Vision for the Future

Capturing Inspiring Stories from Leaders and Changemakers

An Initiative of the Global Partnerships Forum
In collaboration with Long Island University
and Geneva Global LLC



GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS FORUM

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Introduction

Mr. Amir Dossal

President and CEO, Global Partnerships Forum (Curator)



Introduction by Amir Dossal

Welcome to the *Vision for the Future!*

In a world increasingly defined by divisions—social, economic, and humanitarian—the gap between the haves and the have-nots has become ever more stark. As communities face a range of complex challenges, the need for innovative solutions and collective action has never been more urgent. Yet, even amidst these trials, there are remarkable individuals who are not just responding to these challenges but are actively reshaping the world for the better. **This book is a tribute to their efforts.**

The Global Agenda

The Summit of the Future at the United Nations aims to strengthen the multilateral system and bring together governments and people to chart a new course through the Pact for the Future, a blueprint for this cooperation.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (the SDGs) continues to be a challenge. We are woefully behind on achieving the SDGs, and it is clear no single government or group can do it alone. We need the power of partnerships and innovative collaboration, to ensure our focus is to **empower the underprivileged** and address the imbalances in our society.

Leadership Stories

In this collection of narratives, we bring together the voices of extraordinary changemakers, each working tirelessly to create positive impact in their communities and beyond. These leaders come from diverse backgrounds—representing a spectrum of industries, causes, and regions—but they are united by their unwavering commitment to making the world a better place. **This anthology is a celebration of their vision and impact.** Their stories offer valuable insights, lessons learned, and, most importantly, the inspiration needed for others to follow suit. We know there are countless – millions – of others who are equally deserving of recognition. We hope by leveraging the power of new technologies, we will be able to shine a light on many more across the globe.

The contributors featured in this anthology are not only visionaries but also action-takers, demonstrating through their work that change is not only possible but within reach. They have identified challenges that may seem insurmountable to many, but through ingenuity, persistence, and collaboration, they have made meaningful strides toward a more just, inclusive, and sustainable future. Their initiatives serve as powerful examples of what can be achieved when we come together with purpose and determination. We have kept it deliberately short so that you can enjoy the personal stories and hopefully keep coming back to them for additional inspiration.

Call to Action

In a time when hope can often feel elusive, this collection offers a powerful reminder: **the world is full of possibility, and change is happening every day, led by individuals who refuse to accept the status quo.** Through these stories, we hope to not only shine a light on the extraordinary efforts of our contributors but also to extend an invitation to our readers—**an invitation to learn, to be inspired, and to act.** The common theme across all these contributions is partnerships and collaboration to amplify impact.

While the changemakers featured in this book are exceptional, their ideas and actions are replicable. Our hope is that the lessons shared within these pages will inspire others to take up the mantle of leadership in their own communities, to develop and implement solutions tailored to their unique contexts. Whether you are an established leader, an emerging changemaker, or someone simply looking for ways to make a difference, we believe these stories will resonate and encourage you to take action.

Our Deepest Gratitude to our Contributors

This book would not have been possible without the passion, commitment, and generosity of our contributors. Their insights provide a broader view of the systemic changes

needed at all levels, reinforcing the notion that collaboration and shared vision are key to addressing the most pressing issues of our time. We extend our deepest gratitude to each of them for sharing their journeys, their wisdom, and their hopes for the future.

Heartfelt Appreciation to The Team

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the incredibly dedicated team that worked tirelessly to bring this book to life, transforming an initial idea into a powerful reality. This journey began with a casual conversation with our dear friend and esteemed colleague, **Maryalice (Ali) Mazzara.** From that moment, Ali didn't just offer assistance—she took complete charge and brought in **Gregory Barton**, Dean of the Honors College at LIU. Together, they built a passionate and highly skilled team, and co-led this project with vision and commitment, ensuring that every detail was thoughtfully executed. Their unwavering leadership ensured that every aspect of the project was executed with precision and excellence, setting a high bar for the entire team.

We are thrilled to have **Matthew Barton** as our Creative Director, who breathed life into the book with his keen eye for creative design and presentation, amplifying the personal stories in an elegant manner. I am also very grateful to **Zecki Dossal**, our Content Director, who was instrumental in shaping the curation process, ensuring each narrative aligned with our mission.

Together, the "Fab 4" have been the real driving force behind this collection. Their diligence and commitment have made this collection a reality, and for that, I am incredibly, incredibly grateful.

We are truly appreciative of **Sherah Powers, Amanda Seekamp, and Nadia Dossal** for their unwavering patience and steadfast support throughout the entire process—my heartfelt thanks to each of them for their invaluable contributions.

This project would not have been possible without the wisdom and guidance of our Advisor, **Howard W. Buffett**. From the very beginning, his insights on positioning, format, and style helped shape the vision of this anthology, and his thoughtful suggestions provided the framework for its success.

On the next page you will get a glimpse of our Executive Team.

We are also very grateful for the wonderful help and support of the **Research Team.** They took on the task of reviewing the submissions with gusto and ensured consistency in

quality and layout. They are listed right after the contributions, and we wish them continued success as they chart their careers forward.

A special thanks to **Julia Gorlovetskaya** for her expert guidance in digital outreach, ensuring our message reaches far and wide.

Our sincere thanks to **Abhishek Sharma** for his invaluable guidance and expertise in refining the page reading feature, greatly enriching the overall readability experience.

My unwavering source of inspiration – and my greatest cheerleader – is my incredible wife and best friend, **Tas Dossal**. I owe her an immense debt of gratitude. Her guidance and wisdom – and those well-timed nudges – continually push me to be better, to stay focused, and to always strive to do the right thing. None of what I have achieved would be possible without her relentless support and belief in me.

As you journey through these stories, we hope you will be inspired, moved, and motivated to take part in creating the world we all aspire to live in. Together, we can replicate and scale the efforts of these changemakers, creating ripples of impact that will be felt across the globe.

This is our invitation to you: please join us in reshaping our world for the better.

Thank you,
Amir Dossal

Amir Dossal is the President & CEO of the Global Partnerships Forum. He is a 25-year veteran of the United Nations.

Mr. Amir Dossal: LinkedIn | Facebook | X
Global Partnerships Forum: LinkedIn | Facebook | X

Executive Team at a Glance

Dr. Gregory W. Barton

Dean of the Honors College and Global College, Long Island University (Project Director)





Dr. Ali Mazzara

President, Geneva Group LLC (Project Director)

Mr. Matthew Barton

Creative Director, GALE
(Creative Director)





Mr. Howard W. Buffett

Professor, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University
(Advisor)

Mr. Zecki Dossal

Senior Director, Henry Schein
(Content Director)



Foreword

Mr. Howard W. Buffett

Professor, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University (Advisor)



"Let these stories serve as a call to action..."

The Power of Cross-Sector Partnerships in Building a Better Future

The stories presented in Vision for the Future offer a powerful illustration of what can be accomplished when dedicated leaders and changemakers work collaboratively to solve complex challenges. These leaders are operating in a rapidly changing world, where such challenges—extreme climate, inequality, social justice, and more—are too complex for any one individual, organization, or sector to solve alone. These stories illustrate just how important it is for governments, businesses, philanthropies, and communities to work together in partnership to chart a path forward. Cross-sector partnerships are and will continue to be essential for creating the lasting, scalable solutions we need to address these pressing global issues.

Throughout *Vision for the Future*, you will read inspiring examples of collaboration in action. These narratives highlight how remarkable leaders are leveraging the comparative strengths of government, private enterprise, philanthropy, and civil society to produce outcomes that could not be achieved in isolation. Whether it's improving access to education, developing sustainable agriculture, or fostering innovation in global health, these partnerships reveal a powerful truth: we can achieve more together than we ever could apart.

Partnerships, by their nature, help bridge gaps that no single organization or community can address independently. They allow us to combine diverse resources, expertise, and perspectives to tackle problems at their root and at scale. When governments work alongside private sector innovators, when nonprofits collaborate with corporations, and when communities are able to shape their own futures, the results can be transformative.

This spirit of partnership defines the remarkable efforts featured in this collection. From global leaders to grassroots innovators, the individuals represented within are reshaping the world through their collaborative leadership. Their stories remind us that the solutions to our most difficult challenges require us to move beyond traditional organizational limitations, to act across boundaries, and to commit to working together.

I have spent much of my career studying and advocating for cross-sector partnerships because I believe deeply in their potential to drive meaningful and lasting change. In fact, my research at Columbia University has shown that successful partnerships are often built on long-term commitments that help unlock hidden value for those who are involved. These collaborations not only magnify impact but also build the foundation for sustainable progress.

The leaders featured in *Vision for the Future* are proof that, with the right partnerships, even the most complex problems can be addressed—and solved. Their stories demonstrate how collaborative approaches can yield powerful results. As we face increasingly interconnected challenges, the ability to form and sustain such partnerships will be critical.

As you read this compilation, I hope you are as inspired as I have been by the power of partnerships to unlock potential and create value for society. Let these stories serve as a call to action—an invitation to each of us to seek out partnerships in our own work, to learn from the examples set by these changemakers, and to recognize that the future we aspire to build will require the contributions of us all.

Howard W. Buffett
Professor, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University
Advisor, *Vision for the Future*

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Lighting a Path For the Future

Ms. Kerry Kennedy

President, Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights



"And this courage will be what provides the visionary leadership to continue and strengthen the championing of human rights."

Kerry Kennedy's Vision for Human Rights for the Future

Historic/Current

At Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights, since 1968, we have worked to protect civic space and safeguard individuals' rights to participate in their governments. Partnering with human rights defenders and grassroots organizations across Latin America, Asia, and Africa, our attorneys take on cases that advance free speech, peaceful protest, and fair elections.

RFK Human Rights prioritizes a collaborative, strategic approach – holding governments accountable while simultaneously working with partners on the ground to create long-term, structural change. This approach has resulted in significant victories before international human rights mechanisms, creating legal precedents that foster and enable civic space.

I would like to highlight some recent and important victories in our work in Africa. This year, after 8 years of litigation before Africa's premier human rights mechanism, we just won a landmark case in Ethiopia involving the right to vote. The decision set new

standards for the assessment of elections, determining that governments must ensure the free flow of information and public debate in order to truly facilitate free, fair, and credible elections. RFK Human Rights also won a pivotal case regarding the violent crackdown on protests in Zimbabwe. In their decision, the African Commission held that peaceful protest is a right, not a privilege – one that does not require prior authorization from the State.

While these examples focus on Africa, we have secured similar victories in our work in Latin America and Asia. And be it in Africa, Asia, or Latin America, the reason for these victories for human rights, is because of our commitment to developing and working in partnerships. We don't work on behalf of local organizations; we work with them. Our partners form the foundation of our litigation and advocacy efforts. They know the broader context and have a personal understanding of the human rights ramifications at stake. Our attorneys take cases to court and fight to uphold legal principles, which are a vital component of meaningful progress. But our partners are the ones monitoring the situation on the ground, ensuring that those verdicts translate into actionable change.

Partnerships have been core to our mission and our successes and will continue to be the foundation of all we do. We understand that this approach takes time and often donors or investors want to see quick results. But true, lasting change takes time. It requires ongoing commitment and long-term vision. The timeline of an international court system may not offer instant gratification, but it does lay the groundwork for broad-scale impact.

We have learned to navigate that tension and stay the course, even when we would like to see results more quickly. As we take cases to the courts, and we determine the most effective legal avenues to create precedents that will further our partners' efforts. But the work doesn't end with a verdict. In fact, the most critical phase starts after, with the implementation of the decision, and our partners on the ground are critical to ensure that change actually occurs.

Impact for the Future

RFK Human Rights' experiences – of lessons learned and victories achieved – provides a strong foundation to contribute to the future of supporting human rights not only in our work but in helping other organizations to do the same. Advancing human rights requires replication. We are working to uplift the next generation of human rights defenders, training lawyers in Africa and Latin America to utilize international legal

mechanisms. We're also leveraging our Civic Space Case Tracker to elevate key cases and connect individuals with resources across the globe.

This work is not about how powerful you are. Human rights defenders are defined by their commitment. Our clients and our partners – from the Carvajal family to Women of Zimbabwe Arise – show us every day that real change comes from courage. It comes from a willingness to put your life on the line to achieve justice. As Marian Wright Edelman said "I found at a young age, a cause worth dying for and that has made every day of my life worth living."

So my vision for the future of human rights is continuing the critically important work of RFK Human Rights around the world while also strengthening other human rights organizations through the approaches we have developed. This includes: keeping that commitment front and center; supporting your partners; and never underestimating the value of collective action. As my father, Robert F. Kennedy, said, "Those with the courage to enter the moral conflict will find themselves with companions in every corner of the globe." And this courage will be what provides the visionary leadership to continue and strengthen the championing of human rights which is what is needed as we go forward.

Ms. Kerry Kennedy: LinkedIn

Mr. Stephen Heintz

President and CEO of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund



"This is not just a call for reform; it is a call for revolutionary change in the way we govern our world."

A Logic for the Future: Why We Must Rethink Global Governance in an Age of Turbulence

(A synthesis)

(to read the complete article, please visit this link)

The world is more turbulent now than at any point in recent memory. The crises we face—whether geopolitical, environmental, or social—are increasingly complex, interconnected, and urgent. Yet, our global governance systems, established in the aftermath of World War II, remain rooted in a bygone era. It is becoming ever clearer that we need a profound rethinking of how we approach international relations and collective action if we are to secure a stable, equitable, and sustainable future.

A Changing World: Global Challenges Without Borders

In the post-war era, multilateral institutions like the United Nations and World Bank were built to manage international peace, security, and development. These systems, forged through hard-won compromises between powerful nation-states, were instrumental in building a more cooperative world. But today, the very nature of global challenges has shifted. Problems like climate change, pandemics, and cyber threats are transnational by definition, defying the old models of governance that assume state sovereignty and territorial integrity as primary organizing principles.

The invasion of Ukraine, the unprecedented consequences of climate change, and the rise of populist movements worldwide all demonstrate the limitations of existing institutions. These crises highlight the urgent need for a new global logic—one that places collective responsibility and the **global commons** at the heart of international relations.

A Call for Structural Reform

If we want to navigate today's turbulence, we must go beyond mere reform; we need a fundamental shift in how we think about governance. I propose a new **logic for the future**, one based not on hierarchies of power but on a shared commitment to the collective good—**peace, prosperity, and planetary health.**

This new paradigm must prioritize the planet's ecological limits while ensuring the equitable distribution of resources and opportunities. Central to this vision is the idea of reimagining the primacy of national interests to embrace **global interdependence**. No nation can tackle climate change, inequality, or cyber threats in isolation. Only through genuine collaboration can we hope to find solutions that benefit all of humanity and the planet we rely on.

The Way Forward: Practical Proposals

So, what does this new logic look like in practice? Here are three concrete ideas:

1. **Re-envision U.S.-China Relations:** The two largest economies in the world, the United States and China, must collaborate to manage their shared interests. I propose establishing a permanent **U.S.-China Secretariat** to facilitate cooperation on global challenges, even as the two powers remain economic and ideological competitors.

2. **Invest in Diplomacy for the Future:** We must invest in a new generation of diplomats and leaders who are equipped to navigate an interdependent world. This requires rethinking how we educate and train those responsible for shaping international policies. Universities and think tanks can play a crucial role in preparing future leaders for the complexities of global governance.

3. **Codify the Rights of Nature:** We must embrace a legal framework that recognizes the rights of ecosystems, ensuring that our pursuit of economic growth does not come at the expense of the planet's health. The idea of codifying the **Rights of Nature** could revolutionize how we approach environmental stewardship and ensure that future generations inherit a livable planet.

A Call for Structural Reform

A reimagined global system must include more voices at the table, from local communities to civil society and the private sector. We cannot simply reform existing institutions; we need to create new forms of **multilateralism** that reflect the realities of our interconnected world. This means embracing a **multi-stakeholder** approach to decision-making, where national governments, international organizations, businesses, and non-governmental organizations work together to develop and implement solutions.

The upcoming **UN Summit of the Future**, to be held in September 2024, presents a pivotal opportunity to advance these ideas. The **Pact for the Future**, which aims to address key global challenges, will serve as a blueprint for this new era of governance. It is crucial that leaders use this moment to push for reforms that will enable more inclusive, resilient, and accountable systems.

Why Now?

We stand at a crossroads. The **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, adopted by all 193 UN Member States in 2015, offer a powerful framework for addressing many of the world's greatest challenges. However, progress has been alarmingly slow, with only 15% of the SDGs on track to be achieved by 2030. According to the United Nations, an additional **$4 trillion annually** is needed to meet these goals, particularly in developing countries. UN Secretary-General António Guterres has called for a "**surge in investment**" to empower nations to build better lives for their people.

The stakes are high, but history shows us that transformative change is possible. The post-war period gave birth to a new global order, and today we have the opportunity to do the same. But this time, we must ensure that our solutions are built for a world where borders are no longer barriers, and where the challenges we face require **global cooperation** on an unprecedented scale.

Conclusion

This is not just a call for reform; it is a call for **revolutionary change** in the way we govern our world. The crises we face today require us to abandon old models and embrace new forms of global governance that reflect our shared responsibility for the planet and each other. If we can rise to this challenge, we may yet secure a stable, prosperous, and sustainable future for all.

To read the complete monograph, please visit this link.

From the Lens of Leaders and Changemakers

Ms. Muna AbuSulayman

Impact and Development Leader and Partner, TRANSFORM VC



"When you invest in diverse groups of young leaders to become transformational for their societies, communities and countries, you are investing in a better future in all sectors."

Objective:
A cursory view of the news can tell us that the tension between the Global North and South is increasing. The competition for resources, polarized geopolitical landscape, and Social Media misinformation amplify continuous waves of conflicts.

Transformational Leadership Impact Fellowship enables exceptional young global leaders from Muslim backgrounds, a group of people that have been traditionally ignored, to get comprehensive skill sets and knowledge to operate on the global stage in their respective sectors.

Impact:
The fellowship builds on years of working with youth on leadership across the globe and interfaith initiatives to help our world become more peaceful, prosperous and equitable.

The fellowship combines the learning gleaned from Academia and leadership programs we have sponsored.

We saw the difference in having interfaith centers in Ivy League universities on student populations. When you have continuously funded knowledgeable sources interacting with youth, their world viewpoint changes drastically and becomes more empathetic.

However, most leadership programs for youth from a Muslim background are either totally secular or very religious in nature. They are disconnected from the majority of youth whose lives are neither. There has never been an initiative that combines the best of both East and West and prepares them to deal with the global stage and the issues in their own communities at the same time.

Partnerships:

The partnerships were key, as we attempted to create a 360-degree leadership program that helps the young leaders gain the skills and knowledge they seek, as well as help them understand their own heritage and give them the conflict resolution skills to deal with extremely difficult conflicts that are a part of their daily lives such as patriarchy to speaking to authority from a point of no authority.

Developing these curricula from both an Eastern and Western perspective, as well as a critical analysis of entrenched traditions is the most difficult to create, as nothing exists that is not skewed.

Investments:

There is a saying that the best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago; the second best time is now.

Finding investors, donors, and partners who don't shy away from the difficult journey when it is not a "trendy or sexy topic" and who are willing to experiment in new ways of catalytic change is difficult.

Those who understand the importance of investing now in cohorts of leaders who are able to handle both the Eastern and Western aspects of leadership in a world that is at many times Islamophilic and hostile towards them.

SDG Impact:

When you invest in diverse groups of young leaders to become transformational for their societies, communities and countries, you are investing in a better future in all sectors. However, the fellowship at its core is about reducing inequalities and building peace, justice, and strong institutions.

Success:

There are no limits for a young leader to positively transform themselves, their families, their communities, and their society in a way that benefits all because of their deep understanding of the world. By building a large network of young leaders across the world

who have been enabled to achieve their potential and aided in their understanding of critical issues, history, and traditions within their society, we are building momentum and allowing young leaders to thrive.

The development of the curricula and funding top academic opportunities for these students remains a challenge.

Personal Story:

We must help the world turn into a garden, even the desert.

I am privileged to have participated in several leadership programs and helped in my own journey to impact by the contacts, friends, and mentors I met through them. From the World Economic Forum, to Yale, to Aspen or YPO, I've seen the frameworks of each entity's philosophy be applied to the framework we studied or worked under.

However, the majority of those skill sets and networks that I gained did not translate to the issues and challenges I was facing back East. In the East, the majority of the leadership programs were geared towards getting a job, and not on impact. This was most acute in Muslim-majority countries,

It is long overdue that we help the best of the East get the resources to thrive in whichever garden they are planted in.

Looking Ahead:

Grow, scale, and expand outreach.

This is what every leadership program wishes for. Some components of our program can be replicated. However, the most difficult part to scale is the training of moderators equipped to deal with the complicated emotional issues arising from students tackling sensitive cultural taboos and traditions.

Vision for the Future:

For those coming from privilege, it is difficult to understand how revolutionary it is to enable young leaders from Muslim backgrounds to come fully to the global stage as their full selves in every sector they choose while bringing the skills they acquired to add to peace and prosperity to a world that right now is, in many places, hostile to them.

There are many resources made available for leaders in the Western world, it is time we tried to make this a bit more equitable.

Biography:

Muna AbuSulayman is an award-winning strategic development leader and one of the Arab World's most Iconic media personalities.

AbuSulayman's development work has focused on systems thinking solutions to ensure universal opportunity for all. She is repeatedly voted as one of the 500 Most Influential Muslims in the World and has helped co-found several organizations and companies that deal with Women's Empowerment, Leadership, Employment, Gender, Equity, and Education.

With over 24 years of cross-functional experience in managing strategic organizational initiatives, both in the private and public sectors, she works with some of the world's leading philanthropists and organizations in the Arab world by advising, designing, and implementing innovative programs to solve problematic issues facing the MENA region.

As the former Secretary-General of the Alwaleed Bin Talal Foundation, one of the largest Arab Foundations, she supported innovation and strategic initiatives to combat poverty, empower women, and reframe the Islam-West dialogue.

She is focusing her development efforts on unemployment and entrepreneurship in the Arab world. She is a co-founder of 3S Consulting, ADRI, and a Partner at Transform VC, which aims to help Deep Tech, marginalized entrepreneurs.

Ms. Muna AbuSulayman: LinkedIn | Instagram | X


TRANSFORM
VC
2023 AGM
AI + IMPACT =
TRANSITION
Inclusivity
Economic Empowerment
Power
Disrupt Pharma

Ms. Lola Adedokun

Executive Director, Aspen Global Innovators Group



"Don't let ego get in the way of progress. Humility and curiosity can get you much further faster."

Objective:
I chose to tackle the challenge of amplifying and investing in the leadership and expertise of leaders of color around the globe so that they are seen, heard, respected and supported in scaling their innovative solutions.

My goal is to ensure that financial and other resources are directed to those most proximate to the challenges that they are solving and most trusted by their communities to solve them.

Impact:
Through this work both in my previous leadership role in philanthropy and my current role in advocacy, I have been able to direct over 200 million dollars to local leaders and also connect these leaders to key global partners that have amplified their solutions and invested in their personal and professional leadership journeys. Most importantly, this investment in their leadership has enabled them to expand the reach of their services and inform local and global policies to be more effective and inclusive. As a result, many of the programs I have invested in through my work in philanthropy and advocacy have resulted in true and sustainable improved population and individual health.

Partnerships:
Partnerships have been essential in all of the work that I do. I have required and

benefited from thought partnership. Working with others to co-design initiatives and solutions. I have also had the privilege of partnering with philanthropists and community leaders to ensure that resources are truly being directed to the problems and challenges that local leaders face. Finally, I have had the privilege of partnering with academic institutions so that they are developing training and research programs that center community and local leadership. All of these partnerships have been essential to advancing inclusive, people-centered global health solutions.

Investments:

The key challenges have been: 1) changing mindsets amongst Board leaders and global decision-makers about the need to invest in overlooked populations, 2) unlocking financial resources in a timely manner so that leaders and solutions receiving funding that is responsive to their needs, rather than responsive to global agendas that do not reflect the priorities of those in need.

SDG Impact:

My work has been focused on investing in programs and leaders who are tackling the most challenging issues of our time and are directly leading solutions that fall under most of the SDGs, particularly SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 16, 17.

Success:

Key success factors: increased direct investment in solutions and leaders that address SDGs, measurable reductions in mortality in Africa and the US, direct influence in the design of more inclusive local, and global polices.

Challenges: Developing trusted and sustained partnerships takes time, scarcity mindsets about possibility and resources, bias and racism about what populations are deserving of investment

Takeaway: Changing mindsets about what is possible to change takes time. It requires both the time it takes to build trusted relationships and values alignment around human-centered solutions that are truly holistic and inclusive.

Personal Story:

As a first-generation Nigerian-American, my personal career trajectory was originally directed toward becoming a doctor and working in the Midwest. My upbringing instilled in me a connection to Africa, but I wasn't sure how to achieve that from Wisconsin, where I grew up. Luckily, I have had the privilege of being supported and mentored by incredible women leaders who not only advocated for my leadership and showed me a path in

philanthropy and advocacy but also enabled me to be the leader I hoped to be and serve more people than I ever could have.

Looking Ahead:

Yes, the solutions and work that I do are both scalable and replicable with increased resources and increased amplification of more champions and leaders. Investing in human and social capital is the solution.

Vision for the Future:

- Be authentic in all that you do.

- Don't let ego get in the way of progress. Humility and curiosity can get you much further faster.

- Bring others with you along your path toward success. Paying it forward will only result in lifelong partners in your journey.

- Always find and remind yourself of the joy in your work, both the joy that you receive and the joy you bring to others.

Biography:

Lola Adedokun is the Executive Director of the Aspen Global Innovators Group at the Aspen Institute and co-Chair of the Aspen Institute Forum on Women and Girls. She joined the Aspen Institute in December 2021, where she leads a dynamic team advancing a portfolio of programs that expand opportunities for and access to health and prosperity for people living at the world's margins globally and domestically.

Fostering a collaborative culture and positively reinforcing ecosystem among implementers, policymakers, researchers and local leaders, Lola seeks to nurture and empower local leaders to reduce inequality, strengthen communities and enable individuals and families to lead healthy, vibrant and self-determined lives.

