip Roca Blasco is Director of International Relations at the Barcelona Mayor's Office (Ajuntament de Barcelona).

FIONA GATTY

Fiona Gatty serves as the Principal Advisor for Strategic Relationships and Partnerships at Templeton World Charity Foundation. She also provides grantmaking consultation to the Foundation in the Launch and Development strategic funding areas.

Dr. Gatty brings a diverse background and extensive experience to her position. She received her MA in Modern History, as well as her MSt and DPhil in History of Art, from the University of Oxford. Her expertise and publications focus on late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century art, history, and aesthetics. Drawing on her experience as Chapel Director at Somerville College, Oxford, she has also published in the field of material religion and education. Recently, she completed a research project on Education, Purpose, and Human Flourishing in Uncertain Times at the Department of Education, Oxford University.

Before reentering academia, Dr. Gatty enjoyed a successful career as a strategic partnership professional in the international finance, entrepreneurial business, and high-net-worth family business sectors.

GUILLERMO TELL AVELEDO COLL

Guillermo Tell Aveledo Coll is a Doctor in Political Science from the Central University of Venezuela. He is Full Professor and Dean of Law and Politics at Universidad Metropolitana in Caracas.

His academic work focuses on Venezuelan politics, Church-State relations, and extremism in contemporary ideological trends. He is a member of IFIT's Venezuela Expert Group (GEV), and served as a member of the National Primary Commission (2022–2023), the citizen-led body responsible for organizing the opposition's leadership primaries in Venezuela.

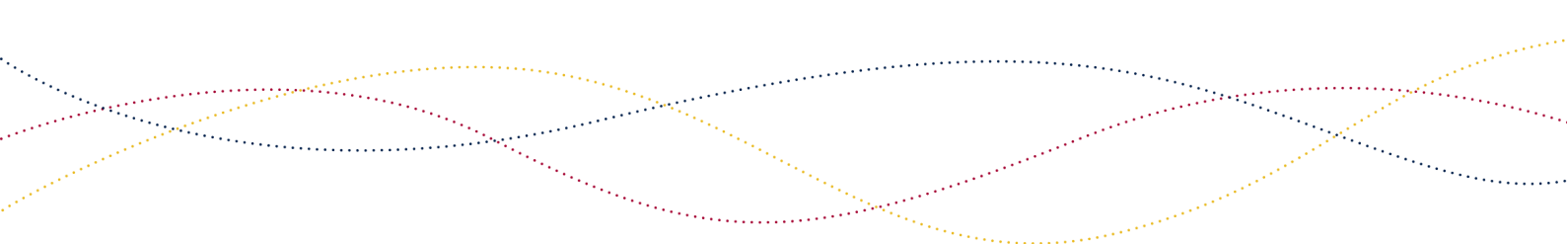
His recent publications include "Venezuela: Reconfiguración de la hegemonía" and "Whose right, whose left? The peculiar iterations of right-wing politics in Venezuela" (co-authored with Maryhen Jimenez). He is a member of the IFIT Depolarization Community of Practice.

HAKAN ALTINAY

Hakan Altinay is a Professor of the Practice at Tisch College, and the founding Director of the European School of Politics in Istanbul. He has previously served as a senior fellow at Brookings Institution, a world fellow at Yale University, and taught at Bogazici, Koc and Sabanci universities in Istanbul.

His book, "Global Civics: Responsibilities and Rights In An Interdependent World", was published by Brookings Institution Press, and subsequently translated and published in Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Spanish. His 2023 book, "Medeni (Civic)", was published by Iletisim Press. His writings have appeared at The Economist, Financial Times, Global Policy, The New York Times, openDemocracy, and ProjectSyndicate.

His current interests revolve around what can be achieved through good conversations and generous listening, as well as the opportunity cost of neglecting our civic muscles around these



perennial practices. Altinay is a member of the IFIT International Advisory Council and the IFIT Depolarization Community of Practice.

HANNES MUELLER

Hannes Mueller is a tenured researcher at the Institute for Economic Analysis (IAE-CSIC) and the Director of the Data Science for Decision Making Program at the Barcelona School of Economics (BSE). He is affiliated with CEPR and serves as the theme leader for Institutions, Democracy, and Peace in the RECIPE project. His research focuses on the application of machine learning techniques to issues in Political Economy, Conflict Studies, and Development Economics. Mueller's work often involves analyzing large datasets, such as newspaper archives and satellite images, to forecast and nowcast violence, with publications in prominent journals like the American Economic Review (AER), American Political Science Review (APSR), Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS), and the Journal of the European Economic Association (JEEA).

Mueller has contributed extensively to public policy through research projects commissioned by various governments and international organizations, including the World Bank, IMF, UN, several INGOs, the Banco de España, the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, and the German Federal Foreign Office. His work spans topics such as political transitions, displacement, the economic effects of armed conflict, structural transformation, and studies on political risk, conflict forecasting, and conflict prevention. Through projects like conflictforecast.org and the EconAI research group, he combines academic research at the intersection of text mining, machine learning, and causal inference with public outreach. His research has featured in newspapers like the Financial Times, El País, La Vanguardia, national radio, and several podcasts, and blogs.

HATEM SALAMA

Hatem Salama is a program officer at the Ford Foundation's MENA Office. His grantmaking focuses on supporting arts, culture and media in the Middle East and North Africa. With 25 years of experience working for international organizations to support arts and culture across the region, Hatem has experience in creative production, technical direction and fundraising. Throughout his career, he has a history of building bridges of trust and respect, nurturing relationships within the cultural sector and the wider civic space, supporting inventive approaches, and ecosystems thinking to navigate complexity.

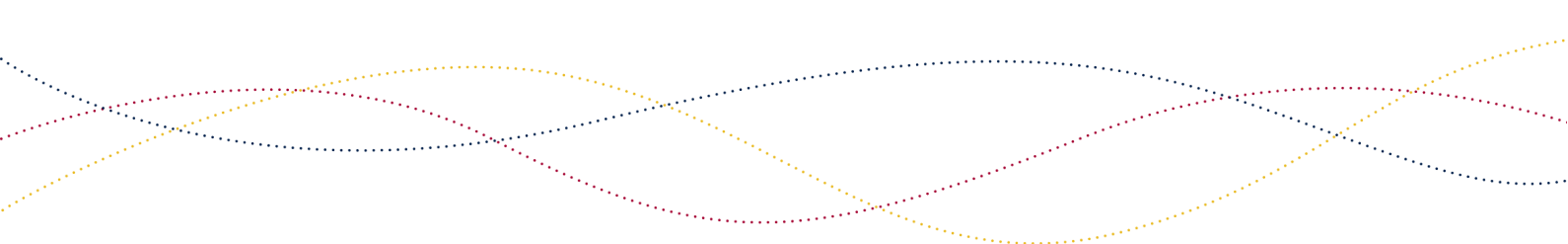
HEINRICH BOHMKE

Heinrich Bohmke is an investigator, mediator and researcher in South Africa. He is the author of a study on how polarization is linguistically represented in 20 languages. He has also developed software which draws on different datasets to measure levels of polarization on particular topics over time. Bohmke holds degrees in Psychology, Comparative Literature and Sociology of Law.

HESHAM YOUSSEF

Ambassador Hesham Youssef is a Senior Advisor at the European Institute of Peace, having previously served as a Senior Fellow and Advisor at the United States Institute of Peace from 2019 to April 2025. A career diplomat with Egypt's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Youssef has extensive experience in regional diplomacy and conflict resolution.

From 2014 to 2019, he served as Assistant Secretary General for Humanitarian, Cultural and Social Affairs of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Prior to this, Youssef held senior positions at the Arab League from 2001 to 2014, serving as Official Spokesman and later Chief of Staff to Secretary General Amr Moussa from 2003 to 2011. From 2012 to 2014, he was Senior Advisor to



Secretary General of the Arab League, Dr Nabil Elaraby, on crisis management and Arab League reform.

Youssef has worked extensively on conflict resolution in the Middle East, particularly the Arab-Israeli conflict, reconciliation in Iraq, and other regional conflicts. He has authored several papers on conflicts and developments in the Middle East. He is an advisor to the IFIT Peace Treaty Initiative and a member of the IFIT Depolarization Community of Practice.

HILARY PENNINGTON

Hilary Pennington is Ford Foundation's former executive vice president of programs (2018-2024) where she oversaw all of the foundation's programs globally, working closely across programs and offices to ensure strategic, meaningful, and well-aligned global grant making. She also oversaw the foundation's BUILD program, and the Office of Strategy and Learning. Before assuming that role, she served as the foundation's vice president for Education, Creativity, and Free Expression (2013-2018).

Between 2006 and 2012, Hilary served as director of education, postsecondary success, and special initiatives at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, where she guided grant programs across the country and worldwide. Before joining Gates, she was a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress and president and CEO of Jobs for the Future, a research and policy development organization she co-founded. In 22 years with JFF, Hilary helped the organization become one of the most influential in the country on issues of education, youth transitions, workforce development, and future work requirements. She also served on President Bill Clinton's transition team and as co-chair of his administration's presidential advisory committee on technology.

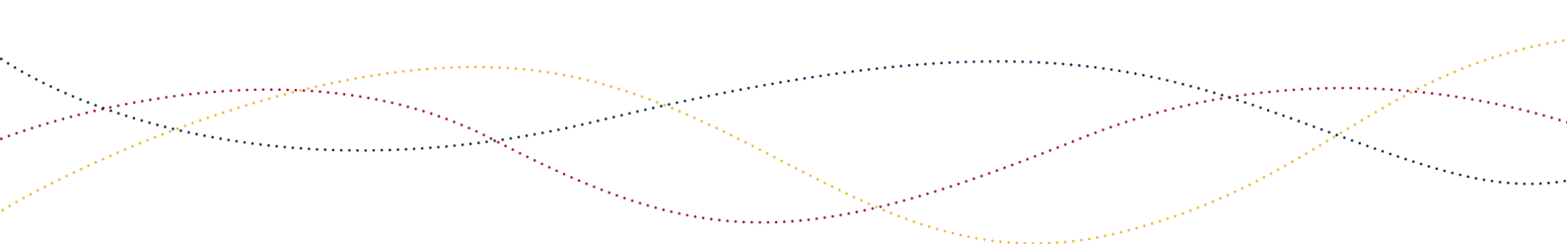
Hilary serves on the boards of Bard College, Search for Common Ground and Lego Foundation, and she is a member of the Trinity Church Vestry and the Council on Foreign Relations. She is a graduate of the Yale School of Management and Yale College, and she holds a graduate degree in social anthropology from Oxford University and a master's degree in theological studies from the Episcopal Divinity School. In 2000, she was a fellow at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. She is the Co-Convenor of the Global Initiative on Polarization and a member of the IFIT International Advisory Council.

JENNIFER McCOY

Jennifer McCoy, PhD, is Regent's Professor of Political Science at Georgia State University in Atlanta and Nonresident Scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, as well as Research Affiliate at CEU's Democracy Institute in Budapest. Her areas of expertise include democratic resilience, erosion and recovery; political polarization and depolarization; crisis prevention and conflict resolution; democracy promotion and collective defense of democracy; election processes and international election observation; and Latin American Politics.

Dr. McCoy was named a 2024 Andrew Carnegie Fellow for her project, "Mitigating Pernicious Polarization through Innovative Civic Educational Interventions." Her current book project is *Depolarizing Politics and Remaking Democracy* with Murat Somer, under contract with Princeton University Press. Her latest volume is *Polarizing Politics: A Global Threat to Democracy*, co-edited with Murat Somer (2019).

Dr. McCoy served as Director of the Carter Center's Americas Program (1998-2015), leading projects on democratic strengthening, mediation and dialogue, and hemispheric cooperation. She has authored or edited six books and dozens of articles. McCoy is a member of the Council on Foreign



Relations, the International Women’s Forum and the Scholars Strategy Network. She is a member of the IFIT Depolarization Community of Practice.

JESTINA MUKOKO

Jestina Mukoko is a distinguished human rights defender, journalist, peace advocate, and civil society leader. She founded the Jestina Mukoko Foundation to provide a sanctuary and platform for those affected by trauma to share their stories as the initial step in their journey of healing and restoration. As former National Director of Zimbabwe Peace Project, a non-profit organisation, she has been dedicated to promoting sustainable peace by tracking and reporting human rights abuses and breaches of peace across Zimbabwe.

A survivor of state-sponsored violence, Mukoko bravely documented her harrowing experience in her book, *The Abduction and Trial of Jestina Mukoko: The Fight for Human Rights in Zimbabwe*, published in 2016.

A political scientist by training, Mukoko holds a Postgraduate Certificate in Defending Human Rights, and an Executive Master’s Degree in Managing Peace and Security in Africa. For her outstanding contributions to democracy, human rights, and peace advocacy, the Institute of Directors Zimbabwe honored her as one of the 50 Inspirational Women of 2020-2021.

Mukoko has been engaged in work to analyse fault lines impacting cohesion in the opposition in Zimbabwe. She has been a member of the IFIT Zimbabwe Resource Group since its inception in 2016 and is a member of the IFIT Depolarization Community of Practice.

JOHAN VIBE

Johan Vibe has dedicated over three decades to diplomacy and international relations. After completing law school at the University of Oslo in 1989, he joined the Foreign Service, beginning with legal work at the International Court of Justice before taking on postings in Central America and NATO Brussels and serving as advisor at the Foreign Minister’s Cabinet.

His expertise in conflict resolution became the defining aspect of his career during his leadership of Norway’s Section for Peace and Reconciliation from 2005 to 2009, where he oversaw several peace processes including Colombia, Spain and Afghanistan. This specialisation led to his appointment as Norway’s Ambassador to Colombia from 2016 to 2018, where he played a crucial role in implementing the historic 2016 peace accords between the Government of Colombia and FARC.

Vibe’s distinguished diplomatic career includes serving as Minister and Deputy Chief of Mission in Washington DC, Ambassador to Spain, and Ambassador to Italy from 2021 to 2025. In August 2025, he assumed the position of Director of the Norwegian Centre for Conflict Resolution (NOREF), bringing his extensive experience in peace processes and high-level diplomatic leadership to this influential international role. Vibe is a member of the IFIT Depolarization Community of Practice.

JOLENE QUINN

Jolene Quinn is an Irish diplomat, currently serving as Deputy Director of the Peace and Stability Unit at Ireland’s Department of Foreign Affairs. She previously served with the United Nations in Ethiopia, Afghanistan, South Sudan, and Somalia, focusing on human rights. Before this, she was a practising lawyer in Ireland.



JONATHAN JACKSON

Jonathan Jackson builds narrative ecosystems and messaging for delivering new ideas. His sweet spot is working across the spectrum of communication, strategy, and go-to-market to help organizations craft stories that transform industries.

After starting at LinkedIn's editorial team during the early "Influencer" era, Jackson co-founded Blavity Inc., transforming the media ecosystem and growing it into one of the largest independent media companies by reach, engaging 100M consumers monthly. Following his departure in 2018, he became a Nieman Fellow, studying intellectual property movements across diasporas alongside leading journalists.

Jackson served as Editor-in-Chief at Red Table Talk, building products and experiences around Facebook's number one show starring Jada Pinkett Smith. Most recently, as Executive Director of Narrative at Standard Chartered Bank, he developed global communication strategies across multiple markets.

As a 2024 Ford Foundation Global Fellow, he studies how institutions, the creator economy, and economic sovereignty intersect for makers building borderless businesses.

JOSÉ MARCELO ZACCHI

José Marcelo Zacchi is a social entrepreneur, researcher, and creator, currently dedicated to developing Mesa Plural, an initiative focused on defending and reaffirming pluralism in Brazil's public sphere.

He holds a law degree from the University of São Paulo and a master's in public administration from Harvard University. He was the founder and director of Instituto Sou da Paz, the Brazilian Forum on Public Safety, Instituto Overmundo, Casa Fluminense, Núcleo Ypykuéra, and Pacto pela Democracia —civil society organizations committed to advancing social and urban policies and strengthening democracy in Brazil.

He also served as Secretary General of GIFE (Group of Institutes, Foundations, and Companies), associate researcher at the Institute for Studies on Labor and Society (IETS), and held positions in the municipal and state governments of Rio de Janeiro as well as in Brazil's Ministry of Justice. Throughout these activities, he also served as a consultant to UN-HABITAT, to the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), to the World Bank and various other public and private organizations acting in social, urban and cultural projects in Brazil and Latin America, and collaborated with various publications and internet and TV projects.