Lola joined the Aspen Institute after 14 years with the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, where she administered almost $200 million in grant-making as both Director of the African Health Initiative and Director of the Child Well-being Program.

Lola currently serves on the boards of Foster America, Community Solutions, the National Employment Law Project, and Integrate Health. She earned dual B.A. degrees with

Honors in Health Policy & Society and Sociology from Dartmouth College and an M.P.H. from Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health.

Ms. Lola Adedokun: LinkedIn



Dr. Ann Aerts

Head,
The Novartis Foundation



"...when you are on a mission and crystal-clear about where you want to land, it will provide you with the drive to navigate through delays and challenges."

Objective:
While ample evidence and tools exist to adequately address cardiovascular disease (CVD), it remains the leading burden of disease globally, causing 20+ million deaths in 2021, many of them prematurely before the age of 60. The Novartis Foundation built the CARDIO4Cities approach that rapidly reduces overall cardiovascular risk in large urban populations. We now aim to replicate it in 30 cities to improve the heart health of 150 million people.

Impact:
CARDIO4Cities was piloted in three cities: Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia; Dakar, Senegal; and São Paulo, Brazil. After agreeing on targets and common goals for heart health, we co-designed population health roadmaps with local authorities, focusing on accelerating detection and adequate management of CV risk factors such as high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, and high cholesterol. With CARDIO4Cities being a data-driven approach, periodic review of progress and outcomes guided decision making, even resulting in redesigning interventions sometimes. Intersectoral collaboration was key and involvement of schools and workplaces, or food and sports sectors e.g., proved essential for the success of CARDIO4Cities. Technology solutions were introduced to address gaps in the population health roadmaps.

Within one year of CARDIO4Cities in São Paulo eg., control rates for blood pressure (the

prime risk factor for heart disease) were tripled and this translated into a reduction of up to 13% of strokes and 12% of heart attacks.

Partnerships:

CARDIO4Cities is a multisector, multidisciplinary partnership, involving authorities, researchers, health system managers and providers, professional associations, and community organizations. CVD is simply too large an issue to be tackled by one player alone - partnering is crucial. Only thanks to the dedication, expertise, and understanding of the local context of all partners could CARDIO4Cities yield the results it did. The ability of local partners to navigate complex situations enabled us to bring the innovations and interventions to the people where and when they needed it. Going forward, strong partnerships are instrumental in replicating and scaling of CARDIO4Cities in other geographies.

Investments:

Our ambition is to develop sustainable population health models, at scale. This can only be achieved through public private partnerships and joint ventures between like-minded partners. While good intentions might intersect, building strategic alignment is not a given, as funds are often earmarked for specific purposes or geographies. Building a coalition of partners who put real "skin in the game", requires alignment behind a single goal, clear roles and accountabilities, while keeping enough flexibility to account for different interests and agendas. The single most important factor for sustainability of CARDIO4Cities is to have local authorities in the driver seat.

SDG Impact:

CARDIO4Cities addresses
- SDG 3 – Good health and wellbeing
- SDG 11 – Sustainable cities and communities
- SDG 17 – Partnerships for the goals

Success:

By codesigning the population health roadmaps with all partners involved, ensuring local ownership from the very beginning drives success for CARDIO4Cities, as such roadmaps are then based on local priorities. Involving end-users in the design also proved essential for success. It assured that interventions simplified the lives of people, patients and providers, instead of complicating. Innovating with simplicity is our motto, as only simple solutions get to scale. This however, requires constant co-creation. As population health aspirations are usually long-term, challenges arise by unforeseen political

changes, medical emergencies, pandemics or disease outbreaks. But issues truly arise when goals and targets weren't clearly defined at the start and created different expectations. Lastly, true impact can only be achieved when health systems leaders are ready to transform their reactive care systems into proactive, predictive and ultimately preventive health systems that keep people healthy. Without that engagement, there will be no impact.

Personal Story:

When I first worked in Africa, it quickly became clear that I could only help so many patients a day, while the hospital got filled with patients that came too late or had conditions for which no therapies were available. People went to traditional healers and if that didn't work, they came to the hospital. I called the local chief who convened a community meeting, which gave me the opportunity to explain early symptoms and clarify that prevention was better than cure. It hit me that if I really wanted to help people, a different approach was needed. Getting a birds-eye-view to explore the situation made me understand that the only way to impact the health of all people who needed it was to take a population health approach and innovate to accelerate access, prevent and offer optimal care as much as possible.

Looking Ahead:

We aim to replicate the proven results of the CARDIO4Cities approach through the CARDIO4Cities Accelerator in 30 cities within 3 years to improve the heart health of 150 million people. We plan to work with several partners globally and inspire local champions to own and implement the approach by themselves.

Vision for the Future:

Absolute clarity about the end goal is essential, be it for things small or large: when you are on a mission and crystal-clear about where you want to land, it will provide you with the drive to navigate through delays and challenges. Secondly, keep it simple and collaborate - none of the projects outlined in this booklet are a small feat. We're looking at undertakings of visionary dimensions that seek to change the world. This, in turn, requires a great deal of simplification and coordination efforts. If you truly want to move the needle on the issue you are addressing, I strongly recommend identifying and forging strong partnerships with people and institutions that share your vision. Only then you'll be able to address the issue at hand in a holistic way, at scale.

Biography:

Ann Aerts is Head of the Novartis Foundation, an organization committed to use data, digital and AI to improve population health and narrow health inequities.

Ann holds a Degree in Medicine and a Masters in Public Health from the University of Leuven, Belgium, and a Degree in Tropical Medicine from the Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp, Belgium.

Passionate about improving population health through data, technology and AI, Ann applies her relentless commitment to pioneering new partnerships, tools and interventions to redesign health systems from being reactive to becoming proactive, predictive and ultimately preventive, so that they become true health systems, keeping people healthy.

Ann has been chairing the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development Working Group on Digital and AI in Health and is a member of the Boards of the Philips Foundation and the Institute of Tropical Medicine in Belgium. Ann served as a member of the US National Academy of Medicine Committees on Improving Quality of Health Care Globally and on Healthy Longevity.

Prior to joining Novartis, she was the Director of the Lung and Tuberculosis Association in Belgium and the Head of Health at the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva.

Dr. Ann Aerts: LinkedIn
The Novartis Foundation: LinkedIn | X



Ms. Deemah AlYahya

Secretary-General, Digital Cooperation Organization



"My advice for those looking to replicate and exponentially grow their initiatives is to prioritize inclusivity and sustainability in every aspect of your digital projects."

Objective:
The biggest challenge we are tackling is the rapid transformation of the digital economy, which risks exacerbating the digital divide. The goal of Digital Cooperation Organization (DCO) is to harness the power of cooperation, harmonize the digital landscape, share best practices and knowledge, and bridge the gap between innovators and users. By doing so, we aim to ensure that the benefits of digital advancements are accessible to all, fostering inclusive growth and development in the digital age.

Impact:
The transformative change brought about through our work lies in the power of cooperation. By bringing the stakeholders of the digital ecosystem together, we have shifted the discussion from an egocentric to a collective approach. The consensus among our Member States is incredible, with the DCO acting as the facilitator and platform. Our most significant change is this shift in mindset, fostering human-centric and diverse approaches.

The DCO has successfully launched several initiatives that have transformed the digital landscapes of our member states. We have facilitated access to digital education and skills training for millions of people, especially women and youth. Our efforts have resulted in improved digital infrastructure and connectivity, enabling businesses and governments to leverage digital technologies for economic growth and service delivery.

By fostering cooperation and a unified mindset, we have made a lasting impact on the digital economy, ensuring inclusive growth and development for all.

Partnerships:

Cooperation is the essence of DCO. We emphasize partnerships among governments, businesses, international organizations, and civil society. Our unique approach ensures benefits for all parties involved by connecting supply with demand. We engage directly with our Member States, leveraging our international standing, including our status as a UN Observer, to promote and advance their interests. Through our initiatives, such as our Digital Space Accelerators and fostering Digital Foreign Direct Investment, the DCO connects the dots and solves challenges, ensuring that all parties are engaged from the beginning. This collaborative approach ensures diversification in ideas and successful outcomes for all involved.

Investments:

Securing investments was challenging due to varying levels of digital maturity and economic stability among member states. Convincing investors of the long-term benefits of investing in digital infrastructure and education proved difficult. To address this, we built strong business cases and showcased successful pilot projects. One significant outcome of our DSA was the development of a PPP framework. This framework not only raises investments but also provides tools for our Member States to bridge gaps. I would emphasize creating public-private partnerships and leveraging innovative financing models, such as blended finance, to attract more investment and reduce risk for investors.

SDG Impact:

Given the importance of partnerships and addressing the digital divide, our initiative primarily supports SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality). However, the broader impact of digital transformation has the potential to revolutionize and accelerate progress across all SDGs, driving comprehensive and inclusive development.

Success:

Key success factors for our initiative included strong leadership, a clear strategic vision, and the ability to forge effective partnerships. The DCO was founded when five countries united with a commitment to shape their future through technology. They developed a focused and specific strategic plan, and this collective intention and dedication were crucial to the initiative's success.

We encountered challenges such as varying levels of digital readiness and resistance to

change in some regions. To address these issues, we implemented targeted capacity-building programs and engaged in continuous dialogue with stakeholders to ensure their support.

The key takeaway is that digital transformation requires a holistic approach with a focus on partnerships. This involves not only developing education and infrastructure but also implementing sound policies and fostering strong collaborations across sectors. By addressing these elements comprehensively, we can drive meaningful and sustainable progress.

Personal Story:

I find inspiration and motivation for my work in the story of a widowed woman from Taif, Saudi Arabia, who had only a high school education and no income, except for a small side business, to support her six children. Despite her challenges, she made perfumes from a unique rose local to her region. Initially, her customer base was limited to her local community, which was not enough to sustain her family. By providing her with an online platform, she was able to reach a global audience. This digital access transformed her business, allowing her to sell her perfume in 90 locations worldwide. Remarkably, she created 60 additional jobs, significantly improving her family's financial situation and contributing to her community.

This story, for me, highlights the transformative power of digital inclusion and motivates me to ensure that everyone has the opportunity for a decent life and meaningful impact through technology.

Looking Ahead:

Our initiatives are scalable and adaptable to different regions. We're exploring expansion opportunities and sharing success stories and best practices to serve as models. Our vision of digital prosperity for all supports global replication. By fostering cooperation, we aim to enable every person, business, and government to thrive digitally.

Vision for the Future:

My advice for those looking to replicate and exponentially grow their initiatives is to prioritize inclusivity and sustainability in every aspect of your digital projects. Engage all stakeholders—policymakers, local communities, and businesses—right from the planning stage and throughout implementation. Building strong, collaborative partnerships is essential, as is being open to innovative solutions and diverse financing models.
The transition from an egocentric mindset to an eco-centric approach by placing people at the center of your initiatives is a pivotal factor. It ensures that your solutions are

relevant and have broad support. The digital landscape is constantly evolving, so it's crucial to remain adaptable and responsive to emerging technologies and shifting needs. Success in digital initiatives comes from a commitment to continuous learning and flexibility. By embracing these principles and staying focused on inclusivity and sustainability, you'll be better positioned to overcome challenges and drive meaningful, scalable growth.

Biography:

Deemah AlYahya is a Saudi digital economy expert and a tech diplomat who serves as the Secretary-General of the Digital Cooperation Organization (DCO).

The DCO is the world's first standalone intergovernmental global organization focusing on accelerating digital transformation and advancing the digital economy while empowering women and youth. As the Secretary-General, AlYahya is an advisor, connecting heads of state, government ministers, and private sector digital economy leaders together. She facilitates multilateral, multistakeholder digital cooperation to bridge the gap, bringing all digital economy key stakeholders to co-design high-impact initiatives to ensure every country, business, and person has a fair opportunity to prosper in an inclusive and sustainable digital economy.

AlYahya is an Edison Alliance champion for digital inclusion, advocating for equitable access to technology for all. As a Commissioner of the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development, she is committed to fostering digital cooperation to ensure universal connectivity and bridge the digital divide. AlYahya additionally serves on several boards, including SNB - Saudi National Bank, SAIP – Saudi Authority for Intellectual Property, SCAI – Saudi Company for Artificial Intelligence, and SAFCSP - The Saudi Federation for Cyber Security, Programming, and Drones.

Ms. Deemah AlYahya: LinkedIn | X



Ms. Tsipi Ben-Haim

Founder, Executive, and Creative Director of CITYarts



"Your profession should combine your passion with the world's needs."

Objective:
When kids create, they don't destroy—they inspire us all! This belief led me to start CITYarts 35 years ago, and it proves true every day. As future leaders, we must bring youth voices to the table. – and What better way to express their ideas than through the universal language of art? Convincing property owners to trust Youth and Artists to create beautiful murals on their walls is always a challenge, and I learned to never give up.

Impact:
With every CITYarts project, we plant the seeds for young, creative, courageous leaders of the future. In 35 years, CITYarts has created over 380 public art murals, transforming communities in need and impacting lives. These projects bring economic and educational development to neighborhoods, fostering pride in young and older participants alike. Thanks to the support of 1,500 sponsors, and 500,000 volunteers, Over 200,000 kids aged 12-20 and about 600 artists have participated in our initiatives.

Following the tragic events of September 11, 2001 in NYC, we designed the CITYarts Young Minds Build Bridges program to create the CITYarts Pieces for Peace project to imagine peace. To date, the artwork that has been created through workshops has united124 countries, and 7 permanent mural peace walls have been produced while instilling significant values in the USA, Pakistan, the UK, Israel, Germany, Spain, and Belgium.

These walls have become gathering places, bringing communities together for meaningful celebrations.

Partnerships:

I see every project as a puzzle. Partnerships form the cornerstone of every project at CITYarts, where each piece contributes to the bigger picture. We value collaboration with schools, government agencies, and private companies, and these relationships are vital to our success. Cultivating personal connections forges long-term supporters who share our vision. School partnerships not only bring students into the creative process, but also enable us to secure crucial financial funding from government and private sector allies. These partnerships enrich and empower our programs and initiatives.

Investments:

We must invest in education as we once invested in oil, for education is a treasure that will never deplete, continuously enriching minds with imagination and innovation. Our students' imagination is a well that will never dry up. Investing in people is the way forward, which is why I'm focusing more on friendraising than fundraising. While most things in life cost money, bartering—like in the old days—can be effective. Engaging more volunteers in the creative process will joyfully increase the number of people invested in your project and save a lot of money.

SDG Impact:

CITYarts aims to address Goals 13 and 16 through the CITYarts Young Minds Build Bridges program and the CITYarts Pieces for Peace project, now in 124 countries. Similarly, the CITYarts Global HeART Warming program asks youth to consider helping slow the speed of climate change, imagining and painting murals for climate justice.

Success:

Seeing is believing. People were amazed by the ideas and beautiful murals created by youth under the guidance of professional artists. They saw how it transformed the neighborhood, community, and environment. Families started returning to the playgrounds with their kids. Graffiti and trash disappeared. Youth who were once seen as destroyers became proud creators, respected by all. A green garden and a bodega opened by the wall, contributing to less crime and a safer atmosphere of trust and joy. We're investing in those who need it most, and it benefits everyone. I'll never forget a 15-year-old girl in Harlem telling me "You think a mural on the wall will stop the crime on the street?" She was later our speaker, smiling all the way through the ribbon cutting ceremony for the I See You mural at the Jackie Robinson housing. Believe in your goals and never give up!

Personal Story:

At four years old, I decided to catch the sun and chased it at sunset until someone stopped me. When I told my father, he said, "Don't let anyone say no to you; if you can dream it, you can achieve it." This motto— imagine it and get it done— has guided my life. I believe everyone has their sun; they just need to find what it is. This, and others, are the stories I share in my TEDx talk "Chasing the Sun."

Albert Einstein said, "Imagination is more important than knowledge." – and we must invest in imagination, which is in abundance in our schools. It's better to invest in education than oil because that well will never run dry. I live with two very creative people: my husband, artist Zigi Ben-Haim, and my son, Yori, who works in films. Creativity is how we start the day.

Looking Ahead:

I started CITYarts 35 years ago to amplify youth voices. Art heals every phenomenon. STEAM education should be taught everywhere. Our programs can be replicated in every community, reaching 193 UN countries with the CITYarts Pieces for Peace project. CITYarts Peace murals can unite communities, fostering young leaders of tomorrow.

Vision for the Future:

Your profession should combine your passion with the world's needs. It becomes your life's mission, something you enjoy while feeling grateful. Believe in what you're doing and never compromise your integrity. Surround yourself with positive voices and kindred spirits to help those in need. Listen to criticism and find ways to improve. Diversity in your team helps a lot. Be courageous and speak up against injustice in the most constructive and humane way. Think with your heart, not just your brain. We live twice: once in reality and once in our imagination. Invest in your imagination; it can lead you to discover and create a better you.

Biography:

Tsipi Ben-Haim is the Founder, Executive, & Creative Director of CITYarts, Inc., a public art non-profit organization in NYC that she started 35 years ago. The organization's mission since 1989 has been to impact the lives of our youth by encouraging them to participate in public art projects that activate their imaginations and empower them to make a difference in the world. Tsipi is largely responsible for the success of over 380 public art projects in public parks, schools, and underserved neighborhoods throughout NYC and beyond. CITYarts raises awareness of social issues through 5 programs that to date have impacted over 100,000 kids, collaborated with more than 500 artists, partnered with over 1,500 sponsors, and engaged over 200,000 volunteers. Tsipi holds a B.A. from

Tel-Aviv University, a Master's degree from New York University, and studied at Columbia University. Tsipi is an accomplished poet, writer, curator, public speaker, and art critic who has organized several exhibitions, including the online SoHo Artists History Walk Exhibition and the international CITYarts Pieces for Peace exhibition, which has traveled to the UN headquarters in NY and Geneva, with its next display in Austria and plans to reach all 193 UN countries.

Ms. Tsipi Ben-Haim: LinkedIn | Facebook | Instagram | X



Mr. Eddie Bergman

Co-Founder and President, Miracle Corners of the World



"It is essential to seek out partners who share your vision and are genuinely passionate about making a difference."

Objective:
Not all young people have access to resources and networks to become positive agents of change in their communities. Young people are the future leaders and my goal was to create an organization (MCW Global) to help youth their ideas into action through social entrepreneurial skills transfer. During this process, we learned the importance of young people working together and building relationships with diverse communities-learning they are stronger and more resilient working together than individually.

Impact:
With leadership being at the core of MCW Global, the organization supports individuals in realizing their potential to be positive agents of change in their communities. Beneficiaries of our programs, who are leaders at various levels, are equipped with the skills, confidence, and mindset to positively contribute to their communities-creating long term impact. More than 1,200 alumni representing 75+ countries have participated in MCW's leadership program and since the launch of the Alumni Ventures Fund in 2009, 40 alumni received over $95,000 in grants to help implement their community-based projects. More than 400 Dental therapists in Tanzania participated in MCW Global's leadership program and have provided oral health services to well over 20,000 community members, providing primary school teachers with the skills to teach their students how to brush their teeth. Since 2009, MCW has provided more than $3 million of in- kind donations to improve facilities at Tanzania's Dental School.

Partnerships:

MCW Global's success, especially in the early years, can be attributed to the diverse formal and informal partnerships that were developed through networking. As a freshman at New York University, I shared my story with my professors and the office for student services. After learning about MCW Global's initiative, I received support from these networks that supported the first in-person leadership program. Some partners served as mentors to the organization and myself, helping with my professional growth while strengthening the organization's programs. Partnering with international organizations specifically in Rwanda, Tanzania, and Zambia, allowed us to reach more communities.

Investments:

Since co-founding MCW Global, I believed in the importance of using readily available resources to implement the organization's vision - allowing for as much of the financial resources to go towards program implementation. Early on, I wanted to do as much as possible with as wide of a reach as possible. This posed to be a challenge because the beneficiary communities were not part of the planning from the start. Today, I am pleased to say that MCW Global involves individuals and communities from the very start with discussions and community needs assessments.

SDG Impact:

MCW Global primarily addresses the following SDGs:
1 - No poverty, 3 - Good health and well-being, 4 - Quality Education, 8 - Decent work and economic growth, and 10 - Reduced Inequalities.

Success:

Adapting quickly and strategically has proven extremely beneficial to MCW Global's success over the years and has helped us to proactively respond to issues and concerns. As MCW Global celebrates its 25th anniversary, a wide range of issues challenged the organization. Understanding that change does not take place overnight was initially challenging, especially when that change is for the positive. It became critical for us to take the time and understand the causes for the delays or resistance in implementing projects. For me, the key takeaways are to understand that change takes time and that patience is key. I also learned to listen to the individuals and communities on the ground, who are essential to any intervention.

Personal Story:

At a young age, my high school mentor, Dr. Peter White, introduced me to the idea of community service through his program, "Students for 60,000." This experience pushed

me out of my comfort zone and into a world where I worked alongside people from diverse backgrounds, all united by the common goal of helping others. It was through these interactions that I discovered new communities and the joy of giving back. This pivotal experience marked the beginning of my lifelong journey in community service.

Looking Ahead:

Definitely - MCW Global's programs can be scaled to reach more leaders and communities. It can also be replicated in communities across the world with passionate individuals who are ready to take simple, actionable steps. Because MCW Global believes anyone can be a leader, replicating the organization's programs requires minimal resources.

Vision for the Future:

It is essential to seek out partners who share your vision and are genuinely passionate about making a difference. Look for those who are not only willing to support and help expand your work but are also adaptable to change. Collaborating with such dedicated individuals ensures the sustainability and continued growth of your vision, even if you are no longer involved. For instance, MCW Global thrives today under the leadership of an amazing and dedicated team who are committed to strengthening and expanding the organization.

Biography:

Eddie Bergman co-founded and serves as President of the Board of MCW Global, an NGO devoted to empowering youth to make positive change in their communities, with a special focus on Africa.

Eddie is President of Innovative Development Services (IDS), a firm focusing on New York City real estate management and development as well as Proxima Hospitality Group, a restaurant management company which owns and manages Hill and Bay (Murray Hill, NYC).

Eddie served as Executive Director of the Africa Travel Association, a position he held for nearly a decade (2006-2015).

Eddie received his Masters from NYU's Gallatin School of Individualized Study with a major in Social Entrepreneurship and his Bachelors in Hotel and Tourism Management from NYU, where he was a Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholar.
Eddie serves on the advisory boards of NYU Africa House, NYU Tisch Center for Hospitality, School of Professional Studies, Gallatin School of Individualized Study, and Ahead

Alliance for Hospitality Equity and Diversity and has served on the boards of the Museum for African Art, the Rubin Museum of Art, the Synergos Institute, and Shared Interest. He has received several humanitarian awards for his work, including the 2009 Ellis Island Medal of Honor.

MCW Global: LinkedIn | Facebook | Instagram | X | YouTube



Mr. Jason Britton

CEO, Reflection Analytics



"Find something you passionately believe in that you truly think will change the world and relentlessly pursue it."

Objective:
Democratize and digitize values-based investing by providing the financial services industry and asset owners an "investor first" software as a service platform. The goal was to deliver a fully digital experience rooted in an easily understood and transparent methodology that allowed for: digital values discovery, investment portfolio auditing and reporting, as well as a best fit recommendation engine designed to remove the friction and increase scalability in the ESG/SRI/Values-based investing field.

Impact:
We have been able to radically shift the way investors and their financial advisors think about values-based investing. By placing the investor's values at the center of the software product, we have been able to bring our analysis and reporting to over $5 Billion in assets reviewed and aligned with their owner's intentions.

Partnerships:
Partnerships were central to our initiative. In addition to two large clients who have requested to remain anonymous, who supported us in the early days as we plowed through use cases and functionality, our primary funder, Good Growth Capital was instrumental in providing not only funding but introductions, technical support and guidance throughout our launch journey.

Investments:

We were fortunate enough to have seasoned founders who, in partnership with a few friends and family investors, as well as the previously mentioned VC firm Good Growth Capital, provide all of our funding needs.

SDG Impact:

Our product at its core, is designed to assess and audit investments across all 17 UN SDGs. We would therefore suggest that we in some way touch each of them.

Success:

Key success factors included:
1. Small but dedicated internal team
2. Outsourced all functions that were not central to product
3. Relentless focus on user/customer and their needs
4. Focus on usability of the product
5. Commitment to transparency
6. Willingness to revisit the process and outcomes constantly throughout development.

Challenges included:
1. Complexity of the product
2. Weaponization of the term ESG
3. Advisor/Big Institution Think roadblocks

Personal Story:

In 2016, I was traveling in my role as head of ESG for Bank of America/Merrill Lynch and I remember waking up one day staring at the ceiling of a luxury hotel room, having just given a presentation the night before to a group of Ultra-High Net-worth investors when I suddenly came to the realization that I had dedicated my life to focusing on investing with purpose and bringing my expertise out into the world and that the people I cared about most weren't able to invest this way because they weren't wealthy. It was then and there that I decided to found Reflection and set off on the journey to make this type of investing available to anyone and everyone that wanted it.

Looking Ahead:

There is literally no limit to how this initiative can be scaled. The product can be used by every investment house, financial advisor, or individual investor in the world. It is unlikely to be able to be replicated in its totality.

Vision for the Future:

Find something you passionately believe in that you truly think will change the world and relentlessly pursue it.

Biography:

Jason Britton wears many hats. He is an adjunct professor of thematic investing at the College of Charleston School of Business, and founder/president/CIO of Reflection Asset Management, a boutique RIA specialized in building bespoke thematic portfolios for high-net-worth clients. He is also founder and CEO of Reflection Analytics, a fintech company specializing in ESG investment evaluation, reporting and advisory services. Jason is a graduate of Georgetown University and the Yale School of Management and is a CSFA Charter Holder.

Reflection Analytics: LinkedIn | Website



Mr. Isaac Castro

Co-Founder & Co-CEO, Emerge



"...there are no shortcuts if your ultimate goal is to help improve our world in some form."

Objective:
Emerge addresses the challenge of human disconnection and loneliness, one of the greatest life hazards of our generation. Almost 200 years after the invention of the telegraph, we are seeing and hearing each other, but we aren't feeling each other. To change that, Emerge is building a multi-sensory communication platform to bridge distance and time—by adding the sense of touch and emotion recognition to holographic communications.