JUAN GARRIGUES

Juan Garrigues is a member of the UN Standby team of Senior Mediation Advisers. Since joining the Standby team in 2024, he has provided mediation support in Libya, Guatemala and Haiti, amongst others. He was previously the Deputy Director of the Dialogue Advisory Group (DAG), where he facilitated political dialogues in different contexts of armed conflict and political transition including in the DRC, Libya, Venezuela and the Basque Country. From 2008 to 2011, he served as a Foreign Policy Adviser in the Spanish Prime Minister's office. In the UN, he has worked in the Americas Division of the (then) Department of Political Affairs and served as a UN Volunteer in Niger. He has also worked in CIDOB, FRIDE and CITpax, and served as a short and long-term election observer with the EU, OSCE and UN.



JUANITA LEÓN

Juanita León is the Founder and Director of La Silla Vacía, a pioneer digital news website focused on Colombian politics that has become a leading reference in the country's media landscape. A Colombian journalist, writer, and public speaker, León has dedicated her career to political journalism and innovative digital media.

León obtained a law degree from the University of the Andes in Bogotá and a Master's degree in Journalism from Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism in New York. She began her career as a reporter for the Wall Street Journal Americas before returning to Colombia in 1998, where she worked for the newspaper El Tiempo and Semana magazine, serving as editor-in-chief of the weekly's website.

In 2006, León was selected as a Nieman Fellow at Harvard University, and upon her return, she helped launch the alternative online news magazine Flyp in 2008. The following year, with support from a grant from the Open Society Foundations and her family resources, she founded La Silla Vacía in 2009.

León has continued to expand her expertise through international academic engagement, serving as an Academic Visitor at St Antony's College, Oxford, from 2018 to 2019. She is the author of several books, including "Country of Bullets: Chronicles of War in Colombia." She is a member of both the IFIT Brain Trust for the Colombian Transition and the IFIT Depolarization Community of Practice.

KATE COLLINS

Kate Collins is an Irish diplomat, currently serving as Desk Officer in the Peace and Stability Unit at Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs. She previously spent time in London as a policy and data analyst focusing on social policy, and holds a masters in modern history from Cambridge.

KEAMOGETSWE SEIPATO

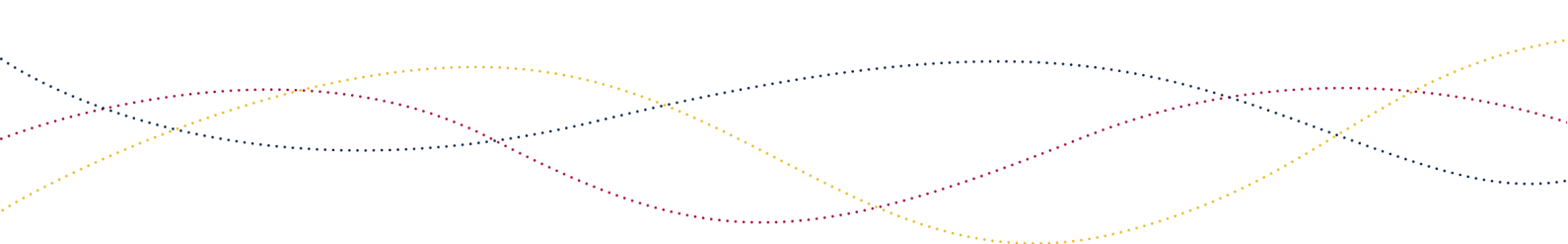
Keamogetswe Seipato is a social justice activist, facilitator and research consultant. She is an eco-feminist and is passionate about building and working with those who want to deconstruct the system.

Seipato is keen on collaborating and co-creating with those on the margins of society. She has over seven years of experience in the non-profit sector and is a Ford Foundation Global Fellow alum. She works at a democracy-deepening organisation called My Vote Counts and also at Digital Society Africa as a researcher.

The work she does on a day-to-day basis gives expression to her activism. Sharing and creating information and knowledge with those who are affected by how the political economy of the world and Southern Africa works, coupled with an inspiration to establish the means to tackle patriarchal capitalism, is a key element of her activism.

KEZIA LOUPATTY

Gloria Kezia Loupatty is a Program Associate at the Ford Foundation. She is a Master of Social Work graduate from the University of Georgia, with a concentration in Community Empowerment and Program Development. Her academic focus includes community organizing, program sustainability, advocacy, and public policy at the macro level. She also holds a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from Universitas Indonesia and earned a Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management and Leadership from the University of Georgia.



In 2017, Gloria was awarded the prestigious Fulbright Scholarship, a U.S. Department of State-funded program, to pursue her graduate studies in the United States. Her professional and academic interests lie in strengthening communities through sustainable programs and advancing policy frameworks that support social development.

LEA BOLT

Lea Bolt is a Nicaraguan activist, researcher, and poet currently serving as Executive Delegate of the Limitless Foundation for Human Development.

She holds a Bachelor's degree in Diplomacy and International Relations and a Master's degree in Creative Writing in Spanish from the University of Salamanca. With over six years of experience, Bolt has led political advocacy projects, coordinated regional research and dialogue initiatives, and facilitated learning processes focused on democratic culture, transitional justice, and human rights. She has collaborated as a research assistant, consultant, and strategic advisor for various international organizations, including projects funded by USAID, the European Union, and AECID. She is also the founder of Bolt: School of Oratory & Debate, where she has trained dozens of young leaders in public speaking, argumentation, and civic engagement.

A committed feminist and advocate for social transformation, her work bridges political analysis, educational innovation, and poetic expression. Her poetry explores themes of memory, exile, and collective resistance, and she facilitates writing spaces that center emotional truth and dissenting voices. Now living in exile in Costa Rica, Bolt continues to contribute to transnational efforts for democracy, justice, and civic participation in Central America. She is a member of the IFIT Depolarization Community of Practice.

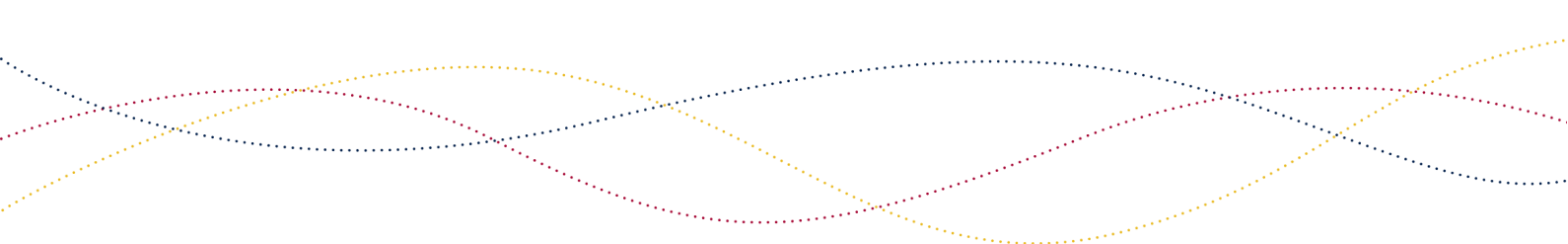
LEOR ZMIGROD

Dr Leor Zmigrod is a political psychologist and neuroscientist, and author of *The Ideological Brain*. Her research centres on what makes some individuals most susceptible to extreme and dogmatic ideologies. She studied at Cambridge University as a Gates Scholar before winning a Junior Research Fellowship at Churchill College, Cambridge. She has held visiting fellowships at Stanford, Harvard, and both the Berlin and Paris Institutes for Advanced Study. She was listed on 'Forbes 30 Under 30' in Science and has won numerous prizes, including the Women of the Future Science Award and the Glushko Prize.

Dr Zmigrod's popular science book *The Ideological Brain* reveals the psychological and neurobiological traits that predispose some minds to extremism as well as the ways in which immersion in rigid ideologies might transform our brains and bodies. The book is being translated into over 15 languages and has been recognised as one of the most hotly anticipated non-fiction books of 2025 by *The Guardian*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *New Scientist*, and *Financial Times*. Dr Zmigrod is a member of the IFIT Depolarization Community of Practice.

LESLIE WINGENDER

Leslie Wingender is Senior Director of Peacebuilding at Humanity United (HU). In this role, she leads the Peacebuilding team's strategy and learning approach across focus areas and supports team members and partners in setting up learning activities and cross-partner engagements. She has co-created learning processes with organizations at all levels, bridging local to national to global perspectives. Leslie also leads HU's Colombia engagement, working with a networked group of 17 peacebuilding organisations and initiatives. She has over 15 years of experience working on inclusive



peace processes and peacebuilding efforts in the Middle East, West Africa and South Asia. She has developed robust MEL tools for programs implemented in conflict-affected areas and provided technical support on conflict sensitivity, reconciliation, peacebuilding M&E and conflict analysis.

Wingender holds a master's degree in conflict resolution from Georgetown University and a bachelor's degree in peace and conflict studies from University of California-Berkeley. She grew up in Bogotá and Medellín, Colombia and speaks Spanish, French, and Arabic.

LUCAS LORENZO JOHNSON

Lucas Lorenzo Johnson is a global leader in conversations about shaping public life and building community across lines of difference. He has been shaped by his time learning from veterans of the civil rights movement in the U.S., and by his work with human rights activists around the world, especially in Africa, Europe, and Latin America. He has deep experience in the lived philosophy of nonviolence, conflict transformation, and community organising.

Lucas was a leader in the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, organising against mass incarceration, the militarisation of policing and the drug war in the U.S. He also led IFOR's International Secretariat in the Netherlands, supporting nonviolent human rights defenders around the world and defending the right to conscientious objection to military service at the UN in Geneva.

In 2018, Lucas joined the award-winning media and public life organisation, On Being. He led the organization's work focused on social healing until last year. He continues to collaborate with On Being, and he also regularly consults with groups in conflict and in support of initiatives focused on democracy and depolarisation. He is a member of the IFIT Depolarization Community of Practice.

MARIANNA ARAUJO

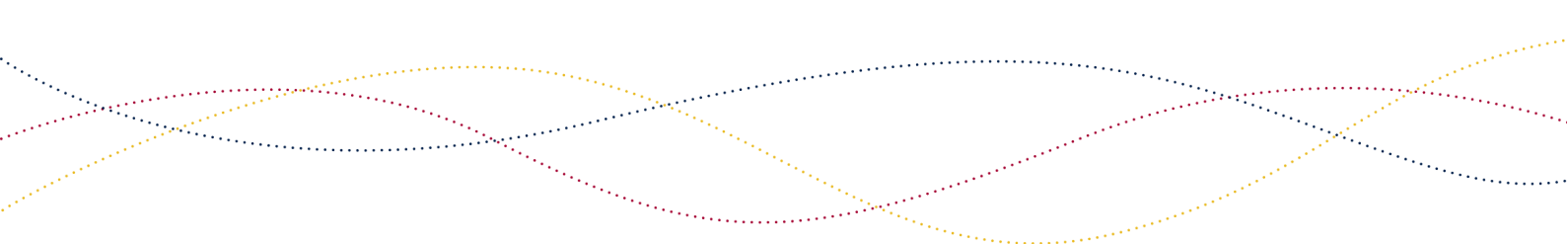
Marianna Araujo is a journalist with a PhD in Communication and Culture from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) and over 20 years of experience working on human rights issues in Brazil. She has built a solid career at the intersection of journalism, communication, and advocacy for fundamental rights, previously serving as Communications Director at The Intercept Brasil, a media outlet known for its investigative coverage.

Araujo currently serves as Director of Communication and Innovation at the Instituto Fogo Cruzado, a pioneering organisation in monitoring gun violence in Brazil. In this role, she develops communication strategies focused on urban violence and democracy. Her work involves creating narratives that humanise violence data, promoting public awareness about the impacts of gun violence on Brazilian communities. Araujo is a member of the IFIT Depolarization Community of Practice.

MARIK SHTERN

Dr. Marik Shtern is an urban-political geographer whose research centers on the complex dynamics of divided cities and intergroup spatial relations. He is a senior research fellow at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute and a senior lecturer at the Negev School of Architecture SCE.

At the Van Leer Institute, Dr. Shtern leads a critical contemporary study examining Jewish-Arab relations and the prospects for shared society in the aftermath of October 7th, among other research projects on intergroup relations in contemporary Israel. His research portfolio encompasses shared Israeli and Palestinian spaces in Jerusalem, offering nuanced perspectives on how communities navigate contested urban environments.



Dr. Shtern's comparative approach extends beyond the Middle East, examining urban planning and intergroup relations across multiple divided cities including Nicosia, Belfast, and Berlin. Dr. Shtern explores how urban environments can either perpetuate division or foster opportunities for shared society, a critical topic in contemporary discussions about cities, conflict, and coexistence.

MICHAEL FEIGELSON

Michael Feigelson is the CEO of the Van Leer Group Foundation. Prior to his current role as CEO, he served as the Executive Director of the Bernard van Leer Foundation, and held several other positions within the Foundation. Before joining Van Leer, Michael spent most of his career serving grassroots and non-profit organizations in Latin America, Africa and Eastern Europe, working with homeless and displaced children and families.

Early in his career he also spent time as a business analyst at McKinsey & Company. He has degrees from Wesleyan and Princeton Universities, was honored as a Thomas J. Watson fellow and was a member of the World Economic Forum Global Agenda Council on Behavior.

MICHAEL KAVATE

Michael Kavate is a Senior Reporter for Inside Philanthropy. He covers climate philanthropy and billionaire donors. He previously worked at Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees. He has been published in The Guardian, Los Angeles Times, Business Insider and other publications. A long-time Californian, he is based in Barcelona, Spain.

MIGUEL SILVA

Miguel Silva is a lawyer and journalist, a political and communications consultant, and the founder of Galileo 6: a strategic communications, crisis and political communications firm. He has advised several governments, campaigns and referendums in Latin America; and served as Chief of Staff to the President of Colombia and to the Secretary General of the OAS in Washington, D.C.

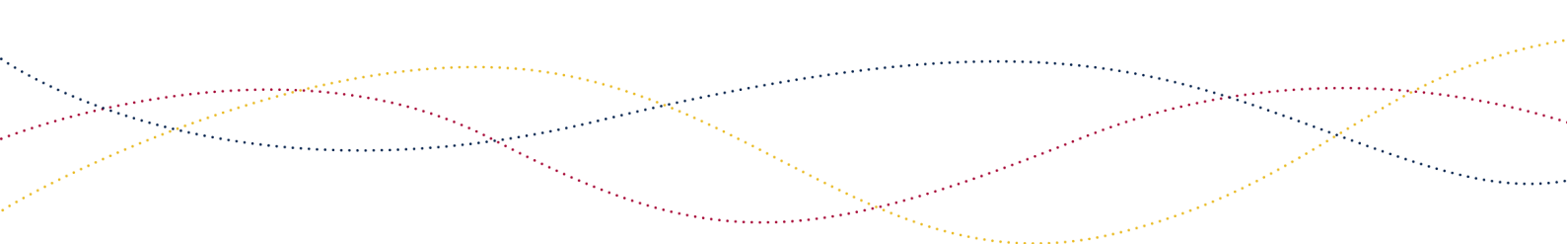
He was the political editor of La Prensa, a columnist for El Tiempo, El Espectador, Dinero, and The Huffington Post, the CEO of the Semana Publishing Group, and the founder of Gatopardo and the Andean edition of Rolling Stone.

Silva was a Fellow at the Institute of Politics at the University of Chicago, and is a member of IFIT's Inclusive Narratives Practice Group, an advisor to the Humanities Department at TEC de Monterrey, and a member of the Board of Directors of the Fundación Cardioinfantil.

MOEMA SALGADO

Moema Salgado has over 20 years of experience in the cultural, social, and political sectors, having worked with public institutions, international bodies, and civil society organizations in Brazil, France, and Haiti. She holds degrees in Law and History from Brazil, as well as a Master's in International Affairs from Sciences Po Paris and a research-based Master's from the Sorbonne (Université Paris IV). Her academic background reflects a solid foundation in cultural policy, international cooperation, and conflict resolution.

Throughout her career, she has managed multi-stakeholder projects, including international cultural programs and social engagement initiatives. She has notably worked at the Ministry of Culture of



Brazil, UNESCO, CulturesFrance (now Institut Français), and Viva Rio. Her work in conflict mediation stands out in two key experiences: in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, she coordinated the creation of a community-based conflict mediation center in Bel Air, involving local actors and international donors; and in Brazil, she worked with the Balcão de Direitos, offering legal orientation and mediation services in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro.