Impact:
Emerge has developed a patented device that emits precise ultrasonic forcefields that enable users to physically feel and interact with one another in a holographic call using their bare hands, without the need for gloves or controllers. A wealth of research has demonstrated that touch is vital for human development, mental and physical health, interpersonal connection, and cognition. Feeling the soothing caress of a loved one and holding hands across the globe is particularly impactful for remote immigrant families, those displaced by conflict, those suffering from loneliness, and long-term patients. Furthermore, physically interacting with 3D digital shared content opens the possibility for more accessible educational experiences. Emerge platform has already reached users worldwide, with a particular focus on those with greater emotional connection deficits and mental health needs, immigrants, and families separated by war. Emerge is projected to impact at least 250,000 more users worldwide in the next two years.

Partnerships:

Partnerships have been instrumental in validating our technology, providing commercial avenues, and furthering our mission. Engaging with consumer electronic companies such as Sony and LG has allowed Emerge to integrate its technology into a vast installed base of smart TVs and other devices, dramatically offsetting scaling costs. Collaborating with Disney will allow Emerge to reach a global audience, integrate our technology into Disney's diverse platforms, and leverage its storytelling prowess. Additionally, organizations like the World Economic Forum provided Emerge with access to world leaders, policymakers, and CEOs, which gave us the opportunity to attract strategic investments and secure key partnerships.

Investments:

Securing investments was challenging due to the novelty of our technology and market immaturity. From our improvised hardware lab in our shared living room, we received over 300 rejections.With one month of rent left, we secured our first investment. Over the years, thousands more rejections followed. Eventually, Emerge secured $40M in funding from prominent investors like the late Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen and former Google CEO Eric Schmidt. In hindsight, we would have partnered earlier in the process to leverage their resources, build stronger narratives around user impact, and showcase tangible benefits sooner.

SDG Impact:

Emerge focuses on the UN SDG #3, 'Good Health and Wellbeing'. Affecting 2 billion people worldwide, social isolation is a priority public health issue per the WHO. The U.S. Surgeon General reports loneliness reduces lifespan akin to smoking 15 cigarettes daily and has a greater impact on mortality than alcoholism, obesity, and air pollution.

Success:

Together with my cofounders Sly and Mauricio, and the Emerge team, we have weathered industry crises, a global supply chain turmoil, and a two-year pandemic as a hardware startup. We were able to transform an idea into frontier technology and then into a product—and key success factors were adaptability, resilience, and a steadfast commitment to our vision. However, building and integrating frontier technology into other frontier technology in an industry still developing is like navigating shifting tectonic plates, with constant goalpost moving and market changes.Scaling such novel tech and hardware without early partnerships proved extremely difficult. In hindsight, we would have focused on building partnerships much earlier in the development process to leverage their resources and expertise and navigate the ever-shifting landscape of frontier technology.

Personal Story:

I've always been separated by an ocean from my friends and parents, and video calls are not enough anymore. My aunt Nines practically raised me alongside my parents. She was like the older sister I never had. Nines was diagnosed with breast cancer while I was working 5,000 miles away in Colombia. The cancer spread to her lungs and bones, and all I could do was travel once or twice a year to see her. One Saturday, my parents called to tell me Nines was in her final hours. I took the first flight from Bogotá to Madrid, a train to her city, and then a taxi to the hospital. When I arrived, all my family was there. Nines saw me and said my name—her last word. I'd have given anything to feel closer to her during her suffering. To offer a soothing caress when she most needed to ease her pain.

Looking Ahead:

AI will help offer a broader range of experiences under the umbrella of communication, well-being, and accessible learning. Emerge is developing an emotional AI platform in the hopes that more partners and organizations can leverage it, so a way to interact in the digital world becomes standard for everyone, everywhere.

Vision for the Future:

Something that I learned through a lot of sacrifice, sometimes frustration, and countless weekends of hard work, is that there are no shortcuts if your ultimate goal is to help improve our world in some form. Yes, lasting impact requires breaking many molds and pursuing the non-obvious—the one thing you probably disagree with most of those around you, and the one thing you care about more than anyone else. Embrace partnerships that align with your values and share a purpose with your organization. Prioritize understanding the real-world impact of your technology on users' lives—there's nothing stronger than staying true to the mission, the one that bursts you out of bed every morning. With time and persistence, this same commitment will attract exceptional team members, supporters, and investors who, with patience above all, will support your mission in its purest form.

Biography:

Isaac Castro is Co-CEO and Co-Founder of Emerge, a technology company building a multi-sensory communication platform, named Technology Pioneer 2022-2024 and included in the Top 10 Emerging Technologies of 2023 by the World Economic Forum.

A former founder in the med-tech, design, and import/export fields, Isaac invented a cancer treatment device for more efficient external radiation therapy, recognized by MIT and Harvard, and as an Innovator Under 35 by MIT Technology Review.

As a Siemens executive, Isaac led medical device engineering as part of a skunkworks group in Germany and led change management for a 300-person team in Latin America.

Isaac actively works on inspiring youth in Colombia. He worked with ex-FARC guerrilla members and the Colombian government on peacebuilding work for which he was invited to speak at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos.

Isaac's work has been endorsed and featured by institutions such as the WEF, MIT, European Parliament, Institut Choiseul for International Politics and Geoeconomics, Fast Company, and in media and publications worldwide.

Isaac holds a master's degree in telecommunications engineering and bioengineering, and he is a graduate of the Google-sponsored Singularity University at NASA Research Park in Silicon Valley.

Mr. Isaac Castro: LinkedIn | Facebook | X



Mr. Binod Chaudhary

President, Chaudhary Group



"...remain grounded in your values, be open to learning, and never underestimate the power of collective action."

Objective:
As a visionary leader from Nepal and Asia, my journey has always been driven by the objective of leveraging business and innovation to uplift our communities and foster sustainable change. From addressing immediate needs following natural disasters to pioneering educational initiatives, my goal has been to build a legacy of resilience, empowerment, and progress. It is my unwavering belief that by investing in our own people and utilizing the unique strengths of Nepal and Asia, we can create a brighter future for all.

Impact:
One of the most impactful initiatives has been through the Chaudhary Foundation, particularly in disaster relief and rehabilitation. Following the devastating 2015 earthquake in Nepal, our team mobilized swiftly to provide emergency aid, rebuild infrastructure, and restore hope. We rebuilt over 3,000 homes and numerous schools, directly benefiting tens of thousands of individuals. Our focus extended beyond immediate relief to include long-term resilience, ensuring communities were better prepared for future challenges.

In education, our foundation has established several schools and scholarship programs that have enabled thousands of underprivileged children to receive quality education. By focusing on both academic and vocational training, we have equipped young minds with the skills and knowledge needed to break the cycle of poverty and contribute positively to society.

Leveraging Private Sector Infrastructure:

The success of our initiatives has been significantly bolstered by leveraging the infrastructure and resources of the private sector. By integrating business acumen with social responsibility, we have been able to implement large-scale projects efficiently and effectively. Our approach includes utilizing the logistical capabilities of our corporate network to distribute aid, deploy educational resources, and support health initiatives across remote regions of Nepal.

Partnerships:

Collaborations with international organizations, government bodies, and local NGOs have been critical. For instance, our partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has facilitated numerous sustainable development projects across Nepal. Engaging with local communities has ensured that our efforts are culturally relevant and deeply impactful.

One notable partnership is with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, focusing on nutrition and stunting through the Baliyo Nepal initiative. This program aims to improve the nutritional status of mothers and children, addressing malnutrition and promoting healthy development. Through this collaboration, we have implemented comprehensive health and nutrition programs, reaching thousands of families and making a significant impact on maternal and child health.

Taking Nepal to the World:

Our ambition of taking Nepal and Asia to the world became a reality when we established Nepal's first multinational company. This venture started with Cinnovation in Singapore, marking our foray beyond Nepal. Today, we have vibrant offices across Asia, including Sri Lanka, Dubai, India, and Singapore. This expansion not only diversified our business but also showcased the potential of Nepal and Asia on the global stage.

Investments:

Attracting investments for social initiatives has its own set of challenges. Aligning investor interests with our vision of long-term sustainable impact often required persistent advocacy and demonstrating measurable results. By creating blended financing models that combine philanthropic grants with impact investments, we have been able to scale our efforts and reach more people in need.

SDG Impact:

Our work directly contributes to several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),

including Quality Education (SDG 4), Clean Water and Sanitation (SDG 6), and Affordable and Clean Energy (SDG 7). Each of our projects is designed with these global goals in mind, ensuring that we are part of a collective effort to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.

Success:

The journey has not been without its challenges. Political instability, economic uncertainty, and natural disasters have tested our resolve. However, the key to our success has been resilience, adaptability, and a relentless focus on our vision. By fostering a culture of innovation and collaboration within our organization, we have turned challenges into opportunities and continued to drive positive change. The key takeaway from our journey is the power of collective action and the importance of staying true to one's values.

Personal Story:

A personal anecdote that continues to inspire me is the founding of Wai Wai noodles. In 1984, I noticed a significant influx of instant noodles at Kathmandu's Tribhuvan International Airport, which sparked an idea. We decided to venture into noodle production, leveraging our existing flour mills to create a new product that could utilize our surplus. Despite initial skepticism about the market demand, Wai Wai became a household name, transforming Nepal's culinary landscape and even surpassing Maggi as the market leader. This journey taught me the importance of innovation, resilience, and the courage to take calculated risks.

Chaudhary Foundation's Role in Social Transformation:

The Chaudhary Foundation has been pivotal in driving social transformation across Nepal and Asia. Our programs span education, health, sanitation, and enterprise development. For example, the Digital Classroom Program aims to bridge the gap between rural and urban education by providing digital resources to community schools. This initiative has reached 24 schools across seven districts, equipping them with laptops, projectors, and other digital tools.

In health and sanitation, our initiatives like Operation Drishti have provided essential healthcare services to underserved populations. Through health camps and partnerships, we have performed thousands of cataract surgeries and provided comprehensive eye care to rural communities.

We have also focused on building capacity in government hospitals by constructing ICU wards and enhancing medical facilities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, our proactive approach ensured that essential resources were available, helping to save lives and man

age the crisis effectively. Our response to disasters like the Nepal earthquake, floods, and the pandemic underscores our commitment to resilience and preparedness.

Promoting Sports and Youth Development:

For the last 25 years, we have been the backbone of developing various sports, such as cricket and football, in Nepal. By investing in sports infrastructure and youth programs, we have nurtured talent and promoted physical fitness. These initiatives have provided young people with opportunities to excel, fostering a sense of community and national pride through sports.

Unnati Cultural Village:

The Unnati Cultural Village is another testament to our commitment to promoting and preserving Nepal's rich cultural heritage. This initiative is dedicated to developing and showcasing the art and crafts of Nepal. By providing artisans with the resources and platforms to hone their skills and market their products, we aim to preserve traditional crafts and support sustainable livelihoods. This cultural hub also serves as an educational center, attracting tourists and fostering cultural exchange.

Skills Development Programs:

The Chaudhary Foundation has launched extensive skills development programs to empower the youth and enhance their employability. By providing vocational training and entrepreneurship development, we are helping individuals build careers and contribute to the economy. These programs focus on sectors like hospitality, agriculture, and technology, ensuring that the workforce is equipped to meet the demands of a changing job market.

Harnessing Technology and AI:

Looking ahead, the role of technology, particularly Artificial Intelligence (AI), will be crucial in driving social change. AI has the potential to revolutionize various sectors, including healthcare and education, by making services more accessible and efficient. For instance, AI can help in early diagnosis of diseases, personalized learning experiences, and optimizing resource distribution. Embracing these technologies will be key to scaling our impact and reaching more people effectively.

Climate Change and Renewable Energy:

Climate change poses a significant threat to Nepal, with its fragile ecosystems and mountainous terrain. Addressing this challenge requires a comprehensive approach. Nepal's rich biodiversity and natural resources offer unique opportunities for develop

ing renewable energy solutions. Hydropower, solar energy, and wind energy are sectors where Nepal can lead by example, reducing reliance on fossil fuels and promoting sustainable development. Investing in these areas will not only mitigate the impacts of climate change but also create green jobs and drive economic growth.

Human Capital and Biodiversity:

Nepal's greatest strength lies in its human capital. The resilience, creativity, and dedication of our people are the driving forces behind our progress. By nurturing this potential through education and skill development, we can build a robust workforce capable of tackling future challenges. Additionally, Nepal's rich biodiversity is an invaluable asset. Protecting our natural heritage while promoting eco-tourism and sustainable agricultural practices can create a harmonious balance between development and conservation.

Role in Politics:

In addition to my business and philanthropic efforts, I have always been passionate about contributing to the growth of Nepal's economy through political engagement. Winning elections and taking on leadership roles has allowed me to directly influence policy and drive economic reforms. My vision to lead the country is grounded in the principles of sustainable development, economic empowerment, and social equity. By integrating my experience in the private sector with my political aspirations, I aim to create a conducive environment for business growth, attract foreign investments, and enhance the overall quality of life for all Nepalese.

Vision for the Future:

My vision for the future is one where technology and innovation are harnessed to drive social change. Artificial Intelligence, for example, has the potential to revolutionize healthcare and education, making them accessible to all. Creating an ecosystem of collaboration among governments, businesses, and civil society will be crucial in addressing global challenges. To future leaders, my advice is simple: remain grounded in your values, be open to learning, and never underestimate the power of collective action.

In conclusion, the journey of creating a sustainable and equitable future is long and demanding, but it is also incredibly rewarding. By sharing our stories and lessons, we can inspire a new generation of leaders to take bold actions and create a lasting impact on our world.



Dr. Tariq Cheema

Convener, Global Donors Forum



"Philanthropy is a problem-solving mechanism that drives toward creating solutions for sustainable change and investing in the future."

Objective:
Before the UN Millennium Declaration adopted in 2005, Muslim philanthropy remained largely unknown and undervalued. At that time, an estimated 1.6 billion Muslims, making up 23% of the world's population, contributed substantially to the world economy. This lack of recognition was remarkable given that Muslims donated close to a trillion dollars annually to humanitarian causes. This oversight represented a significant missed opportunity to integrate the enormous potential of Muslim giving with global development agendas.

Impact:
No network of Muslim donors or charities existed anywhere, even after the MDGs were globally adopted and pursued. The idea of establishing a forum for Muslim philanthropy I envisioned in 2005 finally came to reality with launching the World Congress of Muslim Philanthropists (WCMP) in 2008. The platform was established to advance strategic giving by leveraging the more effective use of knowledge, wealth, and influence among Muslim philanthropists and aimed to build a culture of enduring engagement where Muslim donors collaborate and emerge as a significant and vital component of the global philanthropic community. Today, the biennial convening of WCMP, known as Global Donors Forum, stands as the premier platform for Muslim Philanthropy worldwide and serves as a dynamic marketplace for innovative ideas, a hub for knowledge-sharing, and

a launching pad for high-impact collaborative initiatives. Numerous philanthropic partnerships and ventures have emerged from this platform over the past 15 years.

Partnerships:

One of the platform's most remarkable partnerships was with the United Nations Office for Partnerships (UNOP), which catalyzed mainstreaming of Muslim giving. Several joint events were organized at the UN Headquarters to highlight pressing issues and forge partnerships focused on poverty reduction, disease prevention, and women empowerment.

Investments:

Transferring Muslim donations globally involves several challenges, including navigating complex regulatory and legal barriers, such as compliance with anti-money laundering (AML) and counter-terrorism financing (CTF) regulations that vary by country. Political instability and cultural sensitivities further complicate the transfer and distribution of funds, especially in regions with inadequate infrastructure or technological access. Security concerns, such as the risk of fraud or misappropriation of funds, and logistical issues in conflict zones pose significant hurdles. Overcoming these challenges requires a collaborative effort to streamline processes, enhance transparency, and build trust among all stakeholders involved in global Muslim philanthropy.

SDG Impact:

WCMP long advocated for strategic investments in food security, education, health, displacement, and mitigating conflicts and future disasters. By channeling Zakat funds towards these critical areas, the WCMP helped to foster sustainable development and resilience within vulnerable communities, aligning with the broader goals of global development initiatives like the SDGs.

Success:

A landmark convening titled "Linking Muslim Giving to the MDGs," emphasizing the significance of Zakat in furthering global development, was co-hosted by WCMP, UNOP, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in November 2012 at the UN Headquarters.

The Zakat forum was held during a period when faith-based giving faced challenges due to prejudice, suspicion, and negative publicity, limiting its potential to fund programs addressing poverty, illiteracy, environmental degradation, and disease. The effort promoted the concept of connecting Zakat with human development at the global level. In the

words of Amir Dossal, the then head of UNOP, the partnership with WCMP transformed traditional giving into strategic giving to achieve long-term development objectives. Today, numerous development actors, including the leading UN agencies, collect hundreds of millions of dollars worth of Zakat funds and support critical projects, perhaps without much knowledge of the foundational work of WCMP-UNOP integrating Zakat and global development.

Personal Story:

I always saw giving in my family and community as an essential part of life, deeply linked to a love of fellow human beings. The influence of my parents and family and my early life experiences was critical. I recall accompanying my father, a practicing physician, on his daily volunteer visits to the Afghan refugee camps surrounding our city. Millions of Afghan citizens sought refuge in Pakistan after the Russian invasion in 1979. This early exposure to humanitarian work was a powerful formative experience that shaped my life's mission.

Looking Ahead:

Philanthropy is a problem-solving mechanism that drives toward creating solutions for sustainable change and investing in the future. Hence, there is an opportunity to make sure that its efforts going forward are complementary and mutually reinforcing. Future growth will hugely depend on creating social enterprises and impact investing opportunities.

Vision for the Future:

At a time of change and uncertainty, philanthropy is challenged to help facilitate dialogue among all sectors of society and provide the resources for implementing creative solutions to problems. The successful melding of new models of giving with practices embedded in Islamic tradition has the potential to reap the rewards for society on a global scale. Since Muslim philanthropy is predominantly faith-inspired, resolving long-standing religious tensions and geopolitical conflicts through dialogue and diplomacy must be among the top priorities of Muslim philanthropists to achieve sustained peace and prosperity across the Muslim world and its neighboring lands.

Biography:

Tariq H. Cheema is a renowned philanthropist and social innovator, best known for founding the World Congress of Muslim Philanthropists and the Global Donors Forum. Opting to leave behind a promising surgical career in 1997 to tackle global disparities, he has since distinguished himself as a leading senior executive in the nonprofit sector

and corporate philanthropy. Dr. Cheema has spearheaded numerous impactful social initiatives, adeptly managed substantial grant portfolios, and forged close collaborations with esteemed leaders and funders to devise strategic philanthropy and impact investing frameworks. Embodying a visionary approach to promoting equitable economic empowerment and social progress, he seamlessly integrates the forces of philanthropy, business acumen, and political influence. His groundbreaking efforts to modernize and institutionalize Muslim philanthropy globally have earned him international acclaim. Dr. Cheema ranks among the top 500 Most Influential Muslims shaping our world today.

Dr. Tariq Cheema: LinkedIn | Facebook | Instagram | X



Ms. Calandra Cruickshank

President and CEO, StateBook International



"Real growth evolves from consistently meeting genuine needs and building authentic relationships."

Objective:
We live in a world facing unprecedented challenges, compounded by multidimensional interdependencies that increase social and economic instability, often hitting already disadvantaged communities hardest. Data provides the foundation for innovation. Harnessing the power of technology, my company, Statebook, simplifies complex data to deliver actionable insights that uncover trends, measure outcomes, and inform evidence-based strategies to optimize resources and foster collaboration across disciplines, ultimately paving the way for a brighter, more sustainable, equitable, and prosperous future.

Impact:
We cannot change what we cannot measure. My mission is to support regional transformation by democratizing data, converting otherwise siloed, complex public and private data into actionable insights that revolutionize the ability of communities large and small to better understand how economic, environmental, and societal factors intersect. StateBook helps illuminate the multidimensional nature of communities across demographics, health, housing, race, poverty, education, industry, infrastructure, and environmental risk, empowering communities to identify and address disparities and develop more sustainable, holistic, place-based strategies that promote equality, improve quality of life, and foster sustainable development.

Similarly, businesses achieve real, long-term success using data to select and invest in locations for the right reasons, not simply driven by attractive incentives, thus delivering permanently expanded career options for workers and a reliable tax base. NGOs identify needs and develop public-private partnerships to address them. Collectively, communities that have access to consistent, shared, always-updated data thrive.

Partnerships:

StateBook partners with universities, nonprofits, corporations, start-ups, and governments to share expertise, accelerate innovation, and reach diverse audiences with efficient solutions that couldn't otherwise be achieved. As a SelectUSA partner, we help inform sustainable location decisions for companies bringing FDI to the U.S. As an MIT data partner, our data helps inform city planning solutions.

With guidance from Blue Cross Blue Shield Louisiana, we developed a comprehensive health needs assessment platform examining social determinants of health. With the International Sustainable Resilience Center, we developed the Economic Resilience ScorecardTM to expand access to communities, improving resilience against natural and man-made disasters.

Investments:

StateBook faced the institutional inertia and resistance to change that many disruptive ideas encounter. Forging a new path is scary. Investors don't always understand the value or importance of disruptive technologies. Most people don't realize the intense processing required to normalize disparate data: synchronizing definitions across place and time, methodology evolution, wrangling dirty data requiring constant error resolution. In retrospect, I would raise more capital at the outset and hire ample tech and sales teams to complement my exceptional founding team, who have had to power through many lean times. This would have enabled us to accelerate scalability more quickly.

SDG Impact:

Statebook directly addresses UN SDG 8 by providing actionable insights on economic trends and labor markets, enabling businesses and policymakers to create jobs, promote sustainable economic growth, and ensure decent work for all to develop more inclusive, resilient economies. StateBook data can also be used to support all other SDGs.

Success:

Our success stems from developing strong relationships with our customers, listening to their needs, and deploying agile development to evolve our solutions over time to

empower them to meet their dynamic goals. StateBook's agility is exciting. After overcoming the initial challenges of building our technology, StateBook's true power emerged: providing access to all types of data and continuously adding more to illuminate solutions that address the toughest challenges facing mankind. Our potential is boundless but requires hard work and willingness to adapt. For example, expanding into health and climate risk required StateBook to rapidly develop unique solutions flexible enough to evolve to meet unique regional requirements and dynamic markets. We've faced setbacks requiring grit and determination, but the key takeaway for our team was to persevere by believing in each other, our technology, and to stand by our vision to democratize data and work for social good alongside profit.

Personal Story:

Growing up in New York's Catskill Mountains, I understood how rural communities often struggle to grow, despite their inherent charm. As a teenager, I learned firsthand how devastating it can be to entire communities when a single major employer leaves a region. These perspectives helped inspire me to pursue an education and career in journalism and economics. When I returned to the Catskills, I helped develop a unique model of community journalism focused on sustainable growth. StateBook was born out of the realization that there was no comprehensive repository of government data, and that companies and government agencies alike struggled to obtain and make sense of data. Eventually, in responding to upheavals induced by Covid and increasing natural disasters, we came to realize that our data was even more broadly applicable than we had imagined. Data has the power to inform strategies and change the world in significant ways.

Looking Ahead:

Statebook continues to add data to meet new and dynamic challenges. Our solutions can also be scaled to other countries, further facilitating global cooperation to improve quality of life and equitably share resources. Integrating AI like LLMs may also help achieve our goal of making data more accessible to everyone.

Vision for the Future:

Success requires a clear vision, adaptability, and resilience. Focus on deeply understanding your market and be ready to pivot when necessary. Invest in a strong team and foster a culture of continuous learning and innovation. Practice servant-leadership. Always do the right thing, not just what is expedient. Consider the best interests of your stakeholders, stockholders, employees, and community and prioritize meaningful solutions. Real growth evolves from consistently meeting genuine needs and building authentic

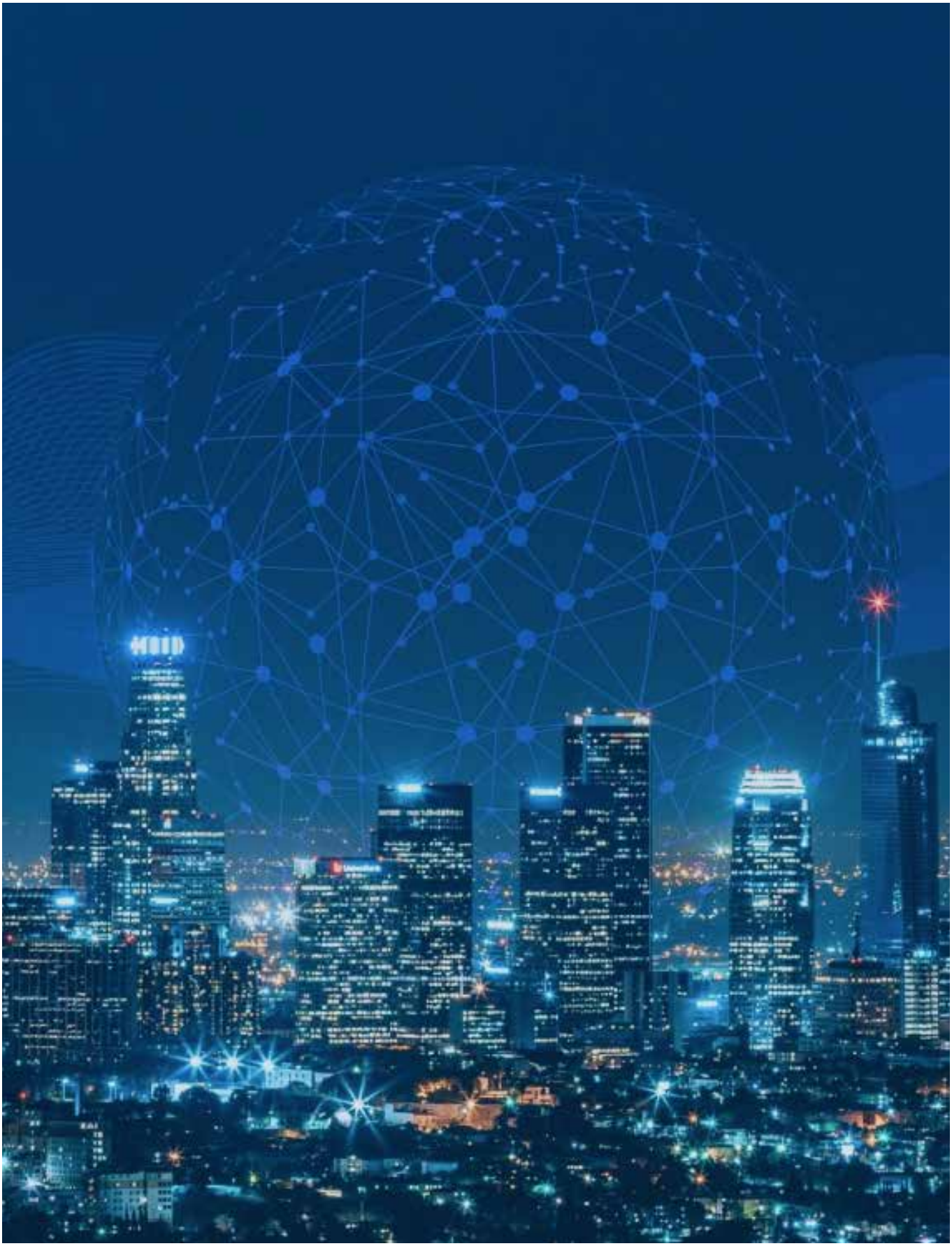
relationships. It comes from not being egocentric but rather focusing on your goal and your vision. Companies that lose their why lose their way. The ability to let go and delegate is crucial. Avoid "founder's syndrome" by trusting your team and empowering them to take ownership to drive the mission forward. No founder knows every detail of the company. That's a sign of success and growth. Don't be intimidated by it – embrace it!

Biography:

Calandra Cruickshank serves as CEO and founder of StateBook International, a tech company dedicated to simplifying complex data to deliver actionable analytics for strategic decision-making in the real estate, climate, health, and insurance sectors. Calandra also serves as a part-time lecturer at the MIT Center for Real Estate, focused on how data science informs innovation in the built environment. Calandra chairs the CoreNet NYC PropTech Committee, driving the adoption of groundbreaking technologies in the real estate sector. She also serves on the Advisory Board for the International Sustainable Resilience Center (ISRC), a global leader in economic resilience, post-disaster economic recovery, and climate adaptation finance. Together with ISRC, Calandra developed the Economic Resilience ScorecardTM, which provides a baseline economic resilience score to communities and a step-by-step framework to improve community resilience.

Her company, StateBook, provides patented, digital, location intelligence solutions, comprehensive data, and visualizations to identify risk, develop evidence-based strategies, and inform optimal locations for investment. StateBook customers can embed its sophisticated data APIs in their websites to gain a competitive advantage delivering critical insights and enhanced user experience to their customers. Calandra has evolved Statebook to be market and sector-agnostic, delivering insights and analytics for all types of data-driven decision-making.

Ms. Calandra Cruickshank: LinkedIn



Ms. Nöella Coursaris Musunka

Founder, Malaika Foundation



"...working directly with the community is critical to ensuring that initiatives are impactful and sustainable, and that progress continues well beyond the four walls of an individual organization."

Objective:
Malaika was created to address the lack of educational facilities, clean water, and community programs in the village of Kalebuka in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Specifically, our aim was to get girls into school and to change deep-rooted narratives in order to empower girls to receive an education and write their own futures. We wanted to create a locally-led, community-driven model that would be impactful and sustainable.

Impact:
Over the past 17 years, Malaika has grown into a fully-fledged ecosystem centered around education, healthcare, and community programs. Our Malaika School opens its doors to 430 girls each day, providing a free, accredited primary and secondary education, with subjects ranging from STEM and coding to art and sport. Our Malaika Community Center offers life-changing community programs to 6,000 youth and adults each year, while providing a safe space away from violence and abuse. Meanwhile, our technical program trains and certifies future electricians and mechanics, our clean water program caters for over 36,000 people each year through the building and refurbishment of 31 wells, and our agriculture program helps feed two nutritious meals each day to students and staff. Through our community-led ecosystem, Malaika is equipping girls and their families with the skills, resources, and support to shape their own future. All programs are provided free of charge.

Partnerships:

Partnerships have been integral to our success. By forming local partnerships on the ground, we've been able to understand first-hand the community needs and gain their buy in. By partnering across sectors, we've been able to scale our impact. We partner at the government level to share our work and explore how local and national regulations impact our approach, and we partner with the private sector to enhance our capabilities. Partners include FIFA Foundation, Caterpillar Foundation, Coaches Across Continents, Laureus Sport for Good, Segal Family Foundation, Global Citizen Foundation, The Global Fund for Children, Salesforce, Voss Foundation, and L'Oréal Fund.

Investments:

The COVID-19 pandemic and today's uncertain global economic backdrop has posed challenges for all grassroots nonprofits, including Malaika. Many individuals and companies are struggling financially, so fundraising efforts have lost momentum. In this challenging environment, we've learnt of the importance of ensuring longevity in our funding relations. We prioritize taking our partners along with us in the journey and sharing regular updates and communications, ensure that they're bought into the process and what we're doing.

SDG Impact:

We're impacting 6 SDGs, creating pathways that go beyond girls' education and reach the entire community. SDG 2: Zero Hunger, SDG 3: Good Health and Wellbeing, SDG 4: Quality Education, SDG 5: Gender Equality, SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation, and SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

Success:

Success factors include the fact that we have: enrolled 430 girls at the Malaika School; enrolled 196 adults in vocational training programs at our Community Center; conducted technical training programs for youth and adults, leading to employment opportunities; ensured a 100% success rate for literacy; formed 15 partnerships with local and national private sector partners; placed 12 youth into internships; provided staff and students with free meals; and, installed 31 wells that provide clean water to 45,800 people in 18 villages each year.

The main challenge is the complexity of measuring the progress of our SDG model due to lack of local data and statistics. As a small nonprofit, we lack the funding to conduct large-scale quantitative research. To overcome this, we're investing in developing a more robust quantitative research model. Our main takeaway is that an ecosystem approach is crucial to building strong connectors between SDG programming.

Personal Story:

For me, my dream started from a young age. I was born in the Congo. My father died when I was five, and my mother did not have the education to be able to support me on her own. She sent me away to live with relatives and get an education. She made this sacrifice so that I could have what she never had: opportunity. When I returned to the Congo again, I was 18. During my visit, I met many girls whose stories could have been mine. They were held back from receiving an education, denied opportunity, and unable to write their own destiny.

I found my purpose, and I decided to do everything possible to provide them with their own opportunity—an opportunity to learn, to be empowered, and to demand the best for their lives. It was this very trip that led me to establish Malaika in 2007.

Looking Ahead:

The work of Malaika is always growing in scale, and has the potential to be replicated in other communities around the world. In 2022 during UNGA week we launched the Malaika Model Toolkit, a detailed manual that shares Malaika's approach to education and community development and lessons learned.

Vision for the Future:

When you're establishing an organization, in order to be successful over the long term, you have to be successful on a small scale, initially. If your business model/approach doesn't fundamentally work on this small scale, it's going to be impossible to scale it up. In the education space, education initiatives that are introduced as grassroots efforts are likely to be much more successful over the long term as they have the backing of local community support and advocacy. Once introduced, they must then of course be reinforced by national legislation or with international funding. But, in the implementation and planning stages, working directly with the community is critical to ensuring that initiatives are impactful and sustainable, and that progress continues well beyond the four walls of an individual organization.

Biography:

Noëlla Coursaris Musunka, a Congolese/Cypriot philanthropist and international model, is the Founder & CEO of Malaika. Founded in 2007, Malaika is a grassroots nonprofit that empowers girls and their communities in her home country of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Malaika's community-driven ecosystem centers around five pillars: a school, a community center, vocational training, an agricultural program, and clean water and sanitation services. Today, Malaika impacts thousands of lives each year, and

its programs are all offered free of charge. Crucially, Malaika acts as a local, community-led model that can be replicated on a global level. A unique and fearless spokesperson, Noëlla is a voice for the power of girls' education worldwide and has shared her insight at a number of world-class forums. She is an Advisor at Concordia and a member of the Advisory Board of the Segal Family Foundation. She also sits on the L'Oréal Fund for Women Endowment Fund Advisory Committee, and has been a three-time judge for EY's World Entrepreneur of the Year Award. She wrote the preface for 'Mandela: In Honor of an Extraordinary Life', published in 2023, after receiving an award at the 100 Years of Mandela celebration in 2018.

Ms. Nöella Coursaris Musunka: *LinkedIn* | *Facebook* | *Instagram* | *X* | *YouTube*
Malaika: *LinkedIn* | *Facebook* | *Instagram* | *X* | *YouTube*



Mr. Mark Dalio

Founder and Co-CEO, OceanX



"Despite most of our world being covered by the ocean, much of it is unexplored, so there is much work to be done."

Objective:
Over 80% of our ocean has never been mapped, explored, or seen by humans. OceanX's mission is to utilize technology to push the boundaries of ocean exploration, to facilitate groundbreaking scientific research, and document stories of discovery to share with the public worldwide. Research from ocean exploration can impact climate change, fishery management and local economies, so we aim to bring the same global attention to and enthusiasm for ocean exploration that space expedition has.

Impact:
Our vessel, the OceanExplorer, allows us to access the most unreachable parts of the ocean and our extensive research and discovery firsts showcase a substantial contribution to uncovering and understanding the mysteries of the ocean, mapping new areas and discovering new features and species. This includes key missions such as the most comprehensive survey of North America's only coral barrier reef system and research of the Red Sea, which has been a largely unexplored ocean environment that can provide new insights into our changing ocean. We have also accomplished many firsts in ocean research including conducting the first-ever submersible dives to the Antarctic seafloor, tagging a six-gill shark from a sub and recovering the data, mapping the sea floor in Bimini, Bahamas in high resolution, and capturing camera and audio tag data of an orca pack predation of a humpback mother and calf.

Partnerships:

We partnered with filmmaker James Cameron and production designer N. C. Page Buckner on our vessel to ensure its media equipment was designed for seamless expedition filmmaking.

We also partnered with James Cameron, National Geographic and BBC Natural History Unit for the series, OCEANXPLORERS, to further build ocean exploration awareness.

We also work with governments, businesses, and local communities to provide them with the resources to understand and take informed, responsible action to protect their oceans.

Key partnerships have given us the technology making our research possible, such as the two Triton Submersibles that are used on the ship.

Investments:

We are working to shine a light on the need for ocean research investment. Space exploration gets so much more investment than ocean exploration, and the ocean is something that is right, and that each of us is completely dependent on. It is deeply intertwined with our weather patterns, climate mitigation, food production, and economics. Yet we barely know it. Our challenge is to encourage more investment in this important work.

SDG Impact:

Goal 13, as OceanX provides the insight that decision-makers need to take action to mitigate the effects of climate change on the ocean.

Goal 14, as our research missions study an entire ecosystem and provide a comprehensive look at an area's biodiversity and unique properties of its waters and seafloor.

Success:

Our unique combination of ocean science, media, and education is part of our success. The OceanXplorer helps us conduct missions that bring these elements together for greater impact. This advanced exploration vessel has four state-of-the-art labs that allow us to seamlessly collect samples and do research. Throughout our many missions, we've achieved several scientific firsts. Combining next-gen technology, science, storytelling, and immersive experiences helps us educate, inspire, and connect the world with the ocean. We have also helped build a global community that is more engaged in

understanding and protecting our oceans. The key takeaway is how important it is to engage and inspire the public to be passionate about the ocean. Inspiring people encourages them to take action to protect the ocean.

Personal Story:

The first time I went in a submersible, I had an incredible encounter with a six-gill shark, a prehistoric bottom dweller. It got so close to the submersible that it almost tried to headbutt us. While this might've been scary to some people, I was so wowed by this creature. It was like a dinosaur in the ocean. I had never seen anything like it. When we returned to the surface, I knew I wanted to share what I had seen with the world. I wanted to show people how amazing the ocean is and how much remains to be discovered. I made it my goal to demystify the ocean and inspire people to protect and care about it.

Looking Ahead:

Given the lack of ocean understanding, more scaling is needed. OceanX is scaling, with an office in Singapore, where we will spend 5+ years working throughout Southeast Asia. Each time we work with a country, we lay groundwork for them to continue to better understand and protect their ocean resources.

Vision for the Future:

Despite most of our world being covered by the ocean, much of it is unexplored, so there is much work to be done. For those who wish to follow our lead, it is important to know that the combination of advanced ocean science and engaging ocean media can unlock the ocean's mysteries to benefit people and the planet and help people reconnect with the ocean on a personal level. We also believe that many people, with diverse professions and perspectives, can focus their work to support our oceans. You don't have to be a marine biologist. Marine work requires various professions such as engineers, data analysts, and communicators. Through educational programs and immersive experiences, we can inspire and attract the next generation of ocean leaders. We are doing this ourselves through OceanX Education programs – at sea, and port, and through immersive ocean portals and exhibits on land.

Biography:

Mark Dalio is the founder and co-CEO of OceanX, where he spearheads the organization's strategic vision and leads its mission to explore the ocean and bring it back to the world. Dalio is responsible for organizational strategy, charting opportunities for impact and growth, overseeing OceanX's educational initiatives, shepherding brand and marketing activities, and leading regional expansion activities in Asia. Alongside his co-CEO,

Dalio also leads development and partnership cultivation for the organization, ensuring that new opportunities support OceanX's strategic objectives. His work has positioned OceanX as an industry leader in oceanic research, science, education and filmmaking and has galvanized a new generation of ocean enthusiasts and conservationists.

A visionary director, producer and storyteller, Dalio has led partnerships with top production companies to develop stunning ocean media, including the BBC's award-winning nature documentary series "Blue Planet II," the PBS Nova special "Creatures of Light," David Attenborough's "Great Barrier Reef," the BBC digital initiative "Our Blue Planet" and the BBC-OceanX produced giant screen film "Oceans: Our Blue Planet." Along with a group of the world's leading creative and scientific minds, he was also responsible for developing and supervising the retrofit of OceanXplorer, the most advanced scientific research and media vessel ever built.

OceanX: *LinkedIn* | *Facebook* | *Instagram* | *X* | *TikTok* | *YouTube*



Ms. Wendy Diamond

Founder and CEO, Women's Entrepreneurship Day Organization



"Find your passion, discover your purpose—the thing you care about deeply day and night, the issue you're driven to solve!"

Objective:
After learning that 250 million girls were in poverty, women received 1% of venture dollars, and microloans had transformative impacts, we saw an urgent need for action. In 2013, few initiatives acknowledged women entrepreneurs. We created a dedicated day and movement to ignite leadership and innovation among women entrepreneurs, driving economic growth and advancing communities. By promoting giving a hand up, not a handout, we aimed to drive change and support women entrepreneurs.

Impact:
Our launch at the United Nations inspired major companies, changemakers, and government officials worldwide to champion women's entrepreneurship, amplifying support for women. The Mayor of New York funded WE NYC, and we pioneered the first-ever Women in Disability Startup Cohort. Women's Entrepreneurship Day is now officially recognized by governments globally, including the US Congress and the President of Mexico State. It is celebrated in 144 countries and 65 universities with 333 global ambassadors. We support incarcerated women through an entrepreneurship program with a 90% recidivism rate. In Saudi Arabia, we trained 60,000 female entrepreneurs and provided 50,000 microloans across Africa and Latin America. Our Oman initiative empowered women against arranged marriages and we awarded scholarships in Uruguay. We launched the inaugural Women's Disability Startup Cohort, reactivated ICWBE Act, and introduced

AI-driven entrepreneurial education in Africa. Partnering with disruptive companies like Dollar Donation Club and Open Grants IO, our WEDO makes an impact!

Partnerships:

Partnerships are pivotal to our initiative's success, driving collaboration and impact. Opportunity International administers our microloans, empowering impoverished women to embark on entrepreneurial journeys. Defy Ventures leads transformative entrepreneurship programs for incarcerated women, achieving a 90% recidivism rate. OWC provides crucial technical support and computers, aiding women entrepreneurs globally. Paycargo guides us in scaling our efforts effectively. Partnerships with Microsoft, Mastercard, UBS, Discover, AWS and Loreen Arbus Foundation, funded our Women's Disability Cohort, now supported by Google for Startups. Collaborations with United Nations ECOSOC, UN Women, UNEP, and Ellis Island Honors Society strengthen our global outreach, particularly supporting disadvantaged women.

Investments:

Securing investments for our initiative initially posed challenges in convincing stakeholders of the transformative impact on women entrepreneurs' empowerment. Overcoming skepticism required demonstrating concrete outcomes and aligning with partners who shared our vision. In hindsight, establishing clearer metrics for success and earlier engagement with potential investors could have expedited funding efforts. Today, we prioritize fostering long-term relationships with investors committed to social impact, ensuring alignment with our goals and values. Emphasizing the scalability and sustainability of our programs continues to be crucial in attracting and retaining investment support for women entrepreneurs globally.

SDG Impact:

Our foundation supports SDG1 by providing microloans and training to alleviate poverty. We advance SDG4 with our education initiatives. SDG5 is promoted through initiatives empowering women. Our efforts under SDGs 8 and 10 focus on sustainable economic growth and reducing inequalities. Strategic partnerships (SDG17) amplify our impact globally.

Success:

Key success factors for our organization included building strong partnerships with influential entities, resilient leadership, and maintaining a clear focus on our mission despite challenges. We encountered appropriation by a larger organization and coped with a former political figure copying our platform. Challenges also included navigating

financial uncertainties and managing fluctuations in public perception. We addressed these by reinforcing our commitment to our purpose, fostering genuine collaborations, and staying true to our values. The key takeaway is the resilience derived from a purpose-driven approach—when driven by impact rather than fame, money, or power, determination becomes unstoppable. Our journey underscores the power of steadfast dedication to making a meaningful difference, regardless of external obstacles or setbacks.

Personal Story:

My journey of inspiration began during a transformative 2013 trip to Honduras, where I volunteered with the Adelante Foundation amidst the challenges of it being recognized as the murder capital of the world. Witnessing the profound impact of microloans on women's economic empowerment was a pivotal moment. One elderly woman's story, who used a $100 microloan to start a small home-based store, resonated deeply as it enabled her to support her grandchildren's education.

Motivated by these experiences and confronted with stark statistics—250 million girls in poverty, only 1% of venture funding for women, and minimal media coverage of women entrepreneurs—I launched a movement upon returning to New York. My philosophy centers on making impactful actions accessible and fostering collective support to drive sustainable change and empower marginalized communities globally. My commitment remains steadfast in supporting the UNDERDOG and advocating for inclusive opportunities in entrepreneurship and business!

Looking Ahead:

Our initiative is scalable and replicable worldwide, open to collaborative efforts. We've developed an easy-to-use toolkit emphasizing collective action. It's about "we" not "me," empowering communities to adopt and implement our strategies effectively, amplifying impact, and fostering sustainable change globally. WEDO - Women Entrepreneurs DO Make a Difference!

Vision for the Future:

Find your passion, discover your purpose—the thing you care about deeply day and night, the issue you're driven to solve! Stay open; inspiration often comes from unexpected places, maybe even someone you've never met. Everyone has expertise to share and lessons to teach. Remember, people everywhere want to lend a hand; the key is making it EASY for them to support YOU! And my favorite word? Integrity—it's essential in everything you do!

Biography:

Wendy Diamond is a globally recognized social entrepreneur, impact investor, animal advocate, humanitarian, bestselling author, TV personality, and dedicated advocate for positive change. As the CEO and Founder of the Women's Entrepreneurship Day Organization (WEDO) and #ChooseWOMEN, Wendy leads a non-governmental organization spanning 144 countries and 112 universities. WEDO focuses on influencing policy-making, stimulating economic advancement, and eradicating poverty, particularly through supporting women entrepreneurs worldwide.

Wendy is the founder of LDP Ventures (SFO), investing in disruptive technologies/funds/initiatives making a positive imprint in this world.

A prolific author with ten celebrated books, Wendy holds three Guinness World Records and has been featured on major media platforms such as CNBC, Oprah, and Forbes. She is a sought-after keynote speaker at prestigious events like the United Nations and Harvard University and serves on the boards of organizations like the Ellis Island Honors Society and Humane Society of New York.

Prior to WEDO, after learning 12 million animals were euthanized annually, Wendy founded Animal Fair Media, Inc. the premiere pet lifestyle media platform bridging celebrity and pop culture to support animal rescue/welfare.

Ms. Wendy Diamond: *LinkedIn* | *Facebook* | *Instagram* | *X*
Women's Entrepreneurship Day: *LinkedIn* | *Facebook* | *Instagram* | *X* | *YouTube*



Mr. Tony O. Elumelu CFR

Chairman,
Heirs Holdings Ltd



"...it encourages me to look forward to a future where the continent's most important resources – our youth – are empowered and meaningfully engaged to drive the continent's sustainable social and economic growth."

I am an African, my success has been in Africa, my education, my businesses, and my family. Africa is where I live, Africa is who I am. My vision of the future is my vision for Africa – an Africa that is known for its success, its thriving entrepreneurship, the resilience and ambition of its people, its ability to create value in Africa, for Africa. An Africa that is viewed by our global partners on its own terms, not the prejudices we so often hear, an Africa that can look itself in the eye, can acknowledge its own faults, but also determine its own fate - and find Africa's path to prosperity and harmony.

It is a vision driven by its own philosophy "Africapitalism" – the idea that Africa's private sector, if given the opportunity, can unlock growth and stability, a private sector that must promote good, as well as doing well. It is also driven by the humbling reality that however driven one is, however hungry for success, however equipped to succeed, luck also plays a real role in outcomes. How often do we know friends, colleagues, and people we admire who seemed so suited to seize life's opportunities fall by the wayside?

In my life, I have been a beneficiary of 'luck.' Decades ago, I got my first job in banking, after audaciously writing to the Chairman of a bank in Nigeria, despite not meeting the qualifications. It was by sheer luck that he read my letter and decided to take a chance on me. It changed my life. This action, completely out of my control, coupled with my personal values of hard work, excellence, and relentless drive, propelled me to where I am today. Today, I chair the United Bank for Africa Plc, a global bank with African roots, spread across four continents and serving over 40 million customers across the globe. We call UBA "Africa's Global Bank." Heirs Holdings, my family office, makes significant investments in strategic sectors of

the African economy, driven by a mission to improve lives and transform the African continent. We do this by taking on difficult tasks, in difficult sectors, investing, turning around, creating value. We want to do well, but we want to change Africa. Africa was a place of resource extraction and rent-seeking. We are in the power sector because, without power, Africa will not advance; with power, Africa can turn its natural resources to create value in Africa. Why shouldn't Africa industrialise? Why shouldn't Africa take the lead in equitable energy transition? Why shouldn't Africa lead in developing new models of wealth creation?

My life has been a life of entrepreneurship. If there is one thing I want to be remembered for, it is entrepreneurship – not just my own, but catalyzing entrepreneurship across Africa. Entrepreneurship is the essence of Africapitalism. That is why, in 2010, my wife and I created the Tony Elumelu Foundation. We committed 100 million USD to identify, train, and mentor 10,000 young Africans who could transform Africa. We took a daring approach to include entrepreneurs whose startups were still at the idea stage but who had the drive to bring those ideas to life. We set out to democratize luck and empower a new generation who will create the much-needed jobs and prosperity that the continent needs. We also know entrepreneurs do not operate in a vacuum, and we quickly realized that our young entrepreneurs needed strong advocacy for their ideas to be actualized and not stifled.

In the ten years of our flagship programme, the Tony Elumelu Foundation has provided 1.5 million young Africans with access to training, and disbursed US$100 million, directly into the hands of 20,000 entrepreneurs, double our target, 46% are women, reiterating our commitment to gender inclusion and equity. These young entrepreneurs have gone on to create 400,000 jobs, directly and indirectly, and sustainable development. We now receive hundreds of thousands of applications for 1,000 places, highlighting the significant demand. With just those 1,000 places, we began to feel we were dashing hopes instead of creating hope. We intentionally began to seek out like-minded institutions to partner with and scale the programme to empower many more young Africans. Our first partnership was with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The partnership was the very first time that the ICRC moved beyond its traditional aid delivery model, recognising the direct impact we were creating by focusing directly on young entrepreneurs. We also developed partnerships with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to fund, train and mentor 100,000 young Africans, with an initial focus on empowering the vulnerable entrepreneurs in the Sahel region of the continent.

The European Union, the African Development Bank, Google.org, and the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa are some of our institutional partners. In addition, African governments such as Benin Republic and Botswana have partnered to replicate this model in their countries, as they recognise the critical role the young population plays in

driving Africa's economic development. We are both sector agnostic, but also run partner programmes that are sector focused, particularly in the green sector, given that climate change is a huge threat in Africa and we have to build climate resilience in our entrepreneurs. As we all work towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), we have ensured that our entrepreneurs' businesses directly align. Our entrepreneurs, through the impact from their businesses, are contributing to the attainment of SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) & SDG 11 (Sustainable Communities).

Poverty anywhere is a threat to everyone, everywhere. Anyone who flies in comfort across the Sahara knows millions are on the move in the most frightful conditions. I actively advocate for investment in Africa to develop infrastructure and support young entrepreneurs to alleviate the poverty on the continent, fight the causes of emigration and fanaticism, and catalyze rosperity. Youth unemployment is a tragic waste of our continent's talents and a betrayal of a generation. Only then can we ensure that Africa's significant demographic dividend is not wasted.

If I focus on my vision for the future, it is on the Tony Elumelu Foundation's plans to significantly scale its intervention on the continent with the launch of a 'Coalition for African Entrepreneurs.' The Coalition for African Entrepreneurs is a global opportunity to invest in more young Africans who will unlock Africa's potential through entrepreneurship. We need multiples of the $100m we have deployed, coming from the private sector, philanthropic organisations, and governments. The Coalition for African Entrepreneurs aims to support 100,000 young African entrepreneurs, including 50,000 women, and create 1,000,000 jobs by 2035!