Currently, Salgado serves as Director of Institutional Development at ISER – Institute for Studies on Religion, a leading Brazilian think tank focused on the intersection of religion, politics, and democracy, where she coordinates projects on climate justice and interfaith dialogue, and monitors the role of religion in Brazil's public sphere, particularly its influence on political polarisation and far-right movements.

MURAT SOMER

Murat Somer is Professor of Political Science and International Relations at Ozyegin University, Istanbul. His research focuses on comparative polarisation and depolarisation, democratic erosion, resilience and recovery, opposition strategies against democratic erosion, secular and religious politics, and ethnic conflicts.

His recent publications include *Democratic Backsliding: How It Happens and How It Can Be Countered* (2025, co-edited with Rachel Beatty Riedl, Jennifer McCoy and Kenneth Roberts), *Return to Point Zero: The Turkish-Kurdish Question and How Politics and Ideas (Re)Make Empires, Nations, and States* (2022), and *Polarizing Politics: A Global Threat to Democracy* (2019, co-edited with Jennifer McCoy). His current book project, with J. McCoy, is *Depolarizing Politics and Rebuilding Democracy*.

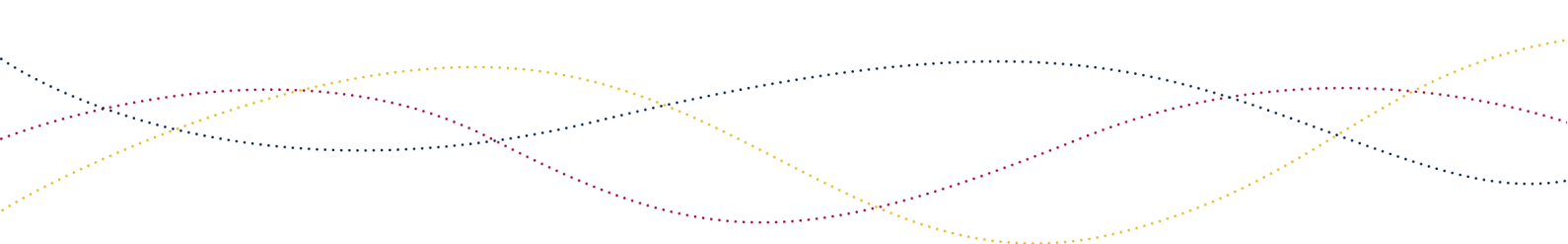
He held many visiting positions including Democracy and Development Fellow at Princeton University, visiting scholar at the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard University, visiting scholar and lecturer in the Abbasi Program in Islamic Studies at Stanford University, and GFDD Senior Fellow at Central European University. He has been an active volunteer, participant and informal advisor for civil society and political parties on issues related to democracy, polarisation and rule of law in Turkey, and a frequent contributor to Turkish and international media on these issues. Somer is a member of the IFIT Depolarization Community of Practice.

PAMELA WADENDE

Dr. Pamela Wadende is a senior lecturer at Kenya's Kisii University where she trains future teachers in Developmental Psychology and supervises graduate students. Dr. Wadende's cross-cultural work with children explores how they learn and flourish in rapidly changing societies in low- and middle-income countries, such as Kenya, Ethiopia, Cameroon and Zambia.

Throughout her career, her guiding question has been: What spurs human flourishing and how can it be optimised through interventions? Dr. Wadende believes that developmental outcomes are heavily shaped by environmental factors on a local and global scale, such as political tensions or climate change. A community's cultural traditions not only foster a sense of belonging for its members but hold a wealth of tools for interventions aimed at supporting their well-being.

In line with this approach, Dr. Wadende recently investigated ways of bridging children's transition from home to school in Kenya and Zambia, supported by Global Ties and UKRI, and currently explores character development among children in Kenya, Cameroon and Ethiopia in two projects



funded by the Templeton World Charity Foundation. She is a member of the IFIT Depolarization Community of Practice.

PHILLAN ZAMCHIYA

Phyllan Zamchiya is a Senior Researcher at the Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS) at the University of the Western Cape in South Africa. He holds a Doctor of Philosophy (DPhil) degree in International Development from the University of Oxford. He also currently serves on the editorial advisory board of Oxford Development Studies and the Journal of Southern African Studies.

Previously, Zamchiya was a research fellow at the Department of International Development at the University of Oxford in the United Kingdom where he taught on the Master of Philosophy programme in Development Studies. His academic interests are twofold: he studies contemporary trajectories of land and agrarian change in Southern Africa and the politics of post-colonial African states in democratic transitions. He has more than a decade experience in conducting field-based research and working with progressive civil society and feminist organisations in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, South Africa, Malawi, Namibia and Zambia.

Zamchiya is the convener of the 'Political Economy of Land and Agrarian Reform in Southern Africa' module and supervises MPhil and PhD candidates. Zamchiya is also a creative scholar whose latest informative documentary is "All we have comes from the land. Women's struggle for customary land rights".

PILAR CALDERÓN

Pilar Calderón is a Colombian-Spanish journalist and writer with extensive experience in politics, culture, and international affairs. She studied philosophy, literature, modern languages, and journalism, and earned a Master's degree in Journalism from Columbia University in New York.

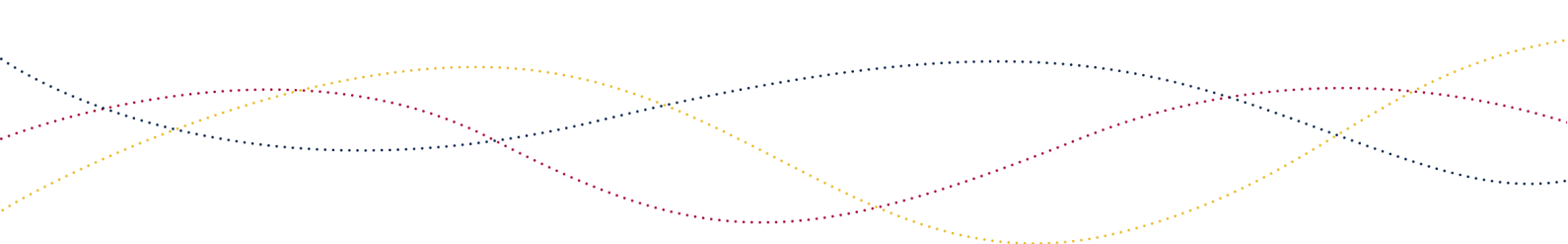
Her career spans leadership roles in government communications, journalism, and cultural management. She began her political career as press chief to Luis Carlos Galán, the reformist presidential candidate assassinated in 1989, and later served as Press Secretary to President César Gaviria. From 2014 to 2016, she was Senior Communications Adviser to President Juan Manuel Santos, where she directed the national government's communications strategy during the Colombian peace process.

In journalism, she worked as a political and investigative reporter, later becoming director of Noticiero de las Siete. She received the 1987 Simón Bolívar Prize for Best Television Interview. In print media, she was deputy editor of Revista Semana and El Espectador. In 1999, alongside Gabriel García Márquez and other journalists, she co-acquired Revista Cambio, where she served as deputy editor and Director of Publications. She later directed Revista Diners.

Her international experience includes five years in Panama and service as Consul General of Colombia in Barcelona (2018–2019). From 2020 to 2021, she advised the UN-backed Scientific Panel for the Amazon. She is currently researching and writing a book on Mercedes Barcha, wife of Gabriel García Marquez.

POL MORILLAS

Pol Morillas is Director of CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs). He is a political scientist, holds a PhD in Politics, Policies and International Relations from the Universitat Autònoma



de Barcelona (UAB) and a Master's (with distinction) in International Relations from the London School of Economics. His PhD received the distinction Cum Laude and the special prize award by UAB. He has taught at several universities, including the UAB, IESE, ESADE and Blanquerna.