When I meet young Africans, I see the energy, the excitement, the sheer determination to succeed and it encourages me to look forward to a future where the continent's most important resources – our youth – are empowered and meaningfully engaged to drive the continent's sustainable social and economic growth.



Ms. Fereshteh Forough

Founder and Executive Director, Code to Inspire



"Stay steadfast in your goals, embrace every learning opportunity, and remember that determination and hard work are your greatest assets."

Objective:
One significant challenge I tackled was the situation of Afghan women's rights, particularly regarding education and technology. My initiative, Code to Inspire, aimed to revolutionize women's futures by providing essential coding and graphic design skills. By breaking down societal barriers and empowering these young women, we sought to transform their career prospects and contribute to a more inclusive and prosperous Afghanistan, driving economic and social progress in the country.

Impact:
Through Code to Inspire, I introduced coding education to Afghan women, challenging societal norms and stereotypes. In a country where women's access to education and employment is severely limited, CTI disrupts the status quo, empowering women to enter the male-dominated tech industry and inspiring broader societal change towards more inclusive and equitable systems. Through Code to Inspire, we achieved transformative change by empowering Afghan women with coding and graphic design skills. As a result, 80% of our alumni now work in Afghanistan, significantly contributing to the region's economy. Additionally, 94.4% of our students and alumni believe that the skills and knowledge they received from our program have contributed to their personal growth and development. Notably, 97% of hired graduates reported a positive shift in their families' perspectives once they began earning an income, challenging traditional norms and fostering greater acceptance of women's roles in society and the tech industry.

Partnerships:

Partnerships have played a crucial role in the success of Code to Inspire. Collaborating with local and international organizations have allowed us to achieve our vision of empowering Afghan women through technology. Through partnering with Herat University, we have been able to effectively recruit female students and understand their needs. Our partnership with Consensys Academy provided scholarships for blockchain and smart contract courses. DataCamp offered AI and Data Science scholarships, enhancing our students' skills. Additionally, collaborating with The Giving Block enabled us to receive crypto donations, expanding our outreach and impact. These partnerships were instrumental in driving our mission forward.

Investments:

In channeling investments for our mission, we faced challenges like ensuring consistent funding was available in a region with political instability, economic unpredictability, and technical difficulties. If I could do anything differently, I would focus on preemptively building a robust network of diverse funding sources like corporate sponsorships, international grants, and crowdfunding campaigns. I would also seek to establish partnerships with private companies and commit them to sponsor our students.
Enhancing our storytelling to highlight the tangible impact of our work attracts more investors and supporters by showcasing the real difference we are making in the lives of Afghan women.

SDG Impact:

Goal 4: Quality Education
Goal 5: Gender Equality
Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth
Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities

Success:

The key success factors for Code to Inspire (CTI) have been our strong community partnerships, a robust curriculum tailored to the needs of Afghan women, and a dedicated team committed to empowering female students. The situation in Afghanistan is particularly dire, characterized not only by official restrictions on women's access to education and career opportunities but also by deeply entrenched societal beliefs about women's rights. These combined factors severely limit the agency of the vast majority of Afghan women, leaving them dependent on male relatives and vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Additionally, the lack of digital infrastructure in Afghanistan significantly hampers Afghan women and girls' ability to engage in remote learning. The key takeaway is the

transformative power of education and technology in breaking barriers and changing lives. By investing in women's education and fostering partnerships, we can create lasting change and drive societal progress.

Personal Story:

Growing up as a refugee in Iran, I watched my mother sew and sell clothing to fund our education. Despite our circumstances, my mother's sacrifices and unwavering belief in the power of education fueled my determination. She taught me that education is the most powerful investment one can make. This belief became the foundation of my journey. When we returned to Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban regime, I pursued a Computer Science degree despite numerous challenges. The struggle was real, but so was my resolve. Witnessing the potential in Afghan women who faced societal barriers, I was inspired to create Code to Inspire. By providing these young women with technological education, I aim to honor my mother's legacy and demonstrate the profound impact of education. My mission is to pave the way for a brighter future for Afghan women, empowering them to become leaders in their communities.

Looking Ahead:

Yes, Code to Inspire can be scaled further and replicated globally. Our proven approach includes coding bootcamps, workshops, and an online learning platform, empowering countless Afghan women with valuable tech skills. We are positioned for expansion worldwide to break barriers and allow women to excel in the tech industry.

Vision for the Future:

As someone who has walked the path of a refugee, a woman in technology, and an entrepreneur, I want to share some guidance with you. First, embrace the power of education and perseverance. No matter the obstacles, remain resilient and adaptable. Your unique experiences are your strengths—use them to your advantage.

Leverage technology as a tool for empowerment and social change. Build a community around you; support and mentorship are crucial. Stay steadfast in your goals, embrace every learning opportunity, and remember that determination and hard work are your greatest assets.

Focus on creating impactful solutions. Seek out and build supportive networks, and never underestimate your potential. Believe in yourself, and remember—you have the power to change the world. Your journey can inspire and empower others, creating a ripple effect of positive change. So, stand tall, be fearless, and let your actions light the way for others.

Biography:

Fereshteh Forough, a resilient force born into the challenges of refugee life in Iran following her family's escape from Afghanistan during the Soviet invasion, embodies an unwavering commitment to education. As a teenager, Fereshteh witnessed the collapse of the Taliban regime, prompting her family's return to Herat, Afghanistan. Undeterred by hardships, she pursued a Bachelor's in Computer Science at Herat University and subsequently achieved a Master's degree from the Technical University of Berlin in Germany. Returning to Herat University, she dedicated nearly three years to shaping young minds as a Computer Science faculty member. In 2015, Fereshteh established Code to Inspire (CTI), the first computer coding school for girls in Afghanistan. Leading CTI, she oversees all facets of operations and fundraising remotely. Under her guidance, CTI has empowered over 600 students through coding and graphic design classes. Her vision centers on a prosperous future for her homeland, where young women are pivotal contributors to the economy and overall success. A trailblazer in her field, Fereshteh has introduced blockchain and cryptocurrency technology to Afghanistan. Her indomitable spirit and dedication to breaking barriers serve as an inspiration, reflecting her commitment to shaping a brighter future for the next generation of Afghan women.

Ms. Fereshteh Forough: LinkedIn | X



Dr. Maria Freire

Founder and Principal, The Freire Group



"It is essential to recruit pioneers willing to break the mold, creatively approach unexpected challenges, and persist despite the naysayers."

Objective:
In 2001, one person died of tuberculosis (TB) every 15 seconds. Combined with the HIV epidemic, this was devastating, particularly in the developing world. There were no new TB medicines and cumbersome treatments increased the prevalence of drug-resistant TB. Global health leaders joined forces to create the Global Alliance for TB Drug Development (TB Alliance) a nonprofit, public-private partnership to accelerate the development of new, faster-acting, and affordable TB drugs and thus revolutionize TB control.

Impact:
As the first CEO of TB Alliance, my outstanding team and I put in place the largest pipeline of potential new TB drugs in 50 years. In searching for better, faster-acting TB drugs, we convened leading experts to design a scientific blueprint and we analyzed market forces to create incentives for productive partnerships. With no in-house laboratories, leveraging capabilities and funding from global collaborators was paramount. Supported by the Rockefeller Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), and governments, we succeeded in catalyzing new TB drug development. One particular compound, PA-824, became our lead molecule. In 2019—after years of dedicated development and long after I had left the organization—this compound was approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). This life-saving medication, Pretomanid, is on the Essential Medicines List for the World Health Organization (WHO), giving hope to millions of people who suffer from TB worldwide.

Partnerships:

TB Alliance was created as a public-private Product Development Partnership (PDP). From the outset, it was clear that we would have to tap the resources—technological, financial and human—of scientists, key opinion leaders, organizations, and companies worldwide. This meant active collaborations with patient advocacy groups, governments, the World Health Organization, foundations, and industry from the developed and developing world. We established a robust Scientific Advisory Board and an active Stakeholders Association, which enabled us to tap partners to achieve our goals. With their support and the financial and in-kind resources from active fundraising, we developed our TB drug pipeline.

Investments:

As a PDP, the TB Alliance was a radically new type of organization—one that intrigued donors but also gave them pause. It was unproven, ambitious, and bold. An important advantage was to have the early, strong financial support of the Rockefeller Foundation, the BMGF, and the governments of the United Kingdom, Netherlands, and the United States (US).

Drug development is an expensive and long-term endeavor, making sustained and committed support critically important. While the success of the TB Alliance has helped channel new investments and proved the PDP model, hurdles for developing drugs that affect poor populations remain high.

SDG Impact:

The mission of the TB Alliance to develop new, short-acting TB drugs directly addresses SDG 3, specifically the outcome target of fighting communicable diseases. By addressing population health—especially in the Global South—it also indirectly helps to reduce poverty (1) and inequality (10).

Success:

The key success factor was bringing together exceptional people to contribute to this groundbreaking venture. They had to support three foundational pillars: excellent science, powerful policy articulation, and sound administrative infrastructure. Some of the challenges were technical. For example, the dearth of potential compounds for development demanded investing in basic science, which added expense and time. We also knew that TB treatment required a polypharmaceutical approach, so our team found an innovative way to test drug combinations for FDA approval, revolutionizing TB drug development clinical trials. Other hurdles were less technical but just as challenging, like

overcoming skepticism that a nascent not-for-profit, without the resources of industry, could successfully develop a new medicine. This would be overcome as the TB Alliance successfully navigated the complicated drug development pathway. And, of course, attaining financial sustainability was challenging but imperative. All this points to the importance of clear mission and focused implementation.

Personal Story:

I grew up in Peru. When studies and career opportunities attracted me to the US, it was important to find ways to give back. TB has long been the world's deadliest infectious disease, and Peru is a high-burden country. My time reinvigorating TB drug development, licensing PA-824, and cementing the TB Alliance as a successful PDP, proved highly impactful and rewarding. When the TB Alliance's new drug-resistant TB regimen was added to the WHO's TB Treatment Guidelines, I knew it would have a transformative impact worldwide. It took time for Peru to make this new treatment available, but with the catalytic help of a local NGO, Peruanos por Peruanos, the first Peruvian patient started treatment on February 2024. This brought my efforts full-circle and is tangible proof that the work of the organization I helped build nearly 25 years ago is helping save the lives of Peruvians infected with TB.

Looking Ahead:

This not-for-profit drug development model can be replicated. PDPs, like the TB Alliance, are recognized as productive frameworks for global health innovation to create new disease-fighting tools, while they also can build capacity, transfer knowledge, and address gender inequities. However, these organizations require adequate funding and strong global political will.

Vision for the Future:

Building the right team, including the right partnerships, is a crucial step for organizations aiming to replicate the TB Alliance model. It is essential to recruit pioneers willing to break the mold, creatively approach unexpected challenges, and persist despite the naysayers. It also shows that success cannot happen without a strong programmatic foundation and policies that guide the way forward. At the TB Alliance, this was embodied in a policy that required that the drugs developed would be affordable, available and accessible to those who need them, marrying scientific requirements and practical considerations. We had control of some of these factors, like which compounds to put into our pipeline or sensitivity to the cost of goods, but not of others, like government health policies or local medical infrastructure. Thus, success depended on strategic partnerships with the public and private sectors, which will likely be true for other such endeavors.

Biography:

Dr. Maria C. Freire is Founder and Principal of The Freire Group, a consulting firm focusing on strategic alliances in life sciences. Until September 2021, she was President and Executive Director of the Foundation for the National Institutes of Health (FNIH) and, from 2008 to 2012, President of the Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation. From 2001 to 2008, she served as President and Chief Executive Officer of the Global Alliance for TB Drug Development (TB Alliance) and directed the Office of Technology Transfer at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) from 1995 to 2001. Dr. Freire served on, and chaired, the Science Board of the FDA and was a member of the WHO Commission on Intellectual Property Rights, Innovation and Public Health. She was appointed to the United Nations Secretary General's High-Level Panel on Access to Medicines and served as a member of the Institute of Medicine Commission on a Global Health Risk Framework for the Future. Dr. Freire obtained her Bachelor of Science degree from the Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia in Lima, Peru, and her Ph.D. in Biophysics from the University of Virginia. She is a member of the National Academy of Medicine and the Council on Foreign Relations.

Dr. Maria Freire: LinkedIn



Mr. Badr Jafar

Special Envoy for Business & Philanthropy, UAE & CEO, Crescent Enterprises



By strengthening networks, collaborating, and sharing data insights, we can scale strategic philanthropic capital effectively.

Objective:
The UN's 2015 Paris Agreement aims to limit global warming to 2°C above pre-industrial levels by 2050, but progress is lacking. The inaugural COP28 Business and Philanthropy Climate Forum sought to mobilize the private sector like never before as part of the COP process with a multi-stakeholder platform to exchange ideas, foster collaboration, and generate meaningful action in support of the world's climate and nature goals and address the multi-trillion annual climate financing gap.

Impact:
Business and philanthropy have often been sidelined in global climate discussions, often perceived as part of the problem. If we are to achieve our climate and nature goals, it isn't viable to keep governments, businesses, and philanthropists operating in isolation. Effective climate action demands collaboration, harnessing the private sector's expertise along with philanthropy's catalytic capital and extensive networks. This synergy can achieve outcomes on a scale that no single sector could accomplish alone.

The COP28 Business & Philanthropy Climate Forum marked a turning point, uniting global leaders to transcend sectoral boundaries and act towards a future where businesses and philanthropy take a leading role in achieving net-zero emissions, restoring biodiversity, and delivering a more sustainable, prosperous world, leaving no one behind.

The Forum was attended by 1,500+ business and philanthropy leaders from 90 nations, with 45% coming from within the Global South and over 400 philanthropic foundations from around the world.

Partnerships:

Partnerships were pivotal to our event's success, made possible by strategic and delivery partners such as the Africa Finance Corporation, Asian Development Bank, BEEAH, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Sustainable Markets Initiative, IDB Invest, International Finance Corporation, OECD, World Business Council for Sustainable Development, World Economic Forum, and XPRIZE.

These partners brought their unique strengths, insights, innovation, expertise, and extensive networks. Together, we created a synergy that accelerated our efforts, achieving our vision of addressing climate finance effectively and promoting sustainable development on a global scale.

Investments:

The success of the Forum highlights the tremendous impact of our collective efforts, with US $7 billion in new capital committed across 32 new initiatives, demonstrating the power of multi-stakeholder collaboration.

While every initiative faces implementation challenges, the key takeaway from our experience is the importance of partnerships and a shared vision. The overwhelming support and commitment from various stakeholders were instrumental in achieving the action-oriented outcomes and we will continue to leverage these partnerships to build on the successes and drive further innovation and investment in reaching net-zero and reversing biodiversity loss.

SDG Impact:

The COP28 Business & Philanthropy Climate Forum fostered collaborations to drive sustainable development by leveraging private sector resources and philanthropic investments. It addresses critical goals aligned with the United Nations' SDGs, specifically SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), and SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), amongst others.

Success:

In the lead-up, the UAE's COP28 Presidency made its ambition clear: to host the most inclusive and consequential COP ever. Aligned with this vision and the COP28 action

agenda, the COP28 Business & Philanthropy Climate Forum convened global leaders and policymakers for 53 sessions over two days, featuring 214 high-profile speakers.

Key factors to the Forum's success included extensive collaboration, inclusive participation, and a shared commitment to impactful action. This commitment was evident in the announcement of numerous private sector climate ventures and initiatives. Key announcements included new partnerships, funding platforms, innovation accelerators, expanded access and inclusion efforts, and more ambitious sustainability and net-zero targets.

These initiatives are hoped to be the start of a coordinated wave of business and philanthropy action supporting a net-zero, nature-positive future.

Personal Story:

After graduating from university, I pursued my ambition of starting a business. I secured a £50,000 bank loan, and with a lot of failures and successes along the way, the business eventually flourished, allowing me to repay the loan within three years. Five years later, I sold the company.

With the proceeds, I invested in various social ventures as a venture capitalist, some of which became successful and impactful, and others didn't. This experience reinforced my belief in the power of social enterprise and the dynamics of the impact continuum from charity through to purpose-driven profitable businesses.

This journey fueled my passion for supporting new, impactful ventures and philanthropic initiatives. My experiences along the way also strengthened my belief in the importance of strategic philanthropic capital and its rise across global growth markets and led me to launch a number of related initiatives to support philanthropic infrastructure across these geographies.

Looking Ahead:

Building on the success of COP28 requires cross-sector collaboration where governments must raise ambitions through enhancing enabling regulatory environments, businesses must move from pledges to scalable action, and philanthropists must embrace flexible, risk-tolerant giving. We look forward to continuing this momentum at COP29, COP30 and beyond through the Troika.

Vision for the Future:

To replicate and exponentially grow successful and collaborative initiatives, we must

embrace emerging technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) and digital platforms. These tools are ushering in a new era of innovation and revolutionising giving practices by enhancing transparency and accountability, allowing donors to track project progress and see the impact of their contributions in real time.

By strengthening networks, collaborating, and sharing data insights, we can scale strategic philanthropic capital effectively. This shift moves us from the traditional "one-to-many" model, where a single wealthy individual donates to multiple causes, to a "many-to-one" model that pools donations from numerous micro-donors toward a single project or cause. This shift has transformed the giving landscape.

Maximizing individual contributions and fostering a sense of community and shared purpose transforms philanthropy into a more inclusive and impactful practice overall.

Biography:

A business executive and social entrepreneur from the United Arab Emirates, Badr is the CEO of Crescent Enterprises, a diversified business operating across nine industry sectors in 17 countries. He is the President of Crescent Petroleum and serves as the Chairman of Gulftainer and Pearl Petroleum. Badr is the appointed Special Envoy for Business and Philanthropy, UAE.

Appointed to serve as COP28 Special Representative for Business and Philanthropy and as a member of the COP28 Advisory Committee, Badr also Chaired the inaugural COP28 Business and Philanthropy Forum.

Badr is actively engaged with a diverse range of non-profit organisations and initiatives focused on humanitarian aid and international development, strategic philanthropy, corporate governance, entrepreneurship, education, and the arts, including serving as a member of the United Nations Secretary General's High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing and the UNESCO International Commission on the Futures of Education. Badr also serves on the Board of Trustees for Zayed University, the International Council of the American University of Beirut, as well as the Advisory Council of Development and Outreach for the American University of Sharjah.

Badr holds a Master's Degree in Engineering from the University of Cambridge and a Business Degree from the Cambridge Judge Business School.Relations.

Mr. Badr Jafar: Website
Business & Philanthropy Climate Forum: Website


SEPTEMBER 19, 2023
NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE

Mr. Farooq Kathwari

Chairman, President and CEO, Ethan Allen Interiors Inc



"Searching for and surrounding yourself with great partners... is always good for business."

Objective:
It began as a business need: Ethan Allen needed expertise in leather upholstery manufacturing. We brought on a partner in a Mexican region known for its strong tradition in leatherworking—and we saw an opportunity to create a transformative workplace. My team worked to define our facilities in Mexico and Honduras as a template for American businesses moving south, where savings on labor costs can be reinvested to improve the lives of working people.

Impact:
We aim to transform both business practices and lives by drawing upon creative management to reimagine work. Our goal is to create a workplace that enables our associates to lead well-rounded lives—not the other way around. In Central America, we maintain health and safety standards up to U.S. code not because we are required to, but because we have the ability—and responsibility—to be accountable for our associates' well-being. We dedicate machines to the tasks that pose a risk to human associates, thus reducing injury risk and physical effort. Technology gives our associates more energy for work, and the activities that make life worthwhile: family time, home duties, and personal interests. Good leaders know that associates who enjoy their lives outside of work are happier and more efficient at work—and it is also just the right thing to do, from a human point of view.

Partnerships:

In countries without the social supports and emergency response infrastructure of the U.S., NGOs must step in. I founded the Irfan Kathwari Foundation in honor of my late son, and partnering with the foundation enables Ethan Allen to empower our associates and their families outside of work. A standout example is when hurricanes brought immense flooding to parts of Honduras in 2020. When 149 of our associates lost everything, the foundation mobilized to provide each family what they needed most: clean water, food storage, a comfortable place to sleep, and the personal empowerment to begin putting their lives back together.

Investments:

Early on, in Mexico, we faced difficulty hiring employees with reliable transportation. Rather than continue our job search and hope that individuals with the right circumstances came along, we realized that we could change the circumstances ourselves. By providing transportation to and from work, we create opportunities for individuals who need them—and gain access to talented workers. When building a workforce in a developing country, you can't operate under the same set of assumptions that you do in an industrialized country. Start considering the broader challenges, like reliable transportation, early and determine what you can do to fix them.

SDG Impact:

Our commitment to Goal #16, Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions coincides with one of our core Leadership Principles: Justice. We set out to make managerial decisions that are fair and thoughtful, treating every associate who works for us with dignity and respect, no matter where they are in the world.

Success:

Through strategic partnerships, we transformed our Central American facilities into hubs for health and community. In Honduras, about 80% of our associates have used the on-site clinic, which provides vaccines, and medical and dental care. We also host a health fair, where associates can bring their families for specialized care, free of charge. For multiple years, we have been awarded "Best Health Fair" by the Medical Enterprise System of the Honduran Institute of Social Security. In Mexico, we have achieved a 3% attrition rate—compared to an average of 15% for other facilities in the area—due to our winning formula of fair wages, a standardized five-day workweek, on-site healthcare for associates and their families, plus low-cost healthy meals and transportation to work. We have won several awards, including Best Place to Work, the State Award for Labor Merit, and the Inclusive Employment Company Badge.

Personal Story:

When I was six years old in Kashmir, our family was separated, and we were declared refugees. Despite these challenges, many people helped me come to America and make a life here. When I was at NYU, my grandfather sent me 12 baskets of arts and crafts to sell. I contacted Martin Traub, CEO of Bloomingdale's, and after some persistence, Bloomingdale's became a customer. A year later, I got a job as a bookkeeper, then became a financial analyst, then joined a Rothschild company and became its CFO in less than five years. After I formed a partnership with Ethan Allen, Nat Ancell, he made me the leader of Ethan Allen. To help others become the best they can be is the job of every leader. Individuals are responsible for working hard and persisting; those who've come before are responsible for recognizing talent and persistence, and rewarding it.

Looking Ahead:

Our vision of a transformative workplace is a repeatable framework for other companies to draw upon. Cost savings is important—that's a given—but I encourage other leaders to get creative and find ways to reinvest in their workforces, thus improving individual employees' lives and uplifting their surrounding communities.

Vision for the Future:

Fair pay and safe working conditions are critical, but they're only the beginning points of security and prosperity. Having affordable healthcare and having quality time to spend with family and friends outside of work encourages people to live a well-rounded life and to invest in their own communities. Because Ethan Allen is headquartered far away from these facilities, I cannot personally oversee moment to moment. Therefore, trustworthy people on the ground who share our values and vision are invaluable to our company. Searching for and surrounding yourself with great partners—such as the family who manages our Mexico facility and our Honduras facility's general manager, one of many women in our company's leadership, is always good for business. These are people who are not only good operational managers but also truly care about their associates.

Biography:

Farooq Kathwari is the chairman, president and CEO of Ethan Allen Interiors Inc. He is a member of the Board of Advisors of the International Rescue Committee; a member of the advisory board of the Center for Strategic and International Studies; a member of the Council on Foreign Relations; chairman emeritus of Refugees International; an advisory member of the New York Stock Exchange; former chairman of the National Retail Federation; director emeritus and former chairman and president of the American Home Furnishings Alliance; a director of the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy at

Georgetown University; co-chairman of the Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council; and a member of the International Advisory Council of the United States Institute of Peace.

He is a recipient of the 2018 Ellis Island Medal of Honor and has been inducted into the American Furniture Hall of Fame. Other recognitions include Outstanding American by Choice by the U.S. government; Yale School of Management's Chief Executive Leadership Institute Lifetime of Leadership Award; the New American Dream Foundation's Lifetime Achievement Award; the Connecticut Institute for Refugees and Immigrants Legacy Award; the Anti-Defamation League's Humanitarian Award; and one of Worth's 50 Best CEOs in the United States.



Ms. Norine Kennedy

Senior Vice President, Policy and Global Strategy, US Council for International Business



"The goal should be to deploy resources where they can have the most impact and where needs are greatest..."

Objective:
In 2022, the United States Council for International Business (USCIB) launched its Moving the Needle Initiative (MTN) to re-energize impactful engagement of the private sector to accelerate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and priorities in the UN Secretary General's Report, Our Common Agenda (OCA).

By focusing on specific elements of the SDGs, OCA and the Global Pact for the Future, MTN aims to reinvigorate progress towards the 2030 Agenda via "impact multiplier" SDGs and enhanced public-private UN partnerships.

Impact:
MTN is exploring how business expertise, action, and resources can be made available as resources for the international community via dialogue, partnerships, and mobilization, thereby accelerating SDG implementation in strategic business-relevant Global Pact for the Future actions, working with and through the multilateral system.

In 2024, MTN is deepening its work on the inter-related topics of innovation, investment in people-centered infrastructure, and tackling climate change. The private sector plays a central role in each of these areas, and the UN will benefit from partnerships with businesses in each of these spaces and the opportunities for synergies across all three.

Partnerships:

Partnerships continue to be the center of gravity for USCIB's continuing MTN initiative as we look ahead to the Summit of the Future and beyond to critical decision-making meetings in 2025, such as the 4th International Conference on Finance for Development and the 2nd World Social Summit.

New forms of partnerships are needed to pursue not only "systems thinking" but also "systems doing." We have appreciated the opportunity to engage with the International Organization of Employers, which has provided valuable insight and examples of how partnerships on the ground at the local level can relate to global efforts toward the SDGs.

Investments:

One area of priority in this year's MTN work program has been unpacking what "investment" entails. Too frequently, the challenges arise from UN discussions of investment that are framed predominantly in terms of quantified financial resources, with limited if any attention to impacts, whether with respect to those benefiting, or to reflecting other co-benefit dimensions of job creation, social development, and capacity building.

MTN is focusing on people-centered investment in infrastructure in its 2024 work to develop a deeper understanding of private sector multi-dimensional evaluation and decision-making with respect to investment, as well as in measuring its impacts on several levels.

SDG Impact:

The SDGs are a total package, and with significant roles for business in nearly all of them. MTN emphasizes SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) as an "impact multiplier" for SDG implementation. SDG 9 synergizes with other business-relevant SDGs, including SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 13 (Climate Action).

Success:

Success factors included a long experience and constructive role that USCIB has played across the multilateral system for nearly 80 years. Our familiarity with different approaches to engage with inter-governmental deliberations for shared benefit provides us with a variety of templates for successful collaboration.

In addition, we are privileged to serve as the sole American affiliate of the International Chamber of Commerce, the International Organization of Employers, and Business at OECD. These connections have demonstrated the win-win outcomes that substantive consultation and solution-oriented partnerships can provide.

A main takeaway from the MTN initiative, as it looks toward the Summit of the Future, is the indispensable need to bring all societal partners forward with transparency, good governance, and attention to including representative voices from the Global South. Multi-stakeholder approaches and the diversity of business both can complement and serve as resources to the fundamental inter-governmental nature of the UN.

Personal Story:

I have been fortunate to see two concurrent understandings emerge in the international policy arena where I have worked for the past 30 years:

The first is that sustainable development is an essential consideration, not just of society, but specifically for the business community, which has embraced and substantially internalized it as inherent to considerations every successful enterprise must reflect to be successful.

The second is the growing realization that not only does the business community depend on the UN as critical infrastructure for the global marketplace, but the converse is also true: to meet current and future challenges and to realize the promise of inclusive multilateralism, the UN needs to strengthen its interfaces and partnerships with business.

It is inspiring to marshal the MTN effort towards a new approach to impactful public-private partnerships that will strengthen the UN's effectiveness, inclusiveness, and resilience for the long haul.

Looking Ahead:

As global challenges multiply, the international community must mobilize collaborative approaches with key societal partners. Delivering the SDGs and Global Pact for the Future will require concerted collaborative efforts from all actors, including business. Institutional innovation that engages business is essential to get back on track towards the 2030 Agenda.

Vision for the Future:

In designing partnerships for impact, with and through the UN, the following points are key:

Reflect and include business across all the roles it plays in accelerating action in connection with the 2030 Agenda. The business community is a resource for implementation in a wide range of areas, inclusive of, but not limited to, investment and financing.

Identify key priorities and gaps on which to focus 2030 Agenda implementation. With limited time and resources, the UN should prioritize a shortlist of SDGs and associated targets that could catalyze and drive results and co-benefits. The goal should be to deploy resources where they can have the most impact and where needs are greatest, for example, for Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

Pursue and prioritize innovation and infrastructure (SDG 9) as a nexus of opportunity to involve business actively and catalytically. Private sector innovation and infrastructure investment and operation are fundamental to building forward better.

Biography:

In her policy leadership role, Norine Kennedy oversees USCIB's sustainability practice, which brings together USCIB's environmental, labor and corporate responsibility advocacy. Based in New York, she also spearheads USCIB's strategic international engagement, which advances inclusive multilateralism and promotes meaningful business participation in international policy deliberations as essential to effective outcomes.

Kennedy is a recognized business diplomat across influential inter-governmental institutions. She currently serves as co-chair of the Business and Industry Major Group (B&IMG) to the UN in New York and has led USCIB's All In and Moving the Needle initiatives.

With over 30 years of experience in sustainable development, environment, energy and climate change, Kennedy has represented U.S. business at the UN Rio, Johannesburg, and Rio+20 sustainability conferences, at all Conferences of the Parties of the UN Climate Convention (COP) and at the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF) since its inception.

She is a U.S. citizen and holds degrees from Wellesley College and the Claremont Graduate School.

Ms. Norine Kennedy: LinkedIn | X



Ms. Heidi Kuhn

Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Roots of Peace



"We believe in amplifying the voices of our local staff...so they can eventually take on leading roles in the industry independently."

Objective:
Roots of Peace (ROP) addresses the challenge of transforming war-torn, often land-mine-contaminated areas into productive agricultural communities. Our goal is to safely remove landmines where necessary, restore agricultural productivity, and empower smallholder farmers through regenerative agriculture and strengthened market systems. This enables farmers to earn fair profits, secure sustainable incomes, and build resilient livelihoods, fostering peace and development at both household and societal levels.

Impact:
As the 2023 recipient of the World Food Prize, Roots of Peace was recognized for its farmer-focused development model that revitalizes farmland, food security, livelihoods and resilience after devastating conflict. For the past quarter of a century, we have shown over a million people living in war-torn regions around the world a way forward for restoring peace and prosperity through agriculture. Roots of Peace has facilitated the removal of millions of landmines, and has impacted the lives of millions of farmers and families spanning Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, Croatia, Guatemala, Iraq, Palestine and Vietnam. We designed a strategy for promoting high value commodities by building agricultural value chains from production and processing to market support and distribution. Since 2002, we have worked with Afghan farmers, including 5000 women, to increase the yield and increase the yield and quality of table grapes, pomegranates, apples, almonds, apricots and melons to restore lands.

Partnerships:

By working hand-in-hand with farmers, governments, and global partners, we have transformed conflict-ridden lands into thriving vineyards, replacing the remnants of war with the roots of peace. Much like the roots of a healthy tree, the fruits of labor have been supported by numerous partnerships. Roots of Peace was launched in 1998 by the U.N. Secretary General Kofi Ann and Nane Annan. We have also collaborated with the U.S. Department of State, USAID, DOD, USDA, UNMAS, EU, ADB, World Bank, HALO Trust, MAG, CROMAC, and over 400 Napa Valley vintners, corporations and individuals.

Investments:

Roots of Peace is the proud recipient of the Skoll Award for Social Entrepreneurship, granted by Jeff Skoll, Founder of eBay, with a $1 million award in 2006. This investment enabled Roots of Peace to scale and expand our impact significantly. Operational funding remains a challenge for a humanitarian NGO based in the United States, as donors often prefer to designate funds in country projects. Cheryl Jennings, ABC7 News Anchor, has joined us in Afghanistan, Israel, Palestine, Qatar, and Vietnam. The news coverage has raised global visibility and funds to inspire donations to support our mission.

SDG Impact:

Our approach directly supports SDG1 by improving smallholder farmer incomes, SDG5 by creating equitable opportunities for women farmers, SDG8 by fostering inclusive economic growth across diverse ethnic groups, ages, and genders, and SDG13 by training hundreds of thousands of farmers in sustainable agricultural practices.

Success:

Roots of Peace (ROP) demonstrated several key success factors, including strong stakeholder engagement, adaptive strategies tailored to market demands, and comprehensive training programs. Key challenges encountered were political trade barriers, logistical constraints, cultural sensitivities regarding female participation, climate resilience, and landmine removal. To address these issues, ROP developed alternative trade routes, provided technical support for export documentation, adjusted payment structures for female farmers, and partnered with experts for efficient landmine clearance. Enhancing local capacities was crucial, with co-payments required from farmers to ensure personal investment in agricultural interventions. Additionally, promoting equitable opportunities for women and implementing sustainable farming practices bolstered climate resilience. The key takeaway is that adaptability, proactive stakeholder involvement, and a commitment to local capacity-building are essential for overcoming obstacles and achieving sustainable project outcomes.

Personal Story:

On March 28, 2014, Roots of Peace faced a harrowing attack by the Taliban, resulting in a four-hour gun battle at our compound in Kabul, with five of our workers trapped inside, their fate uncertain. Listening to the live battle as our Afghan guards protected our expats was terrifying. Once the guns fell silent and our staff was safe, we faced a defining moment: whether to remain in Afghanistan or not. Ultimately, we chose to stay, guided by our commitment to the farmers rather than any flag. Our resilience allowed us to plant seven million fruit trees on former war-torn lands. We encountered another test of our resilience in August 2021 when the Taliban regained power. Despite the fear, we realized that abandoning our mission would leave crops to rot in the fields during the harvest season. Our dedication to the Afghan farmers compelled us to continue our work, ensuring the fruits of their labor did not go to waste.

Looking Ahead:

Impact can be scaled by unlocking funding through strategic partnerships and innovative proposals focused on regenerative agriculture and a broad-based market systems approach. We are establishing a model to reduce overhead by investing in local talent and leveraging AI, driving industry-level agricultural transformation. Additionally, we are enhancing impactful storytelling and expanding our reach to maximize our influence and effectiveness.

Vision for the Future:

ROP envisions empowering smallholder farmers by transferring regenerative agriculture knowledge and strengthening market systems. We believe in amplifying the voices of our local staff, having them take a leading role in proposal design and implementation, so they can eventually take on leading roles in the industry independently. Our goal is to ensure these farmers earn fair profits, secure living incomes, and build resilient livelihoods adaptable to changing market needs. This approach reduces poverty, promotes gender equality, fosters economic growth, and supports climate resilience. By creating a foundation for economic stability and social cohesion at the household level, ROP contributes to sustainable peace and development at the societal level. Furthermore, ROP has partnered with the International Eurasia Press Fund (IEPF) to advocate for the establishment of the 18th SDG—The Eradication of Landmines, as none of the other 17 SDGs can be fully accomplished in a minefield.

Biography:

Heidi Kuhn, a 2024 Nobel Peace Prize Nominee and 2023 World Food Prize Laureate, is renowned for her transformative work in agriculture and social justice. As the founder of Roots of Peace, she envisioned turning “Mines to Vines” by replacing landmines with

vineyards and orchards worldwide. Over 27 years, she has impacted over 1.1 million farmers and their families across seven countries, removed over 100,000 landmines, and planted over seven million fruit trees, transforming war zones into thriving agricultural lands. Her accolades include the 2023 Mother Teresa Memorial Award, 2019 Mahatma Gandhi Seva Medal, 2007 Jefferson Award, and 2006 Skoll Award for Social Entrepreneurship. A member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, she is also Chairperson for the Smithsonian's 250th Birthday of America. As a VACS Champion in Agriculture to the Department of State, Heidi advocates for innovative agricultural solutions and sustainable development. A UC Berkeley graduate in Political Economics, she established the Kuhn Center on campus and previously produced stories for CNN in the former Soviet Union. Heidi's legacy is defined by her unwavering commitment to peace, security, and global community betterment.

Ms. Heidi Kuhn: LinkedIn | Facebook | X
Roots of Peace: LinkedIn | Instagram



Ms. Francine LeFrak

President and Founder, Francine A. LeFrak Foundation



"... use your own talent to help others find and share their voices."

Objective:
During the 1994 Rwandan genocide, the United Nations estimated 250,000 women were raped, and approximately 70% of those women became HIV positive. The majority of these women couldn't receive proper medical care due to lack of transportation and affordability, leading to worsening health. The goal of creating Same Sky was to embrace the women of Rwanda's talent and give them opportunities to create a future for themselves and their children.

Impact:
Same Sky raised awareness for these women who had little hope for a better future and connected them with tens of thousands of people from around the world. Through our programs and helping them generate income through their jewelry, these women could afford medicine to treat diseases, including HIV, become healthier, and develop a sense of dignity and respect in their community. Creating jobs and opportunities for these women gave them the foundation and confidence to start their own ventures. Many now have their own businesses, can independently support their families, and can afford some basic necessities, including proper mattresses, attending school, and purchasing uniforms.

Partnerships:
Our three partners, Indego Africa, FAWE School, and Bridge2Rwanda have been essential

to the impact of our mission. After training over 200 women to make jewelry, our partnership with Indego Africa has allowed this impact to be multiplied by creating business training for over 1,000 women to start and run their own businesses and enterprises. The partnership with FAWE School supports exceptional girls in studying STEM and attending college. With Bridge2Rwanda, we have created scholarship opportunities for students to attend the top schools in the U.S., provide them with microgrants for first-year expenses, and act as mentors.

Investments:

If I could do it all over again today, I would partner with on-the-ground business training organizations sooner to multiply the effect and impact more women. The primary challenge was finding the right partners to maximize our impact.

SDG Impact:

Same Sky's work addresses several of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, including fighting against poverty, promoting good health and well-being, quality education, decent work and economic growth, and fighting for climate action.

Success:

Proximity has been the key to our mission's success. Personally, spending time in Rwanda over the last twenty years, meeting these women where they were, and beginning to truly understand their needs has allowed us to create hand-ups for them, not hand-outs. I have been able to get to know many of the people we have helped and fostered meaningful connections with so many of these women who have become very important in my life.

Personal Story:

I met a woman named Barbara through our work with formerly incarcerated women in New Jersey. We planned on taking the group of women to sell their jewelry in a local mall; however, Barbara was apprehensive because she had been arrested and imprisoned for shoplifting at that mall. After convincing her to go and emphasizing that she had paid her debt to society, Barbara bravely returned to the mall. She naturally connected with people as she sold jewelry, which was a true example of our mission. I always say, 'talent is everywhere, opportunity is not,' and we were able to provide Barbara a second chance and the opportunity to be lifted up and use her talent. I receive the most pleasure from sharing the privilege I have had in my life to see others lifted and succeed, going from invisible to visible, and contributing to their communities.

Looking Ahead:

By adding more teams of designers and oversight to guide female artisans and oversee quality control, Same Sky can operate on a greater scale. Others can do it with groups of women who are talented with their hands to create initiatives to use their skills and bring products to market.

Vision for the Future:

The best wisdom I can offer is to use your own talent to help others find and share their voices. When you define your talent, you can bring that out in other people and help them share that with the world. To create workforce development where there are skilled artisans, it is important to understand local materials and what the people you are working with are capable of. Their vision is their local market, and your contribution is to expand their market by using their incredible talents. By adding expertise and sophistication, you allow them to see what is possible with their unique skills and expand them in different directions to open marketplaces for themselves.

Biography:

Francine LeFrak is a dedicated social entrepreneur, women's rights advocate, and passionate philanthropist. Her mission is to give individuals a hand up, not a handout, which has enabled her to impact thousands of individuals around the world to return to the workforce through job training and education. In 2007, she pioneered the Same Sky trade initiative, which trained more than 1,000 women affected by the Rwandan Genocide to run their own businesses and transform their lives and the lives of their families. Today, her Wellness Center with the New Jersey Reentry Corporation serves 4,400 formerly incarcerated people by providing them with healthcare, job training, and the dignity of meaningful work.

The Francine A. LeFrak Foundation Center for Well-Being at Barnard College will open this Fall as the first center to focus on three pillars of wellness: mental, physical, and financial well-being. Francine is a proud trustee of Barnard College, Chair Emeritus at Harvard Kennedy School's Women's Leadership Board, and Honorary Deputy with the NYC Fire Dept. She has received prestigious awards, including the Chevalier Legion of Honor Award from the French Government, the U.N. Women for Peace Award, and the George H.W. Bush Points of Light Award.

Same Sky Foundation Fund: Facebook | Instragram | X
Francine A. LeFrak Foundation: Instagram



Mr. Oliver Libby

Co-founder and Chair, Resolution Project



"By providing the right support and opportunities, we can unleash the potential of youth to solve the world's most pressing challenges."

Objective:
Leaders of tomorrow often lack champions who can help them start leading today. Young people possess the fresh perspectives, idealism, and global connectivity needed to make a difference. However, they frequently lack the opportunities and resources necessary to develop their ideas. Without early support—including funding, technical assistance, and a peer network—these potential young innovators struggle to launch successful social enterprises. As a result, many promising solutions to pressing social issues remain unrealized.

Impact:
Since 2007, the Resolution Project has awarded Fellowships to 688 young entrepreneurs, representing a total of 403 ventures in 87 countries, as well as 22 states and Washington, D.C., in the United States. Resolution Project Fellows have seeded and grown ventures addressing every U.N. Sustainable Development Goal, including health, education, development, agriculture, employment, environment, energy, and humanitarian relief. Nearly two-thirds of our Fellows report that they were extremely unlikely or unlikely to have launched their ventures without the help of the Resolution Project. Collectively, ventures started by Fellows have benefited over 6.3 million people since our founding and have amassed market capitalizations among the for-profit ventures of more than $7 billion.

Partnerships:

Resolution Project collaborates with diverse partners to support our global network of Fellows, who are our most crucial stakeholders. We continuously refine our offerings to ensure an impactful lifelong Fellowship experience. Our partners, including the Mastercard Foundation, Deloitte, Harvard World Model United Nations, and Enactus, provide funding, programming, volunteers, and resources to nurture young social entrepreneurs. Through our Pathway Partnerships Program, we connect Fellows to over 100 social organizations, creating a robust ecosystem for growth and support. This collaborative approach enables us to identify, empower, and invest in talented young leaders who are addressing pressing global challenges around the world.

Investments:

As a non-profit offering seed funding of $2,000 to $10,000 rather than investments, we have had to build a diverse network of donors and partners to support our mission. Convincing potential funders of the impact that relatively small grants can have on young social entrepreneurs was sometimes difficult. If we could do things differently, we might focus more on building long-term partnerships with corporations and foundations earlier on, and develop a stronger alumni network to support future Fellows. We would also emphasize showcasing the multiplier effect of our grants on communities worldwide.

SDG Impact:

Resolution Project Fellows address every U.N. Sustainable Development Goal, including needs in health, education, development, agriculture, employment, environment, energy, and humanitarian relief. As an organization, our primary focus is on addressing SDG 17—Partnerships—as we work to bring the social sector closer together in supporting young leaders.

Success:

Our successes have been our belief in young people's potential, our comprehensive support system, and our global network of partners and volunteers. Our "Pathway to Action" model, providing early-stage funding, mentorship, and resources, has been crucial in launching hundreds of social ventures. Challenges we've faced include scaling our impact while maintaining personalized support, securing sustainable funding sources, and adapting to diverse global contexts. We've addressed these by continuously refining our programs, building strong partnerships, and recapitalizing Enactus, a global network with 33 independent country offices supporting young leaders. By providing young people with resources and a supportive community at the crucial early stage, we've enabled hundreds of innovative solutions to take root and grow, creating a ripple effect of

positive change worldwide. We've also seen some of their ventures grow, for example, Esusu, Meesho, Equip Health, and WISE Systems have all scaled significantly.

Personal Story:

In 2007, I co-founded Resolution Project alongside a group of young professionals who were frustrated with being labeled as "leaders of tomorrow". We believed we had the energy, dynamism, and skills to tackle some of the world's most persistent problems right away. We created Resolution Project as a supportive ecosystem for university students with innovative social venture ideas. For me, every interaction I have with the Resolution Fellows is a source of inspiration, determination, and hope. The Fellows I have been honored to guide directly, including the amazing Derrius Quarles, Anne-Marie Ryu, Kristina Saffran, and Carlos Garcia, are extraordinary leaders who have taught me as much as I have shared with them. When the world gets a bit overwhelming—as it often does these days—thinking of these young leaders taking action is all I need.

Looking Ahead:

Resolution's model allows telescopic impact—our Fellows number in the hundreds, but their impact changes the lives of millions, moves billions of dollars, and helps solve global challenges at scale. They would not be achieving these results without the first belief that is Resolution's reason to exist.

Vision for the Future:

Our vision for the future is to continue empowering young social entrepreneurs globally. To those wishing to replicate or grow similar initiatives, I offer this guidance: trust in young people's abilities and provide early support; create a comprehensive ecosystem with funding, mentorship, and resources; build strong cross-sector partnerships; design programs for scalability; and align with established frameworks like the UN SDGs. Remember, investing in young social entrepreneurs creates a ripple effect of positive change. By providing the right support and opportunities, we can unleash the potential of youth to solve the world's most pressing challenges.

Biography:

Oliver is the Managing Partner of Hatzimemos / Libby Holdings (H/L Ventures) and CityRock Venture Partners. Based in NYC and founded in 2009, H/L Ventures is highlighting the importance of building high-growth businesses that protect people and the planet while promoting strong diverse leadership. Mr. Libby also chairs the Board of The Resolution Project, Inc., a non-profit organization based in NYC that he founded in 2007.

Mr. Libby began his career in the U.S. Government and later worked at a global management consulting firm. He is a Presidential Leadership Scholar, a Steering Committee Member of the Milken Young Leaders Council, a Leadership Council Member of Tech: NYC, a Fast Company Impact Council Member, a Concordia Summit Advisor, a member of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network Youth Advisory Council, a founding GLG Social Impact Fellow, and a NationSwell Councilmember.

He has been invited to speak at Harvard, the United Nations, and numerous business conferences. His work has been covered in publications such as the New York Times, Bloomberg BusinessWeek, Fast Company, and Reuters, and he has made television appearances on CNBC. Mr. Libby graduated magna cum laude from Harvard College.

Mr. Oliver Libby: LinkedIn
Resolution Project: LinkedIn



Padma Shri Reema Nanavaty

CEO, Self Employed Women's Association of India (SEWA)



"By building contributory programmes that promote mutual accountability, it increases community participation and fosters a sense of ownership and belonging."

Objective:
What attracted me the most was "SEWA" members. When I first joined SEWA there was a severe drought in Gujarat. SEWA was working on drought relief work. The lesson I learnt was what is poverty, what havoc poverty and drought together can cause. The only food villagers had was seasoned grass tubers. This was my first encounter with poverty. Sharing the pain of poor women became the guiding question for my life.

Impact:
In the dry arid areas of Gujarat I saw that every household had a woman who embroidered. Yet they were all digging earth on relief sites. We turned the traditional skill into livelihood.

In two years' time we had organised more than 15,000 women artisans. Women's embroidery became the major source of income and livelihood in the area. Now the families have different assets. Children attend school. Migration has stopped. Women's employment has brought about a change in the family dynamics as well as the community.

The women get the strength by organizing. It builds collective strength. They can take on any challenge life brings them. They move out of poverty. SEWA builds on the strengths of a woman. She may be poor and vulnerable, yet she is a survivor, so she is strong. She innovates, takes on newer risks.

Partnerships:

We come together as poor, as women and as workers in our fight against poverty. Poor alone cannot fight poverty. We identify the needs and issues of our members and partner with the Government programmes. Partnerships with the private sector enable scaling up of women owned enterprises.

Investments:

We believe the poor do not want charity. They need an enabling environment that equips and enables them to fight poverty. This calls for access to finance. Affordable finance. SEWA has piloted blended financing facility which builds resilience of women. There is a need to scale this and institutionalise such a facility.

SDG Impact:

SEWA'S main goals are to achieve full employment and self-reliance for the poor and the informal sector women workers (SDG5), SEWA focuses on strengthening livelihood. (SDG2), integrating into the mainstream economy (SDG8, SDG10), poverty and food security (SDG1), health care (SDG3), lifelong learning (SDG5), water and sanitation (SDG6), clean energy (SDG7), and climate resilience (SDG13).

Success:

Today we have our member-owned organization and manage several enterprises including the SEWA Bank, SEWA Trade Facilitation Centre, RUDI – an agribusiness initiative, SEWA Manager Ni School that builds a cadre of grassroot managers.

Identifying the needs and issues of the communities and organizing them under the women's leadership has been essential in our success. By building contributory programmes that promote mutual accountability, it increases community participation and fosters a sense of ownership and belonging. Organising is the key to building women's economic empowerment. It is a process, and has to be at the pace of women and the poor. It cannot be fit into a project cycle mode. This approach needs investment of time and resources.

Personal Story:

The first time I went to a village to work, the women did not trust me as a young city woman. Hundreds of women surrounded me and started snatching away at my work. I had to leave. However, by the next visit the women were very cooperative.

One of the leaders, Puriben, asked for my local address. Two days later, she knocked at

the door at 6:00 am of where I was staying. I welcomed her, and we had tea together. A week later, in the meeting with artisans, Puriben herself took the lead in explaining the importance of organising. She exclaimed, "I went to the office at 6:00 am and Reemaben (Ben means sister) was there. She has come here for us. This is our work." I later found out that Puriben took the only bus from her village at 5:30 am to check if I had shared the correct address.

It was here that I understood the importance of building trust, to build a sense of ownership and belonging. I always learn from our members.

Looking Ahead:

We realized that the conditions or the issues of the poor informal sector women – be it in Gujarat or in India or internationally are not very different. Their issues are the same. This insight led us to work directly with sisters in Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and five other countries.

Vision for the Future:

There is a need to support and invest in some of the new global initiatives that have come from women's leadership such as the Global Climate Resilience Fund for Women, Global Coalition on Future of Workers. Poor women are trying to take leadership not realizing how difficult it is to raise resources to build resilience of women and their communities, fight poverty and make the world a livable planet.

Biography:

Reema joined SEWA in 1984. She expanded membership to new heights making SEWA the single largest union of informal sector workers.

Reema oversees organizing and development of SEWA's 2.9 million members, pan India, and also in 7 South-Asian countries, focusing on women's economic empowerment by building women-owned enterprises – in energy, agribusiness, food processing, waste recycling, and textiles.

Reema was invited to the International Labour Organization's High Level Global Commission on Future of Work as the only member representing the informal sector workers.

She was honored with the Padma Shri, a high-level civilian award, for her contribution in the field of Social Services.



Prof. Dr. Bertrand Piccard

Initiator, Chairman and Pilot, Solar Impulse



"We must change our world to make it modern and efficient!"

Objective:
Achieving in 2015/2016 the first solar powered flight around the world, flying 43,000 kms without a drop of fuel was my way to prove that renewable energies, and clean technologies, can reach the so-called impossible goals. The Solar Impulse airplane, with a wingspan larger than a jumbo jet and the weight lighter than a family car, was a demonstration of pioneering spirit fulfilling what was considered to be impossible.

Impact:
The goal of Solar Impulse was not to transport passengers but to transport a message about pioneering spirit in the ecological transition. It has raised the awareness on the credibility of renewable energies and clean technologies at a time where too many people considered them as an expensive and useless anecdote.

The legacy of this endeavor, thanks to its notoriety, is the Solar Impulse Foundation, which has been able to continue its work of promoting a positive vision of ecology. Since 2016, we have identified more than 1,600 technical solutions that can protect the environment in an economically profitable way, giving them the Solar Impulse Efficient Solution Label, and promoting them in the world of industry, finance and politics. Reconciling ecology and economy around profitable systems, products, materials, devices, and processes is vital to help everyone reaching their environmental targets.

Partnerships:

The Solar Impulse project would have never been possible without partners sharing the same vision of pioneering spirit and clean technologies. We have been supported by corporate partners bringing the funding and the technology to build and operate the airplane, in exchange of visibility and communication rights.