Previously, he was Coordinator of the Political and Security Committee of the Council of the EU, Advisor on External Action at the European Parliament and Head of the Euro-Mediterranean Policies field at the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed). His latest books are *En el Patio de los Mayores. Europa ante un mundo hostil* (Debate, 2025) and *Strategy-Making in the EU. From Foreign and Security Policy to External Action* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

Morillas has also participated in several H2020 and Horizon Europe research projects such as MENARA, FEUTURE, MEDRESET, EU-LISTCO, EU IDEA and JOINT and collaborates with other think tanks and international organisations. He regularly collaborates with various media outlets (press, radio and TV) as a European and international affairs analyst.

RAFAEL POÇO

Rafael has dedicated nearly two decades to strengthening democracy and advancing human rights. He is the Executive Director of Instituto Galo da Manhã, funding initiatives and leaders focused on systemic impact, public policy advocacy, and the strengthening of networks and research on how to deepen democracy and the rule of law.

He founded Despolarize and co-founded Instituto Update, where he researched emerging political practices across Latin America. His career spans work as a lawyer, consultant, network builder, and civil society leader, including serving as an advisor in the creation of the Public Policy Center within the Public Prosecutor's Office in Brazil. As host of *Política: Modo de Usar* on GloboNews, he shared on TV innovative democratic experiences from across the region.

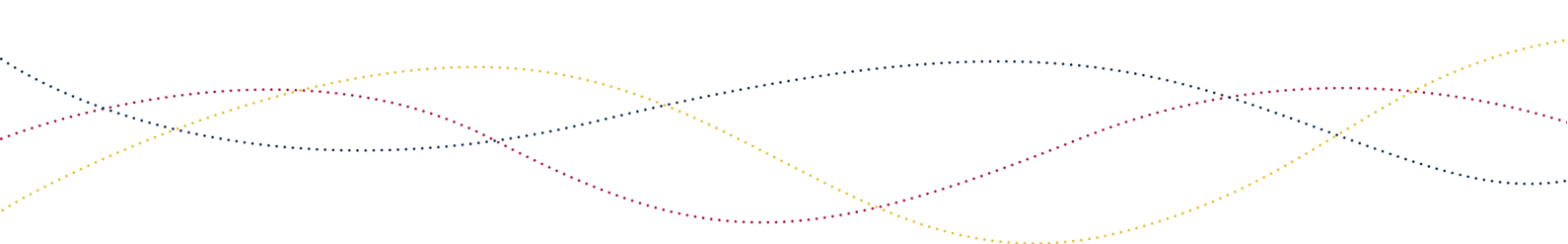
In philanthropy, Poço focuses on building bridges between strategic actors, fostering collaboration, and inspiring constructive debate and negotiation. He believes meaningful change emerges when lightness meets depth, firm convictions meet pluralist perspectives, and critique is rooted in intellectual honesty—always with authenticity and a touch of humor.

RAFAEL VILASANJUAN

Rafael Vilasanjuan, journalist, is a Director at ISGlobal since 2011. From 2006 to 2011, he was the Deputy Director of the Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona (CCCB). Previously, he spent 12 years at Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), starting as Communications Director in 1995 and later becoming the General Director of MSF's Spanish section. In 1999, when MSF was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, he was appointed General Secretary of the international movement, a position he held until 2006, working in major conflict zones such as Colombia, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Somalia, Sudan, West Africa, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Rafael was a member of GAVI (the Vaccine Alliance) and served as chair of its Steering Committee, representing civil society organisations from 2017 to 2018. He later became Board member of the GAVI alliance from January 2020 to 2024.

Rafael is the President of Ashoka Spain and Portugal, a member of the IFIT International Advisory Council, and a member of the Advisory Board of Open Democracy, among others.



He writes a weekly opinion column on international affairs for El Periódico and regularly contributes to La Ventana on Cadena SER.

REFIK HODZIC

Refik Hodzic is a strategic communications and transitional justice specialist, writer, journalist and justice activist from Prijedor, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In recent years, working with the European Institute for Peace and the UN International Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar, Hodzic has worked with victims of massive crimes in Syria, Yemen, Myanmar, Afghanistan and Ukraine, focusing on ensuring justice for mass atrocities and empowering victims to have a voice in decision-making forums which affect them directly.

Since 2020, Hodzic has been a founding member of IFIT's Inclusive Narratives Practice Group. Comprised of a select group of leading international experts on the subject, the group explores the creative and realistic options for transforming conflict-driving narratives. Previously, he served as director of communications at the International Center for Transitional Justice and in various capacities at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Hodzic is an award-winning journalist, film-maker and writer, whose published work mainly focuses on explorations of the impact of mass violence on communities, their perceptions of justice and their struggle for remembrance. He is a recipient of the Civic Courage Award from Fontbonne University in St. Louis, and is a member of the IFIT Depolarization Community of Practice.

RENATA CUK

Renata Cuk is the Director of Programmes at Ariadne, a European network of human rights and social change funders. In this role, she guides philanthropic responses to today's urgent challenges, championing values-driven, strategic, and systemic approaches to grantmaking. Her work supports funders in strengthening justice, equity, and human rights across Europe.

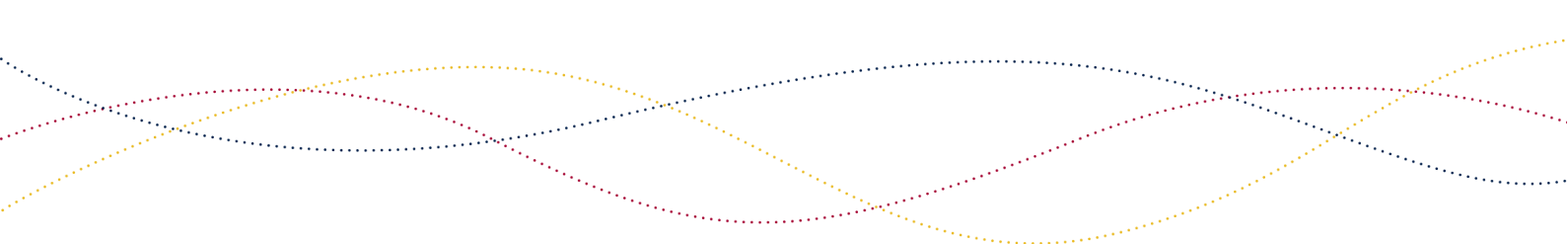
Renata brings over 15 years of experience in the human rights field, shaped by her early activism in Croatia's (and the region's) feminist and reconciliation movements. These formative years grounded her long-term commitment to justice. She has since carried this commitment into regional and international work, focusing on social, gender, racial, and economic justice.

Before joining Ariadne, Renata spent 11 years at the Open Society Foundations, where she worked across a range of issues and shaped OSF's economic justice strategy in Europe. She has also played a leading role in philanthropic collaboratives, including serving on the European Steering Group of the EDGE Funders Alliance.

A Senior Atlantic Fellow for Social and Economic Equity, Renata continues to engage in narrative work—from her activist roots to her current strategic roles—exploring how narratives shape belonging and exclusion. She holds MAs in Sociology and Human Rights and Democracy and is based in London.

RICARDO SANTOS

Ricardo is the Deputy Director-General for Andean Countries at the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He holds a Law degree and joined the Spanish Diplomatic Service in 2002. He has served at the Embassies of Spain in South Africa, Panama, Argentina, Lebanon, the United States, and



Venezuela. Previously, in Madrid, he was Chief of Staff to the Secretary of State for International Cooperation and for Ibero-America.

ROBERT DEDMAN

Robert Dedman is a Partner in the Financial Services & Products team at CMS UK, where he advises banks, insurers, asset managers, and intermediaries on regulatory compliance, governance, and enforcement.

Previously, Dedman was a Partner at King & Spalding and a Senior Director at Navigant, focusing on global investigations and compliance. He also held senior positions at the Bank of England, where he created and led the Regulatory Action Division as its first Chief Counsel and oversaw the PRA's early enforcement outcomes, including landmark cases against RBS and the Co-operative Bank. Earlier in his career, he played a central role at the Financial Services Authority in designing the reforms that established the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and the Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA).

Dedman began his career in competition law at Macfarlanes and held legal roles in the Ministry of Justice and the Court of Appeal. He holds a BSc in Law and French from the University of Surrey and an LLM from King's College London.

SABA ALMUBASLAT

Saba Almubaslat is the Regional Director of Middle East and North Africa at the Ford Foundation. She has more than 25 years of international development and humanitarian response and experience with special focus on youth and women participation and civil society empowerment, particularly in the Global South.