Because the Solar Impulse Foundation is a non-profit organization, our team of 35 people and 370 independent experts benefit from the support of around 20 corporate partners, philanthropists and public entities to identify, asses, label and promote the efficient solutions that the world needs to become cleaner.

Investments:

As an experimental project that had never been done before, we had to discover without any benchmarks on how to succeed. In the end, with 15 years and $170 million, it took twice the time we had planned, and cost four times what we had budgeted. No one from the world of aviation and energy was interested, as they were far too conventional, and usual sponsoring partners in the corporate world also denied collaboration. We have been supported completely by other types of companies, like chemical and engineering industries, elevator construction, and telecommunication specialists. Innovation very often comes from outside the system!

SDG Impact:

By targeting the efficient and profitable solutions that can provide cleaner and cheaper energy, reduce pollution, mitigate climate change, reduce waste, protect biodiversity, and improve quality of life, the Solar Impulse Foundation targets the SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 17.

Success:

The millions of people following the solar powered flight around the world have understood the power of pioneering spirit and the potential of renewable energies and clean technologies. It was our first goal, and we achieved it.

But the story isn't over yet - the Solar Impulse Foundation is still working hard on helping understand that efficient and profitable solutions exist and should be used exercised more often to protect the environment and fight climate change. This implies communication actions in the political, industrial, financial, and economical sectors, and needs much more support from partners, NGOs and institutions.

Personal Story:

When flying day and night around the world in the Solar Impulse airplane, with no fuel, no noise and no pollution, I first thought I was propelled into the future, like in a science fiction story. But not at all: it was the present, with what the current technologies allow us to do today. It made me aware that, if I was not in the future but only in the present, it meant that the rest of the world was in the past. And people don't notice it, like a fish in the water that doesn't notice he's wet! Everybody still uses inefficient thermal engines, badly insulated buildings, outdated heating, cooling or lighting systems, old industrial processes, and dirty fossil fuels, and find it all normal. This is what needs to be changed: we must change our world to make it modern and efficient!This is THE learning of this adventure for me.

Looking Ahead:

We need to go further in fighting skepticism and defeatism and demonstrate how to decarbonize the world. This has taken me to launch my next project, Climate Impulse, a liquid green hydrogen powered airplane that will attempt to fly around the planet non-stop and without any emissions in 2028.

Vision for the Future:

Today, we don't need to choose between a sacrificial and expensive ecology, or a polluting but profitable industry. Ecology can become a profitable and clean industry.

Even for the ones not believing in human-made climate change, there are enough technical solutions that make economic sense to become more efficient, reduce waste and pollution, as well as protect the environment. Ecology can come at the core of economic development, offering new business opportunities and more profit margin.
What we need to do, all together, is to work at promoting all these solutions, and become realistic in obtaining practical results outside of any ideology.

Prof. Dr. Bertrand Piccard: LinkedIn | Facebook | Instagram | X
Solar Impulse Foundation: Website


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SOLARIMPULSE
AROUND THE WORLD

Mr. Paul Polman

Co-Author, Net Positive



"If you truly want to play your part in building a better future for our children and grandchildren, show courage, work with others, and do it now."

Objective:
I was part of the High-Level Panel, which developed the UN Sustainable Development Goals and have worked to advance them ever since. Particularly to galvanise business around the shared challenges no single government or company can tackle alone, and none more burning than climate change, nature restoration and inequality. It pays: during my ten years as Unilever's CEO we saw a 290% shareholder return while consistently ranking #1 in the world for sustainability.

Impact:
No one would pretend that the private sector is doing enough, but we have seen a step change in activity and ambition. Our role has been not only to get business to the table, but to foster transformative partnerships within industries, and also between companies, government and civil society. If you ask which sectors are most urgent for the SDGs, beyond energy, immediately you get to food, fashion, tourism and travel, the built environment and finance. In all, we are mobilising new coalitions to drive collective action. People, including CEOs, find their courage in the collective. Through The Fashion Pact, for example, we now have a third of the global industry collaborating on climate, biodiversity, plastics and other vital issues, and across the value chain. The world is facing exponential problems, and only through bold new partnerships can we scale and accelerate our response.

Partnerships:

We have some high-potential coalitions in place to advance the SDGs. The Fashion Pact I have mentioned. Others include the UN Race to Zero, which I have been involved with from the outset. I co-chair the Planetary Guardians, and helped launch Business for Nature and FOLU. I advise the TNFD, sit on the Rockefeller Board and work with PRME to help change business education. We have worked on industry coalitions to push nature restoration legislation in Europe, and the global plastics treaty. So collective action is definitely happening. But it's still the exception; we need it to become the rule.

Investments:

I'm increasingly spending time on mobilising capital towards the SDGs. Including helping set up three impact funds, catalyzing over $10bn. The challenge is upfront costs and perceived risks, but there have been steps forward. In 2023, for example, global investment in renewable energy skyrocketed to $1.8 trillion, an all-time high. Yet still these investments need to be two to three times bigger. At the company level, it helps many are realising the cost of inaction now outstrips the cost of action, particularly with climate, and where regulation is shifting. And the needed technology is coming online faster than anticipated.

SDG Impact:

The Goals are interlinked because, for humanity's greatest challenges, including poverty, health, education, inequality, climate change, and conflict, we must move on all or risk failing on each. But Goals 10, Reduced Poverty, and 13, Climate Action, are most burning. Goal 17, Partnership, is at the heart of our work.

Success:

If we want to shift industry norms, as we did for instance in consumer goods on the issues of palm oil and deforestation, we need a critical mass of companies across the value chain to move. This requires leading companies, who carry the needed weight and credibility in the market. And these companies need courageous leaders at the top. It helps to focus on tipping points, and it all begins with mindset. There really is no systems transformation without human transformation. We call it a Net Positive, or regenerative mindset, where instead of being "less bad", companies work to actively make the world better. The aim is to be able to answer an overall yes to two simple questions: Am I profiting from helping solve the world's problems, rather than from creating them? And is the world, therefore, better off because my business is in it?

Personal Story:

I believe if most CEOs visited the poorest people in their value chain, they would be moved to do business differently. When I was CEO of Unilever and I went to Bangladesh and Pakistan, I saw many who were struggling to make a living, or even survive. Many, of course, were garment workers, and the Rana Plaza collapse was a tragic wake-up call for the company – especially when we saw few in the textile industry stepping up or taking responsibility. The most important thing for executives is to remember that their business would be nowhere without the human beings across their value chains, none of whom should be left behind. During Covid again we saw suffering, when big companies cut off small suppliers and refused to pay for orders they had placed. But we also saw businesses rewarded for treating their suppliers and employees with dignity and respect.

Looking Ahead:

We can and must drive collective action across different industries, learning from our experiences in food, fashion and elsewhere. Different sectors need different models but, however you structure it, the goal is shifting from purely competitive leadership to collaborative leadership. And to build wider partnerships with policy-makers and NGOs too.

Vision for the Future:

Ask yourself what kind of leader you want to be. What did you put first, self-interest or shared interest? Did you manage to move beyond immediate and short-term pressures, to lead for the long-term? Did you set the targets the world needs, or the targets you knew you could get away with? At the toughest moments, did you choose the harder right, or the easier wrong? These things are extremely difficult, and powerful, vested interests will undoubtedly stand in your way. But we live in a world where timidity and delay are as bad as doing nothing. Where our problems are getting worse by the day, and standing still is, therefore, the same as falling behind. If you truly want to play your part in building a better future for our children and grandchildren, show courage, work with others, and do it now.

Biography:

Paul Polman works across a range of organisations, coalitions and funds to accelerate action by business to tackle climate change, regenerate nature and reduce inequality. He is a global advocate for the UN Sustainable Development Goals, which he helped develop.

As CEO of Unilever (2009-2019), Paul demonstrated how business can profit through

purpose, marrying a long-term, multi-stakeholder model with excellent financial performance. During Paul's tenure, shareholders saw their returns increase by 290% while the company consistently ranked 1st in the world for sustainability and as one of best places to work.

He has been recognized as #3 in the Thinkers50, after publishing his critically-acclaimed book with sustainability expert Andrew Winston, "Net Positive: how courageous companies thrive by giving more than they take."

Mr. Paul Polman: LinkedIn | X | Website | Newsletter



Ms. Stefanie Powers

Actress and Founding President, William Holden Wildlife Foundation



"We adaptively manage through evidence-based learning."

Objective:
Throughout my life and my long-time career in theatre, television, and films, foremost in my mind has always been the protection, conservation, and welfare of the natural world. This is exemplified in wildlife, biodiversity, the environment, and domesticated animals who have accompanied our evolution and served us in war and in peace.

Impact:
Of the activities I have pursued to arrive at my current position are the following: in childhood, I was a member of 4H, and at home, we had a private sanctuary for anything that fell out of a tree, crawled into our backyard, or was hit by a car. I was raised partially on my stepfather's stud farm, where we were taught all of the hard lessons of animal husbandry and the commitment to the responsibility and welfare of animals, both domestic and exotic. Those lessons led me to rescue a baby Malaysian Sun Bear that had been sold to the pet trade, thus opening the door to the community of professionals and enthusiasts who look after wildlife in captivity. I have served on the board of four zoos in the United States and as a conservation consultant for Jaguar North America, where I created the Jaguar Conservation Trust, which I operated in Belize, Guatemala, and Costa Rica for five years. I was active in the movement to protect North American wild horses and was instrumental in obtaining a 6-month moratorium on wild horse roundups and sales from feed lots. In addition, I was able to affect the transfer of 40 wild horses whose DNA was traced to Spanish bloodlines. These horses were saved, collected, and transported to

a private ranch in South Dakota, where they survived and prospered thanks to the Ford Motor Company and their negotiations with the BLM in Washington, D.C.

Partnerships:

Through my long-time relationship with William Holden, whose conservation work was never publicized, I became a shareholder in the Mount Kenya Game Ranch. The MKGR, now a conservancy, is a 2000-acre converted farm on the slopes of Mount Kenya, where Bill established the first game ranch for the preservation of species in all of Sub-Saharan Africa in 1959. It was Bill's hope to build a wildlife education center for the youth of Kenya to learn about the importance of preserving their world heritage wildlife. Thus, after his death in 1981, I founded a 501(c)3 public charity called the William Holden Wildlife Foundation in order to build and endow the education center Bill had imagined, whose mission statement is 'Wildlife conservation through education and alternatives to habitat destruction.'

At the time, I couldn't envision that we would grow into the service of our mission statement as we have. It is the work all my staff and I do that brings our mission to the communities we serve, which number over 6000 in our outreach and 11000 at our main center annually.

Successes:

After years of concentrating on the first half of our mission statement, we are now concentrating on its second half. In 2017, we began a program of habitat restoration, including farmland in rural areas, with an emphasis on carbon capture. We created seven pilot projects attached to primary and secondary schools where we have, over the years, rebuilt their campus infrastructure. Our outreach to students, their teachers, and parents introduces a practice of regenerative soil and farming techniques that produce higher quality and quantity of food even in drier conditions. This program of Agro Ec teaches small farmers how they may become more productive and averts them from the need to further exploit and damage land through over-chemicalization and poor farming practices.

Looking to the Future:

We are currently in the process of establishing a protocol with criteria to prove and qualify a given piece of land as having accomplished measurable soil regeneration. We partner with two laboratories in Kenya and one in the United States for soil analysis, as well as a local Kenyan laboratory that specializes in carbon measurement in soil.

Investments:

Our multiple achievements since 1982 are thanks to our donors and our careful husbandry of their donations. We keep our overheads to a bare minimum, and by the grace of one donor, all of our operational costs in Los Angeles are covered. In spite of this good news, it is still a constant challenge to raise funds for our ongoing projects as well as our ever-increasing new ones. Since I am the chief fundraiser, it rests on me to seek grants and funding at great personal sacrifice. Whatever I have sacrificed in my personal and professional lives is compensated for by the impact we have made and the help we have given to the countless people who have benefited from the efforts of our work at WHWF.

Looking Ahead:

The Agro-Ec aspect of the WHWFEC (William Holden Wildlife Foundation Education Center) is designed to be replicated by everyone we reach through our education programs on-site and our outreach to rural areas.

Vision for the Future:

We adaptively manage through evidence-based learning.

SDG 1

At one of the rural schools where we have reconstructed all classrooms, including a special needs classroom, our Agro-Ec Project has successfully produced food sufficient for the student gardeners to raise money to help other students in the school through the sale of the produce.

SDG 2

We encourage parents and teachers at our rural schools to learn and participate in the Agro-Ec gardens we have installed at the schools. We hope that they will apply these methods at their own homes and small farms to produce a higher quality of food for personal consumption and sale, and we guarantee our continuous support.

SDG 13

All our programs are designed to provide information and applied approaches to climate mitigation. In addition, our education center grounds have successfully preserved critical habitat along the Nanyuki River, which contains one of the last vestiges of original forest. And finally, our Agro-Ec Program targets critical carbon sequestration methods that can be applied by small-scale rural farmers across many landscapes.



Ms. Irene Pritzker

President, IDP Foundation



"The key takeaway is working with the government on shared outcomes is key to this work, and it is through public-private partnerships that significant and lasting change can be ignited."

Objective:
Low-fee private schools (LFPS) are an organic community response to overwhelmed public education systems in low and lower-middle-income countries, owned and operated by local education entrepreneurs charging affordable fees in underserved communities. However, LFPS often receive little to no support from government and multi-lateral funding agencies, meaning millions of children are being ignored. Therefore, the IDP Foundation used its philanthropic capital in a catalytic way to enable local financial partners to support these schools.

Impact:
IDPF has been on a transformative journey, overcoming challenges, embracing sustainability through innovative financial investment, and fostering local engagement. The revolutionary financial model empowers local communities to effect change by improving access to and quality of education, marking a shift from reliance on aid to achieving financial sustainability. When IDPF started its journey 16 years ago, it became clear that these schools were falling through the cracks, both in terms of government recognition and private sector support. Through programs in Ghana and Kenya, combining access to capital and training, we have seen these schools prove their resilience. There has been over a 96% repayment rate on school improvement loans from micro-finance partners, and have worked with governments to build better engagement. Over 1,900 schools have

been supported, ensuring that their infrastructure and classrooms are conducive to learning and fees remain affordable for low-income families, reaching over 400,000 learners.

Partnerships:

We believe in collective action, making partnerships central to our work. The United Nations Office of Partnership (UNOP) supported us early on with invaluable introductions, guidance, and opportunities to engage in key education-related discussions. We collaborate with organizations focused on education and systemic change. As a learning organization, we embrace ideation, experimentation, and long-term commitment, empowering local actors to deliver sustainable solutions. We partner with national governments, UN agencies, ECOSOC, Foundations, NGOs, financial institutions, and other mission-aligned organizations that are seeking sustainable solutions in global education.

Investments:

IDPF has proven a sustainable investment pathway that emphasizes the need for government recognition of the affordable non-state sector and embraces policies that recognize this sector and support government efforts. Through partnership with the Government of Ghana, IDPF helped establish a regulatory environment based on trust between the government and school proprietors, fostering a more transparent and inclusive education system.

SDG Impact:

IDPF targets SDG 4 (Education) because not a single other SDG goal is connected to, dependent on, or impacted by education. By putting education at the center of our strategic focus, we have a major impact across the entire spectrum of SDG goals.

Success:

While governments are responsible for providing quality free education for all children, in many developing countries this is not happening, despite often meeting, or exceeding, recommended UNESCO benchmarks on budget allocation. As a people-led response, communities in low and lower-income countries have increasingly taken educating their youth into their own hands by opening low-fee private schools. However, these schools are left out of national education policies and disregarded by international support, either through a lack of understanding or willful ignorance. IDP Foundation has spent over 16 years shining a spotlight on these schools, legitimizing their contribution to progress towards SDG 4, engaging with governments, multi-laterals, funders, and other stakeholders to shift mindsets and engage systems change. The key takeaway is working with

the government on shared outcomes is key to this work, and it is through public-private partnerships that significant and lasting change can be ignited.

Personal Story:

In 2008, traveling to the Agbogbloshie market in Accra, Ghana, I came face to face with the reality of low-fee private schools and their lack of access to capital and school management training. Not believing in aid dependency, I wanted to discover a sustainable solution to this issue. What followed was a challenging journey to find local partners, design programs, engage national governments, and ultimately impact the lives of over 400,000 children in Ghana and Kenya to date. I witnessed first-hand the sheer determination and commitment of these school proprietors, who were delivering education in the most difficult of circumstances, and as a trained teacher with a background in social economics, I was able to understand the magnitude of the obstacles that they faced. I also recognized the power of listening, rather than imposing Western solutions on diverse cultural backgrounds, which has been crucial to our program's success.

Looking Ahead:

This model is not only sustainable but is currently being replicated in different contexts.

IDP Foundation, in partnership with Save the Children Global Ventures and a consortium of partners, has designed the Generation Empowerment Fund to replicate and scale this model across Sub-Saharan Africa.

Vision for the Future:

IDPF's ambition is to attract more catalytic funders and private investors to the affordable non-state sector while engaging governments to create supportive regulatory frameworks for low-fee private schools. What is needed is more recognition, integration, and support of these schools so that they can continue to serve low-income communities and contribute to turning the tide on the lack of access to quality education in the developing world. For example, despite reaching 98% enrollment in primary education in Sub-Saharan Africa, 90% of children can't read a simple text with comprehension by age 10. Demand for education financing in Sub-Saharan Africa creates a $4.9 billion total market potential that is currently unmet. If philanthropies like IDPF are bold, agile, and empower local actors to be primary change makers, then they can have a crucial catalytic role in this investment potential being realized.

Biography:

Irene Pritzker co-founded the IDP Foundation, Inc. (IDPF) with her daughter, Liesel, in

2008. She was motivated when she visited Ghana that same year and saw how many local schools had barely any infrastructure or resources. Irene considered whether it would be possible to successfully provide a business loan to these schools given that they were serving the poorest families in Ghana.

Focusing on localization and working closely with the Government, the school proprietors and having developed an extraordinary partnership with local NGO and Bank Sinapi Aba she launched a successful pilot program with 105 schools with an initial enrolment of 27,000 children. The IDP Rising School Program continues to grow today, no longer dependent on aid, and the model has been replicated, expanding with new partners into new countries, reaching over 1,000 schools, serving over 200,000 children.

In 2020, Irene decided to step back from day-to-day operations and hire a CEO. She remains actively involved as Chair of the Board. IDPF continues to thrive and expand the impact at an impressive scale. (update) As of March 2024, IDPF operates in Ghana and Kenya with a reach of over 400,000 students and over 1,900 schools supported with 2,166 loans disbursed.

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IDP Foundation: LinkedIn | Facebook | Instagram | X | Website



Dr. Aziza Shad

The Herman and Walter Samuelson Children's Hospital at Sinai, LifeBridgeHealth, Baltimore MD and the Aslan Project, Washington DC.



"The first step toward setting up a successful, replicable program is identifying the need..."

Objective:
The biggest challenge in my field is providing equitable access to quality pediatric cancer care in low-resource settings. I co-founded The Aslan Project, a Washington, DC-based nonprofit, in 2012 with a focus on Ethiopia, as the country lacked any capacity to treat children with cancer at the time. Our initial goal was to open Ethiopia's first pediatric oncology unit and training program so that children with cancer treated there would get state-of-the-art treatment.

Impact:
In the decade since the founding of the first pediatric oncology unit in Addis Ababa, our training initiatives, investment, and mentorship have spurred the establishment of a comprehensive pediatric cancer healthcare system that spans the country, with five comprehensive pediatric cancer programs that collectively have treated more than 7000 children. The number of pediatric hematologist-oncologists has grown from zero to nine, with eighteen more currently in training. Scores of nurses and tens of pharmacists assigned to the units have received training in pediatric oncology. To prevent abandonment of care, we helped establish TAPCCO, an Ethiopian non-profit that provides free housing, counseling, transportation, nutrition, and other services, including skill-building for parents at all five centers, so that pediatric cancer patients can get their treatment in a holistic, supportive environment. As a result, Ethiopia has been chosen as one of the focus countries for the WHO Global Initiative for Childhood Cancer (GICC).

Partnerships:

Aslan Project's work on the ground and remotely is conducted by our volunteer global medical faculty. Support of their institutions: Sinai Hospital, Baltimore, Universities of Rochester and North Carolina, and Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto, have played a key role. St. Jude Global has been an invaluable partner, sponsoring faculty and sharing expertise. We partner with premier cancer institutions in India, Pakistan, and Israel to provide hands-on experience to our trainees and work with other global collaborators to address gaps in capacity. Our key local partners are the Ethiopian Ministry of Health, the University hospitals treating children with cancer, and TAPCCO.

Investments:

Our initial work establishing Ethiopia's first pediatric cancer program included not only training doctors, nurses, and pharmacists to treat and care for the patients but also renovating the hospital space and procuring novel equipment (e.g., biosafety cabinets) and drugs not included in the government's Essential Drugs list. These procurements were very challenging: A costly shipment of a vital chemotherapy drug expired in customs, and the hospital lacked personnel to maintain the equipment. Together with our partners, we have addressed these challenges by advocating with government and hospital leadership and seeking international partners who could provide needed drugs and training.

SDG Impact:

As we continue to build and expand pediatric cancer capacity in Ethiopia through the education and training of a first-generation workforce, creating quality hospital programs, and, more importantly, developing a sustainable and nationally unified healthcare system, the Aslan Project initiative addresses SDGs 3, 4, 8, 9, 16, and 17.

Success:

The key to the success of the Aslan Project is the dedication, commitment, and expertise of our human workforce, namely, our volunteer medical faculty who have donated thousands of hours of service and vacation time to educate our partners and mentor our programs, together with the brilliant and selfless Ethiopian physicians, nurses, pharmacists, psychologists, and social workers who have joined us to develop this very challenging discipline. Initially, when pediatric cancer was a nascent field in the country, it was difficult to attract healthcare professionals to our training programs and to change attitudes about, inter alia, the curability of childhood cancer, operating procedures, data collection, and the importance of psychosocial support. Through continued education and advocacy, our pediatric cancer programs have become models for other Ethiopian

institutions, and applicants for our fellowship training program now hail from across the country who want to provide pediatric cancer care at their home hospitals.

Personal Story:

I have always believed that children with cancer should have access to treatment irrespective of their birthplace, color, creed, religion, education, or socioeconomic status. I have spent most of my professional life working towards that goal. The inspiration behind the Aslan Project is two young boys, Temesgen and Eyoel, who came to me at Georgetown for treatment from Ethiopia, misdiagnosed and suffering from an advanced disease that we could not cure. In 2011, I traveled to Ethiopia with Mary Louise Cohen, co-founder of the Aslan Project, to learn about their pediatric cancer healthcare system, only to realize that there were none. We forged a partnership with the Ethiopian Ministry of Health to develop Ethiopia's first comprehensive pediatric oncology program. In 2012, together with a group of my patients' parents, and global experts in pediatric oncology, I formed the Aslan Project to promote equitable access for children with cancer in low-resource settings.

Looking Ahead:

The Aslan Project's model for creating a sustainable pediatric cancer healthcare system is scalable and already is being replicated by other countries. Our pediatric hematology-oncology fellowship curriculum is being utilized by other low-resource sub-Saharan African countries, while other Ethiopian pediatric sub-specialty training programs are seeking to adopt our twinning model.

Vision for the Future:

The first step toward setting up a successful, replicable program is identifying the need, followed by articulating a vision that incorporates a roadmap with clearly defined goals and objectives.

The project should be realistic, not overly ambitious. Identify partners and stakeholders and set priorities and expectations so there is a clear understanding of each partner's commitment to the project. Build strong relationships with the stakeholders, be prepared for unexpected setbacks, and have alternate solutions available.

As you start meeting goals, focus on sustainability. Perfect your model with a 360-degree assessment to identify strengths and fix weaknesses. Your model is now ready for replication and further growth.

My recommendation for twinning programs seeking to replicate our model would be to secure necessary policy and financial commitments from the government and other institutional partners from the start to maximize the success of any interventions and reduce the financial burden on the twinning partner.

Biography:

Aziza Tahir Shad, MD is the Ellen W.P. Wasserman Chair of Pediatrics, Chief, Division of Pediatric Hematology Oncology, and Director of the Kara Amey Cancer Survivorship Program at the Herman and Walter Samuelson Children's Hospital at Sinai, Baltimore, MD. She is a Professor of Pediatrics and Oncology at Georgetown University School of Medicine, and a Clinical Professor of Pediatrics at George Washington University School of Medicine, Washington DC.

Dr Shad is the Co-Founder and Medical Director of The ASLAN Project, a non-profit organization devoted to improving pediatric oncology capacity in developing countries. She is a member of the WHO Working Group, WHO Global Initiative for Childhood Cancer, and Children's Oncology Group.

Dr Shad's clinical and academic interests have focused on pediatric lymphoma, cancer survivorship, palliative care, and international oncology. She is actively involved in the development of pediatric oncology programs in developing countries in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. She has spoken at scientific meetings, both nationally and internationally, and is widely published. She has been honored with multiple academic and national awards including the '2019 and 2024 Top 100 Women in Maryland'. She has been listed as one of the Top Doctors of Washington 2002-2015 and 'Top Doctors of Baltimore' since 2017.

LifeBridge Health: LinkedIn | Facebook | Instagram | X



Mr. Feike Sijbesma

Honorary Chairman, Royal DSM



"Whenever you can, however busy you are, take the time to listen and learn. To learn about yourself, about those around you, about the world."

Objective:
Hunger and malnutrition still tragically blight hundreds of millions of lives globally - despite remarkable increases in agricultural yields and food production over the last 75-100 years. I wanted my company to help tackle this massive challenge and take responsibility in society by applying its core competencies in health and nutrition, plus global reach and partner relationships, to get essential vitamins and micronutrients to as many people as possible, wherever the need was greatest.

Impact:
Firstly, this and other purpose-led initiatives anchored in the company's core business became effective levers for internal and external stakeholders in the journey to explicitly place purpose and performance - doing well by doing good - at the heart of strategy and culture. Collectively embracing the understanding that reach and ability bring a responsibility to act - also for businesses. Secondly, in terms of outcomes and impact, we reached millions of people with essential nutrition they could not otherwise access. Thirdly, we increased capability. With Africa Improved Foods in Rwanda, we established a business ecosystem working with smallholder farmers, many of them women, to produce fortified staple foods for local markets alongside products for use by the UN World Food Programme and regional governments in humanitarian interventions. As the saying goes, "Give a person a fish, and they are fed for a day. Teach them how to fish, and they can eat for a lifetime."