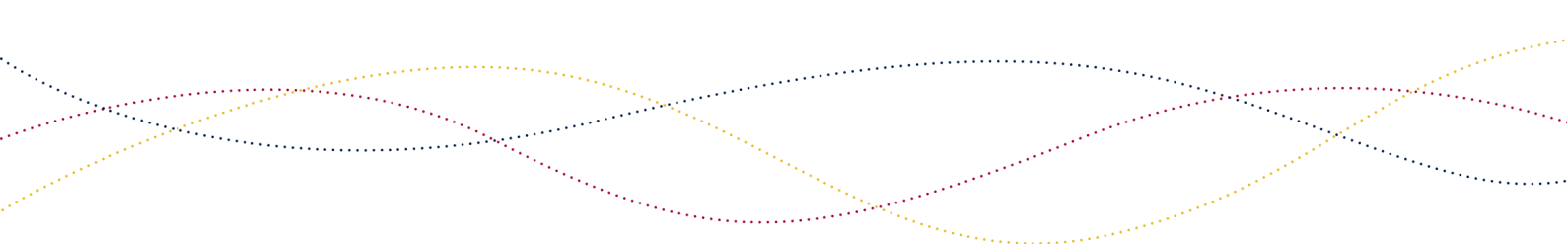
Prior to joining Ford, Saba was Chief Executive Officer of The Asfari Foundation, where she provided grants to ensure civil society organizational resilience and professionalization in the Middle East, as well as creating incubators and accelerators for youth innovation and entrepreneurship in the region.. She previously served as the Chief Executive Officer of the Humanitarian Leadership Academy, a subsidiary of Save the Children UK, where she oversaw the establishment of a network of 6 regional hubs in the Global South, focusing mainly on the designing and documentation of indigenous learning and knowledge at the local level, positioning local partners and connecting them to global decision makers as well as democratizing access to contextualized knowledge. Before that, Saba was with Save the Children International for 15 years, her last position was the Country Director in Jordan, leading the Syria Crisis Response and leading a consortium of INGOs to ensure coordination and responsiveness to affected populations, both from refugees and host communities.

Saba has a Master's Degree in Education from Framingham University, MBA in Executive Leadership, and a bachelor's degree in Engineering from Jordan University.

SARA COBB

Dr. Sara Cobb has a Ph.D. in Communication (UMASS Amherst) and is the Drucie French Cumbie Professor, Emerita, at the Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution at George Mason University. She was also the Director of the Center for the Study of Narrative in Conflict Resolution from 2010 to 2019.

Dr. Cobb has written extensively on narrative dynamics of conflict, providing the theoretical basis for a narrative lens for both conflict analysis and conflict intervention. Formerly Executive Director of



the Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School, she has been a leader in the fields of negotiation and conflict resolution studies.

Currently, her funded research is focused on the analysis of stakeholders' risk narratives in the Arctic, facing challenges from climate change. She is also CEO of Cobb and Associates, a consulting group focused on narrative strategy, for businesses and NGOs, as well as agencies and institutions. Cobb is a member of the IFIT Inclusive Narratives Practice Group.

SELLAH NASIMIYU KING'ORO

Sellah King'oro is an accomplished conflict analyst and specialist in Women, Peace, and Security. She is an Advocate of the High Court of Kenya and currently serves as a postdoctoral fellow at the State University of New York, Binghamton.

With over a decade of experience in peacebuilding and gender policy, King'oro has played a pivotal role in advancing inclusive security frameworks across Africa. She previously served as the Senior Gender Advisor with the British Peace Support Team (Africa), where she led capacity-building initiatives for Troop and Police Contributing Countries, enhancing the deployment of qualified personnel to United Nations and African Union peace support operations. Prior to this, she spent 12 years in Kenya's public service as Head of Research and Policy at the National Cohesion and Integration Commission, spearheading reconciliation efforts among communities in Kenya and beyond, including East, Central, and West Africa.

Her work reflects a deep commitment to gender-responsive peacebuilding, institutional strengthening, and the transformation of societal norms through evidence-based policy, strategic training, and narrative peacebuilding. King'oro's contributions continue to influence regional approaches to cohesion, security sector reform, and the integration of gender perspectives in peace processes. She is a member of the IFIT Inclusive Narratives Practice Group and the IFIT Depolarization Community of Practice.

SERGIO AGUAYO

Sergio Aguayo Quezada is a prominent Mexican academic, journalist, and human rights activist. He earned a BA in International Relations from El Colegio de México, and completed his MA, PhD, and postdoctoral studies at Johns Hopkins University.

Since 1977, Aguayo has served as professor researcher at El Colegio de México's Centro de Estudios Internacionales, where he founded and coordinates the Seminar on Violence and Peace. He has also taught at CIDE, UNAM, UIA, and as a visiting professor at Harvard (beginning 2015), UC Berkeley, University of Chicago, Johns Hopkins, and the New School.

A founding member of La Jornada and the magazine *Este País*, he currently writes a weekly column for *Reforma* and appears on various national and international media. From 1990 to 1996, he was president of the Mexican Academy of Human Rights, and he has also led civil society organisations like *Alianza Cívica*, *Propuesta Cívica*, and *Fundar*.

Aguayo is the author of over 25 books and nearly 1,500 academic and journalistic articles, focusing on democracy, human rights, U.S.–Mexico relations, organised crime, and intelligence services. He is a member of the IFIT Depolarization Community of Practice.



SETH McNEW

Seth McNew is guided by a passion for solving big problems, adventure, and building connections around the world. He has worked at various tech and start up companies, and before that, as a performing acrobat, including with Cirque du Soleil, he traveled the world, learning firsthand about high-intensity international work.

McNew's also worked in anti-money laundering and intelligence, and earned certificates in Mediation from Harvard Law School, International Security Policy from Stanford University, and Mandarin Chinese from Beijing Language and Culture University.

He is dedicated to seeking unconventional opportunities where his unique blend of technical, international, and physical experience can forge the human-to-human connections essential for making an impact in important areas.

SHAMIL IDRIS

Shamil Idriss is CEO of Search for Common Ground (Search), an international non-profit organisation committed to transforming the way the world deals with conflict, away from adversarial approaches toward cooperative solutions. With 500+ staff working in 30 countries, Search is the largest dedicated peacebuilding organisation and was nominated by the Quakers for the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize.

During his tenure at Search for Common Ground, Idriss has presided over the organisation's growth in reach, impact, and influence, including leading merger processes with Soliya and Preemptive Love Coalition and strategic partnerships with global public and private sector entities, including the Office of the UN Undersecretary for Humanitarian Affairs and Meta.

Prior to his current role, Idriss was the CEO of Soliya where he led a public-private sector coalition to establish the field of virtual exchanges. In 2005, he was appointed by then-UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan as Deputy Director of the UN Alliance of Civilizations. He served on the Steering Committee of the World Economic Forum's Council of 100 Leaders and is a member of the World Economic Forum's Young Global Leaders and recipient of the 2015 Open Society Foundation New Executive Award. He serves on the Boards of Giving Tuesday, Ploughshares Fund, and Soliya. He is a member of the IFIT Depolarization Community of Practice.

SHIREEN ZAMAN

Shireen Zaman is a Program Officer on the Building Institutions and Networks (BUILD) team at the Ford Foundation, where she is also the Program Manager for the Global Initiative on Polarization.

Zaman has over two decades of experience in the philanthropic and nonprofit sector. Prior to joining Ford Foundation, she was the director of the RISE Together Fund at Proteus Fund, where she invested in grassroots organizations from Black/African, Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim, and South Asian communities in the US. She also served as executive director of the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding and directed the Middle East and North Africa program at Vital Voices Global Partnership.

Recognized as a White House Champion of Change for her work as an Asian-American woman leader, Zaman holds a BA from Boston College and an MA from American University's School of International Service. She studied Arabic at the American University in Cairo and is currently completing a coaching certification program.



SULEMANA BRAIMAH

Sulemana Braimah is the Executive Director of the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA), West Africa's most influential freedom of expression advocacy and media development non-profit organisation. He is an experienced, visionary and transformational non-profit leader with over 15 years of experience. He is skilled in non-profit management, building talents, policy analysis, strategic planning and innovation, with extensive networks in Africa and globally.

Braimah is a 2019 Global Eisenhower Fellow in recognition of his exceptional leadership; and the 2023 recipient of the coveted Eisenhower Fellowships Impact Award, in recognition of the extraordinary impact of The Fourth Estate non-profit journalism project, which he founded in 2021.

At the regional level, Braimah serves as the Secretary General of the ECOWAS Civil Society Platform on Transparency and Accountability in Governance (ECSOPTAG). He is a member of the IFIT Depolarization Community of Practice.

TESSA DOOMS

Tessa Dooms is the host of Power Breakfast on Powerfm 987 in South Africa, and the Director at the Rivonia Circle, political think-tank. She recently authored a book titled 'Coloured' that explores identity politics in South Africa.

Trained as a Sociologist, development practitioner and political analyst, Dooms is an activist, author and change maker committed to the remaking of the future of South Africa. She started her career in academia and has worked in diverse sectors including government, NGOs and the private sector, where she did work that aligns the objectives of various institutions and programmes with developmental objectives for the advancement of Africa. She has 15 years' experience as a development worker, trainer and researcher with expertise on governance, youth development and innovation, and has worked in over 10 African countries. In 2015 she was appointed to the National Planning Commission to advise the President on the implementation of the National Development Plan of South Africa.

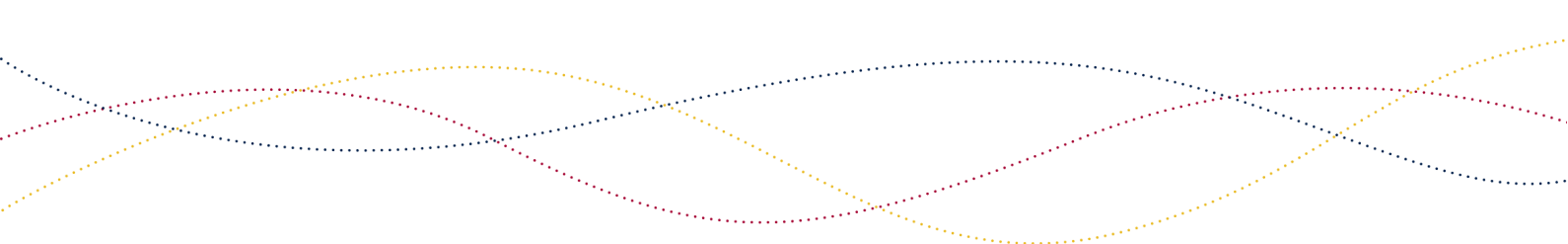
Dooms is a Trustee of the Kagiso Trust and holds a Masters of Arts from the University of the Witwatersrand. She is a member of the IFIT Depolarization Community of Practice.

TETIANA KYSELOVA

Tetiana Kyselova is an Associate Professor at the International Relations department, National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, and Director of the Mediation and Dialogue Research Centre. Since June 2025, Dr. Kyselova has been a Marie Curie Fellow at the Institute for Conflict Management, Viadrina University.

She holds a DPhil from the University of Oxford and a PhD from the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. She has been a visiting fellow at the Universities of London, Uppsala, Giessen, Torino and Basel. Dr. Kyselova was certified as a mediator by the Search for Common Ground and as a business mediator by the IHK Academy for Munich and Upper Bavaria.

Dr. Kyselova has been working with civil society and the professional community of mediators in Ukraine since the 1990s, advising them on strategies of peacebuilding, professional regulation, training, and methodologies of mediation and dialogue. She has co-authored a Ukrainian law on mediation, served as an advisor to the Ukrainian government and various international



organisations. Her research interests include conflict transformation, peacebuilding, mediation, negotiation and dialogue. She is a member of the IFIT Depolarization Community of Practice.

THERESA PETERSON

Tess Peterson is the VP of Thought Leadership Research at the Edelman Trust Barometer. She is responsible for writing the Trust Barometer questionnaires, directing data analysis, and developing insights. In her three years at the Edelman Trust Institute, she has led the development of studies on racial justice, trust in brands, employees, health, and the annual Trust Barometer.

THIERRY CRUVELLIER

Thierry Cruvellier is the Editor-in-Chief of Justice Info, the leading news website on international justice created in 2015 by Fondation Hirondelle.

For about thirty years, he has reported on trials for crimes against humanity and genocide, from Rwanda to Sierra Leone, from the former Yugoslavia to Cambodia and Colombia. He has been an Op-ed contributor to The New York Times, a 2003 recipient of the prestigious Nieman Foundation Fellowship for Journalism at Harvard University.

He has taught at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (USA), and is the author of three books: Court of Remorse (Le Tribunal des vaincus, Calmann-Lévy, 2006) on Rwanda's genocide trials; The Master of Confessions (Le Maître des aveux, Gallimard, 2011) on the Khmer Rouge trials in Cambodia; and Promised Land (Terre promise, Gallimard, 2018), a tale on the extraordinary resilience of the Sierra Leonean people over the past forty years. He is a member of the IFIT Depolarization Community of Practice.

THOMAS B. EDSALL

Thomas B. Edsall writes for The New York Times. His column on strategic and demographic trends in American politics appears every Tuesday and he has been a weekly contributor to the Opinion section of The New York Times since 2011.

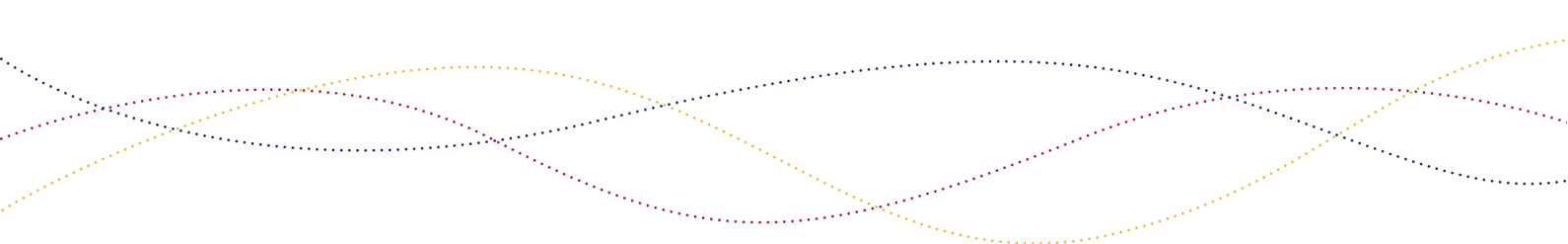
Edsall covered politics for The Washington Post from 1981 to 2006 and, before that, for The Baltimore Sun and The Providence Journal. In addition, he was the political editor of the Huffington Post from 2007 to 2009, and a correspondent for the National Journal from 2006 to 2007.

Edsall has written five books: “The Age of Austerity,” “Building Red America,” “Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights, and Taxes on American Politics,” “Power and Money: Writing About Politics” and “The New Politics of Inequality.”

Edsall lives in Washington, D.C. He holds the Joseph Pulitzer II and Edith Pulitzer Moore Professorship in Public Affairs at The George Washington University’s School of Media & Public Affairs. He is a member of the IFIT Depolarization Community of Practice.

TIMOR SHARAN

Dr. Timor Sharan is the co-Founder and Programme Director of the HAMRAH Initiative that supports Afghan civil society organisations in exile. Originally from Afghanistan, Dr. Sharan has lived in exile since the fall of the Afghan Republic in 2021. He has over 15 years of experience in international development, with background in programme management, policy analysis, joint advocacy, and applied research.



In 2020, he founded the Afghanistan Policy Lab—the country’s first policy hub dedicated to experimental research, policy modelling, and behavioural insights. From 2017 to 2019, he served as Deputy Director-General for Policy and Programmes at the Independent Directorate of Governance under the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Dr. Sharan is currently a Senior Associate Fellow at the Overseas Development Institute and a Senior Policy Analyst at the Centre on Armed Groups. His previous roles include Visiting Fellow at the Global Security Programme at the University of Oxford, Senior Analyst for Afghanistan at the International Crisis Group, and Adjunct Professor at the American University of Afghanistan.

He holds a PhD in Politics from the University of Exeter and an MPhil in Development Studies from the University of Cambridge. He is the author of “Inside Afghanistan: Political Networks, Informal Order, and State Disruption.” Dr. Sharan is a member of the IFIT Depolarization Community of Practice.