Partnerships:

Partners are indispensable. Without strong and successful relationships with the WFP, local governments, non-government actors, and other like-minded companies, we wouldn't have been able to reach so many people with improved nutrition. It's important to recognise the strengths but also have humility to see the limitations of your core competencies and connect with complimentary partners who can provide expertise and services outside your scope. WFP, for example, is an incredibly well-oiled logistics machine to reach people in need on the ground. It's also incredibly well-connected and able to interact with stakeholders who aren't natural partners for business.

Investments:

We encountered a mindset of addressing malnutrition primarily through donations from abroad, yet that doesn't solve structural causes of hunger at the source. I believe that investing in on-the-ground capabilities in low- and middle-income countries is key to their development. I founded an African Social Enterprise called Africa Improved Foods in partnership with developmental financial institutions, including the FMO and IFC, and the government of Rwanda. Finding capital for a new and more risky investment wasn't always straightforward. Yet the partners shared our belief in the potential for long-term impact in terms of improved nutrition, local economy benefits, and climate resilience.

SDG Impact:

The main focus was on SDG 2–Zero Hunger. Food and nutrition are central to Good Health and Well-being–SDG 3–and consequently for fulfilling one's full potential and breaking intergenerational cycles of Poverty – SDG 1, also supported by AIF's capability-building. We furthermore contributed to SDGs 5, 12, 13 and 17.

Success:

Establishing win-win-win partnerships is critical. The partnership with the UN WFP, which started in 2007, included the following key success factors:

1. Innovating Products: We helped WFP make a strategic change in the way they viewed their food basket, from being predominantly around calories to taking a broader view of macro- and micronutrients needed for nutritious food products.

2. Increasing Reach: Together, we reach 35 million people annually with essential nutrition, helping assuage the nutritional deficiencies which still affect some two billion people around the world, stunting growth, capping potential, and threatening lives.

3. Building Partnerships: Naturally, there were challenges when working with two organisations with markedly different cultures. Yet, over time, as we worked increasingly closely together, we were able to build a foundation of trust and a rapport that meant the people involved felt like colleagues. This enables quick collaborative action when crises hit.

Personal Story:

Many moments throughout this journey strengthened my conviction that we must do more. One trip to Bangladesh organised by the UN-WFP in 2008 stands out in particular. We were talking to some villagers when one of the women placed an infant in my arms. She asked if I had children at home; I said yes, two sons, and she told me this was her sixth child. She implored me to take her baby with me when I left, explaining that if our group was to return, she would no longer have six children anyway. It was heart-breaking, yet also affirmative: it is within our power to prevent this if we, the global community, choose to do so. I was determined to help her and millions of others like her, not by taking her child, but by addressing the cause in every way possible, at scale. Hunger must stop.

Looking Ahead:

Putting purpose at the forefront of business – doing well by doing good – is inherently scalable as long as there's a clear link with your core competencies. Then, every euro, dollar, or renminbi you earn reflects a real-world benefit created, and your impact drives further growth and success.

Vision for the Future:

Whenever you can, however busy you are, take the time to listen and learn. To learn about yourself, about those around you, about the world. Insight is a crucial competence for business leaders, society, and life in general. It is fundamental to making intentional choices, to making real connections, and to understanding the need behind the need. It is the key to discovering your purpose, for yourself, and as an organisation. It truly allows you to build connections, based on trust and collaboration, that develop, deliver, and, above all else, grow your impact - all in line with your purpose.

Mr. Feike Sijbesma: LinkedIn
Darwin International: LinkedIn



Mr. Inge Solheim

Explorer



"Challenge the establishment, disturb the comfortable, and take personal responsibility."

Objective:
People call me an Explorer. We humans like to put each other in defined boxes. Usually it is linked to job, education, social status, a diagnosis, or some personality trait. We do that to ourselves, too. Probably to make sense of the world around us, and it is easier than seeing the complexity and many facets of a human being.

I have spent a lifetime expanding my boxes helping others do the same.

Impact:
I have had many jobs and done many things: sports, military, teaching, finance, entrepreneurship, expeditions, security, and more. What most people associate with me is probably the adventures and expeditions including many high profile trips, celebrity clients, and big TV productions. I used to see myself as a guide "from A to B," but I now see myself more as a facilitator of growth, like a coach or mentor. People and myself reach new levels of insight and ability through relatively extreme experiences. Nature is the best process arena for this. Pushing yourself, being outside of your comfort zone, leaving the noise behind, and working together with other people towards a goal all can have a transformative and healing effect on us humans. We are Nature, and it is vital for our mental and physical health that we reconnect. I am fortunate to experience this with so many interesting people.

Partnerships:

Expeditions, projects, and initiatives are sometimes initiated by organisations, charities, or TV production companies. Other times, private individuals hire me. My job is to plan, prepare, and facilitate. I try to bridge the gap between ability and ambition. The level of challenge varies a lot. I am very grateful for all the inspiring experiences. Taking people with physical or mental disabilities on challenging expeditions is what feels most meaningful for me. On these projects I have been working together with veterans charities, mental health organisations, and schools. Media outlets and corporate sponsors are essential partners.

Investments:

All of my hundreds of projects have been different. Sometimes, they're fully funded by the clients; other times, they rely on outside funding. Sometimes, I take part in funding efforts, too. Especially when it is science, environmental projects, or education, we rely on corporate or private sponsors. Media coverage and social media reach decide very often how interested sponsors are. Hard work and creativity are usually what make the project fly.

SDG Impact:

For me, it is difficult to analyse or quantify the impact of a conservation project in the Arctic or a South Pole expedition with disabled people. My gut feeling and observation is that it makes a difference for the people and animals involved. Other people can put it in an SDG perspective.

Success:

My focus and philosophy are to do more of what feels right and less of what feels wrong. If we can make a positive impact on the world around us, it is both a duty and a huge privilege.

Personal Story:

I have so many stories and amazing experiences. It is difficult to single out one story... I do have a favourite quote that has helped me personally and people I have been leading through hardship. "Sometimes doing your best is not enough, you have to do what is required" -W. Churchill

Looking Ahead:

I hope I can do this for the rest of my life and many other things, too. I refuse to be defined by narrow boxes or limitations set by others. I have seen incredible examples of human potential.

Vision for the Future:

What I want for all of us, and for future generations, is to experience biodiversity, animals in their natural habitat, see people live out their potential, true freedom and liberty, less corruption and manipulation, health, security, and prosperity for all. We all have to fight for this and be willing to do what it takes to achieve it. It is naive to think that the habits, politics, people, or culture that have created the challenges we face are capable of solving them. Challenge the establishment, disturb the comfortable, and take personal responsibility.

Mr. Inge Solheim: LinkedIn



The Countess Sondes

Chair,
Lees Court Estate



"..follow your heart, be willing to take risks, trust your instincts, 'think outside of the box' and work your guts out! "

Objective:
To ensure that the community and way of life at Lees Court, an 800-year-old English estate, continue to survive and flourish with its traditional values, we have fostered creative and innovative partnerships. We have developed into our seven thriving enterprises: Archaeology, Farming, Education (Lees Court Education and Research Network - LEARN), Maritime, Conservation and Game Shooting, Tortoise Breeding, and Woodland Management

Impact:
The discovery of several prehistoric sites has significantly altered archaeologists' understanding of the area, previously thought to lack prehistoric habitation.

Through LEARN, we educate groups from corporates to school children from the disadvantaged to the disabled, about the natural environment. Also enhancing, exposing, and experiencing natural features on the Estate. Non-Food Crops can reduce dependence on fossil fuels and offer new opportunities for health and wellbeing. As an Agricultural Advisor to the United Nations Office of Partnerships, I have engaged with a global audience.

The Estate led a multi-organization PhD project with the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology, demonstrating that correctly managed commercial shooting can increase biodiversity. We adhere to the principles from this five-year project, making it a

leading commercial shoot that enhances conservation and biodiversity.

The Estate inspired the development of Dutch Elm Disease-resistant trees, initiating adaptation trial sites with national and international research organizations.

Partnerships:

As an Ambassador for the Global Partnerships Forum, I have witnessed the global impact of partnerships. The Estate has established over a dozen collaborations, with key partners including the Kent Archaeological Society and the Turner Contemporary.

The Society is planning a peer-reviewed book and applying for Natural England Scheduled Monuments status. Together we are collaborating with museums to ensure accessibility of the finds.

The Turner Contemporary, Kent, a leading UK art gallery, partners with us to bring school children to the Estate, fostering an appreciation for nature and integrating it into the curriculum, celebrating the relationship between art, ecology, and agriculture.

Investments:

While grants from various NGOs and government bodies are available, their stringent conditions and requirements often create obstacles in the application process. As an organisation with only two office staff and a reliance on external consultants, the time, cost and effort needed to apply for such funding is often prohibitive. Consequently, we finance most of our educational projects independently or collaborate with larger partners who have the expertise to manage the application process on our behalf. Our farming challenges are addressed through the revenue generated by our successful farming practices, allowing us to reinvest in the farm and Estate.

SDG Impact:

We have made significant strides towards 14 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Our most notable achievements are:

Zero Hunger - Enhancing farming techniques bolstering food security

Quality Education - Providing diverse groups with quality education through LEARN

Partnerships to Achieve Goals - Prioritising collaboration with partners to effectively pursue our sustainability objectives

Success:

The key to our success has been identifying our strengths and finding partners who will complement and enhance them. Our four pillars are: Beauty, Community, History and Innovation.

By putting together a strong team, creating new areas of enterprise and developing significant partnerships, Lees Court has become recognised as a highly diversified Centre of Excellence.

My takeaway is simple: follow your heart, be willing to take risks, trust your instincts, "think outside of the box" and work your guts out!

Personal Story:

When my husband passed away, I couldn't see my way forward, given the battles and lack of experience needed to carry the responsibility of 800 years of history.

As a former New Yorker with no background in farming or rural life, I had followed my heart and moved to England after marrying my British husband. After his death, with no immediate relatives to turn to, I was left to uphold the legacy of Lees Court. There were many obstacles in a country of primogenitor for an inexperienced foreign woman. At the time, I was informed that the estate would have to be sold within two years due to the financial situation, which was 27 years ago!

My closest mentor, the late Joan Rivers, who called me "Action Countess," encouraged me to put one foot in front of the other and find that extra strength you didn't know you had, and "go for it."

Looking Ahead:

My greatest wish is to secure Lees Court's continuity and future.

The archaeological project will run for at least 20 years, using land for archaeological research and education.

Our LEARN partnership with the Turner Contemporary will expand to Kent school curriculums, potentially nationwide, involving other agricultural businesses and NGOs.

Vision for the Future:

By viewing Lees Court through different eyes, and by 'thinking outside the box', I have

created my own paradise. Typically, on an historic British Estate might feature wheat, barley, horses, cattle, and sheep; at Lees Court it is echium, corn gromwell, tortoises, and you may find a hand axe made by a Neanderthal man! We share this paradise with groups, as supporters of the British Council, with their outreach to an audience of over 600 million. Our vision for land management is supported by over 50 groups who have visited Lees Court through our programme LEARN. Our advocacy, with exposure on television, radio, print, and digital media, ensures our messages reach a broad audience. As an industry leader, having spoken at conferences and other organisations, my vision is shared and demonstrates that it can be replicated. My core message is that land management offers opportunities to explore and integrate whatever your passions may be!

Biography:

The Countess Sondes is not a typical member of the British aristocracy in either her origin or her attitude. She represents the fusion of twenty-first century enterprise and insight, with centuries-old tradition.

A New Yorker by birth, Phyllis Kane lost her first husband only six and a half weeks after their marriage. Some years later she met Henry George Herbert, The Fifth Earl Sondes in New York. They were married in 1986 and she came to live in England. The Earl Sondes (or Lord Sondes) died in 1996. Determined to retain Lees Court and preserve the continuance of its way of life, she has brought her own unique vision to the Estate, seat of the Sondes Family for over eight centuries.

The Countess Sondes (or Lady Sondes) has infused the Lees Court Estate with can-do American ingenuity, blending this with her understanding of its historical way of life and that of the rural community. In essence, she has reinvented what it means to be a forward-thinking member of the aristocracy. The result is an exciting vision for the future of the British (or should it be English) countryside.

Lees Court Estate: Facebook | Instagram | X



Ms. Laura Turner Seydel

Chair, Captain Planet Foundation



"...we all have the power to create a demand for regenerative products in our food-buying habits."

Objective:
Raising awareness and scaling regenerative agriculture globally can help solve the biggest challenges facing humans: the climate and biodiversity crises, food and water insecurity, and the economic and health crises facing farmers. Regenerative agriculture includes adaptive managed grazing, cover cropping, and reduced soil tillage. This rebuilds soil organic matter, leading to carbon drawdown, drought, and flood resistance, and reduces costly inputs like fertilizers and pesticides that harm soil and grower health.

Impact:
About 800 million people worldwide are food insecure, facing starvation or lacking in essential nutrients. And approximately 2 billion people around the world do not have access to clean drinking water. Today, crop yields are declining, and native grasslands are suffering desertification due to grazing patterns and increased extreme weather: heat, storms, floods, and droughts. These conditions are causing higher food prices, declining fresh-water flows in streams and rivers, depletion of aquifers, destabilized economies, increased political instability, mass migration, and violence. The practices of regenerative agriculture and adaptive managed grazing have proven, through science and profits, worthy of investment and implementation. Our current conventional agricultural practices used for growing food are making it impossible to grow food now and in the future.

Partnerships:

Partners for training and educating farmers include Understanding Ag's Soil Health Academy, Deserts to Grasslands, Turner Institute of EcoAgriculture, the Savory Hubs, 1000 Farms Project, Patagonia, Rodale Institute, and Arizona State University. Important films about regenerative agriculture include Kiss the Ground, Common Ground, Soil Carbon Cowboys, Roots So Deep, and The Biggest Little Farm, to name a few. I am serving as executive producer of the film Common Ground and devoting my time and effort to help promote the movie as well as raise awareness and share the proven and scientific benefits of regenerative agriculture and grazing.

Investments:

The main challenge that farmers face when attempting to adopt regenerative practices is limited access to educational resources, training programs, and technical support to adopt and successfully implement these practices. That is why a global movement of companies, nonprofit organizations, governments, filmmakers, farmers/ranchers, institutions, and consultants are pulling in the same direction. It's out of necessity to survive. To scale, there needs to be awareness and investment.

SDG Impact:

Regenerative agriculture provides many benefits to aiding the overall goals of the SDGs, including Goal 2 (Zero Hunger), Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), Goal 13 (Climate Action), Goal 14 (Life Below Water) and Goal 15 (Life on Land).

Success:

The goal of the Common Ground film is to educate and help train enough farmers to reach 100 million acres of regenerative farms in the US; we have already reached 36 million acres. The film can play a key role in this initiative by empowering viewers, farmers, policymakers, corporate leaders, influencers, and students with the tools and information they need to alter our food and agricultural systems. Information is power!

Personal Story:

I attended my first Soil Health Academy in August 2020, and it changed my life. I learned that the current industrial methods of conventional farming are not sustainable. My dad, Ted Turner, had a vision long ago to buy ranches in the western US, take down the fences, and restore the natural ecosystem, including bringing back the native American bison. I've witnessed firsthand how implementing regenerative agriculture and adaptive managed grazing practices leads to a win-win for people, animals, and the planet. We

have seen an increase in the number of native plant species, pollinators, and bird species. Our ranches now contain more than 45,000 bison, plus elk, deer, beavers, antelope, bears, and mountain lions. Our scientific team helps reintroduce native threatened and endangered species, including several IUCN red-listed species, like the Mexican gray wolf, black-footed ferret, native cutthroat trout, Bolson tortoise, Chiricahua leopard frog, and monarch butterfly.

Looking Ahead:

With the success of the film Common Ground in the US, I am an executive producer of the trilogy's third soil-health film, Groundswell, which will take a worldwide view of the challenges and solutions needed to globally scale the practice of regenerative agriculture.

Vision for the Future:

We are building a movement in the US and around the world to transition our planet to regenerative farming and grazing. There are a lot of ways to get involved. Watch the films, help support NGOs that train farmers, support government policies that promote regenerative agriculture, and, finally, as consumers, we all have the power to create a demand for regenerative products in our food-buying habits. These products are much healthier and nutrient-dense and are better for our families than the chemically produced products.

Ms. Laura Turner Seydel: LinkedIn | Facebook | Instagram | X | Website



Ms. Ponsi Trivisvavet

CEO and Director, Inari



"As we understand more about the issues and implications of climate change, food security and farmer profitability, it's clear that we need everyone at the table."

Objective:
Inari is the SEEDesign™ company, working to address the issues of food system sustainability (climate change, food security, and farmer well-being) by designing nature-positive seeds. Bringing together AI-powered Predictive Design and a cutting-edge multiplex gene editing toolbox, we aim to increase yield in soybeans, corn and wheat by 10%-20% without requiring more crop inputs. Additionally, we have an ambitious goal to reduce corn's need for water and nitrogen fertilizer by as much as 40%.

Impact:
We are currently preparing to commercialize our first product, a higher-yielding soybean that already represents significant progress. We have also been actively trialing higher-yielding corn and, through our partner, InterGrain, are preparing to test higher-yielding wheat in Australia.

These are critical developments, because despite being an incredible success story, modern agriculture has heretofore relied on practices that are not sufficiently equipped to address the exponentially growing demands on our food supply – not to mention the mounting challenges from climate change.

Partnerships:
Partnerships are key to our approach at Inari, starting with our active participation in

issues-driven domestic and global organizations that prioritize a better future for all. To remain on the cutting edge of R&D, we work closely with an esteemed Scientific Strategy Board that includes notable figures such as Jennifer Doudna, who won the Nobel Prize for her discovery of the CRISPR-Cas9 genetic scissors. Even our commercial model is built around partnership: as a technology provider, we don't sell directly to farmers, instead partnering with seed companies to deliver innovations that will have the most impact for their farmer customers.

Investments:

We have been fortunate that investors have consistently expressed belief in our mission and confidence in our creation of significant economic and environmental value by delivering our breakthrough, nature-positive products to seed customers. Just this year, we successfully closed on a $103 million Series F fundraise that brought our cumulative equity raised to more than $575 million.

SDG Impact:

With the ability to design seeds that meet the world's needs, Inari is uniquely positioned to help address:
- Goal 2 (Zero Hunger)
- Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation)
- Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)
- Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities)
- Goal 13 (Climate Action)
- Goal 15 (Life on Land)

Success:

Our first key success factor and our first key challenge were one and the same: prove that our vision of pairing AI-powered predictive design and multiplex gene editing could produce real results. When we launched in 2016, there were still some in the scientific community who questioned whether multiplex gene editing – an advanced form of gene editing that involves making multiple edits to plants' natural DNA at the same time – was even feasible. Since then, we have not only successfully proven that it is, but we are now preparing to commercialize our first product: soybeans that yield significantly more without additional inputs.

The biggest challenge when addressing problems like climate change and food security is time. New breeding techniques will help farmers adapt exponentially faster than previous technologies, but the fact is that we are already playing catchup to these rapidly evolving issues. We can't waste a minute.

Personal Story:

I draw much of my inspiration from my grandfather and father. My grandfather taught people in Penang, Malaysia, how to fish, equipping them with functional skills to help better their lives. Following his example, my father instilled in me early on that the most critical factor in any career is to work in service of others. These lessons were reinforced for me many years later when I met a farmer in Indonesia who, because of hybrid seeds, could afford beef for his family for the first time. This proved to me the power and potential of agricultural innovation.

Looking Ahead:

We prioritized soybeans, corn and wheat for our initial products because they represent approximately 70% of the global seed market and have a significant environmental footprint, providing an immediate opportunity for impact. However, our platform can edit any crop in any geography, and we are evaluating options for future products.

Vision for the Future:

As we understand more about the issues and implications of climate change, food security and farmer profitability, it's clear that we need everyone at the table. Farmers of all sizes in all countries are directly impacted by this challenge, but large farmers in industrialized countries have a particularly unique opportunity. With their relative size, their relative impact can be that much greater – positioning them to create broad positive change at a fast pace. Many actually are entrepreneurs themselves, coming up with their own innovative, nature-positive solutions. There is a great opportunity to help take their ideas and bring them to scale for broader, even greater application.

Biography:

Ponsi Trivisvavet is CEO & Director of Inari, the SEEDesign™ company using predictive design and advanced multiplex gene editing to unlock the full potential of seed. Her broad management expertise in global agriculture helps Ponsi to lead Inari closer to achieving its mission of helping to build a more sustainable global food system in the face of climate change. Prior to joining Inari, she held several leadership roles including president of North America Seeds with Syngenta, after earning her MBA from Cornell University and working with McKinsey & Company.

Ms. Ponsi Trivisvavet: LinkedIn | X
Inari: LinkedIn | X



Mr. Hans Vestberg

President and CEO, Verizon



"If you want to lead a responsible business that moves society forward while achieving commercial success, you have to start with values."

Objective:
I have made digital inclusion my life's work because access to digital services are essential for individuals and communities to fully participate in 21st century life and everybody should have that opportunity. Digital services will help us achieve each of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and digital inclusion is the heart of Citizen Verizon, the responsible business strategy that powers our success while serving multiple stakeholders (customers, employees, shareholders and society).

Impact:
Verizon's network powers and empowers people to live, work and play to their fullest potential. We were the first in the U.S. to launch 5G mobility and pioneered the launch of fixed wireless access, which can deliver broadband-speed internet to communities that are underserved by fiber infrastructure. We built our business around customer choice and have priced our services on a wide spectrum from premium to value, so that everybody can access them.

In 2021, we partnered with the World Economic Forum to found the EDISON Alliance, a cross-industry platform for the private and public sectors to address the global digital divide, which, at the time, had left 2.7 billion people without access to the internet or mobile network services. Alliance members pledged to improve 1 billion lives around the

world by delivering digital services in education, healthcare and finance - a goal we have nearly met.

Partnerships:

No one person, company or government can solve the problem of digital inclusion and achieving the SDGs is collaborative work. So, we partner frequently with others.

The EDISON Alliance is a multi-stakeholder partnership that has enabled Verizon to collaborate on digital inclusion with companies like Mastercard, Vista Equity and Apollo Hospitals; organizations like the United Nations and the World Economic Forum; and governments like Bahrain, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Honduras, Nigeria, Rwanda, Togo and the United Arab Emirates. Verizon also partners frequently with organizations like Global Citizen, the United Nations, the UN Foundation and the U.S. government.

Investments:

Responsible business practices must be integrated into business strategy so that they receive continuous investment in good times and bad. At Verizon we are always investing in digital inclusion, not only because it is the right thing to do, but because we are expanding our customer base now and in the future, by giving people the access, means and skills they need to use our services. In 2021, we made a 5-year pledge of $3B to help close the digital divide and realize the SDGs, and we have issued $6 billion in green bonds to fund our energy transformation.

SDG Impact:

Digital inclusion enables the achievement of all 17 SDGs, while Citizen Verizon highlights our contributions to:

SDG 4: Quality Education
SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy
SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth
SDG 13: Climate Action
SDG 15: Life on land
SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Success:

Key to our success has been our steadfast commitment to running a responsible business that serves all of our stakeholders. In that way, we never stop doing business the

right way, there are no pauses or interruptions. Some of our notable achievements include:

Spearheading the EDISON Alliance 1 Billion Live challenge, which we have almost completed.

Reaching nearly 8 million students through Verizon Innovative Learning, our education initiative for students in the United States.

Equipping more than 300 thousand small business owners with digital skills through Verizon Small Business Digital Ready, with our goal to reach a million by 2030.

Using $6 billion in green bonds proceeds to fund 24 long-term renewable energy purchase agreements for more than 3.0 GW of projected renewable energy capacity.

Working to teach digital skills to half a million U.S. workers by 2030.

Personal Story:

When I began working at Ericsson, which served 180 countries, I saw the importance of digital networks firsthand, especially in Africa, where cell phones and the internet were essential to dealing with the Ebola outbreak. Later, in Ethiopia, my team and I were greeted by hundreds of villagers holding signs that read, "Thank you for bringing us the internet." We had connected a remote community to global society, and they saw the benefits.

I had been an early supporter of the UN Foundation, moved by the leadership of Ted Turner, its founder. Through that, I contributed to the drafting of the UN's SDGs, and I worked very hard to make digital inclusion an 18th goal. While it was not adopted, I see it as an essential component to each of the 17 that were. We cannot have justice, equality, economic opportunity or a sustainable planet without collaboration, technology and networks.

Looking Ahead:

Digital inclusion is a global cause that needs local solutions, so we look for community-based solutions that can apply worldwide. For example, our work with the government of Rwanda to subsidize device purchases could be used in any country where affordability is the primary obstacle to people getting online services.

Vision for the Future:

If you want to lead a responsible business that moves society forward while achieving commercial success, you have to start with values. Technology, politics and markets will always change. But your values are always with you and can guide you to incorporate society's needs into a successful business strategy.

My core values come from my childhood in Hudiksvall, Sweden. They are classically Swedish values like equality for all, the importance of building consensus, sustainability as a societal imperative and the power of diversity on any team.

When you know your values, you can apply them to the purpose of your business. Verizon's purpose is to power and empower people to live their fullest lives through the connections we provide. By adhering to our values, we fulfill that purpose in a responsible way that takes the needs of all our stakeholders into account.

Biography:

As CEO since 2018 and Chairman since 2019, Hans is the architect of Verizon's 5G network strategy, which powers and empowers how Verizon customers live, work and play. With an eye towards serving customers, shareholders, employees and society, Hans' strategic vision is to create the connections that matter most to our customers, from mobility and cloud services to the latest artificial intelligence applications. Hans has executed transformational investments, including the $53 billion purchase of C-Band spectrum, the largest in history. For customers, he has worked to deliver personalized services, choice and value through offerings like myPlan, the most customizable mobility plans in the U.S.

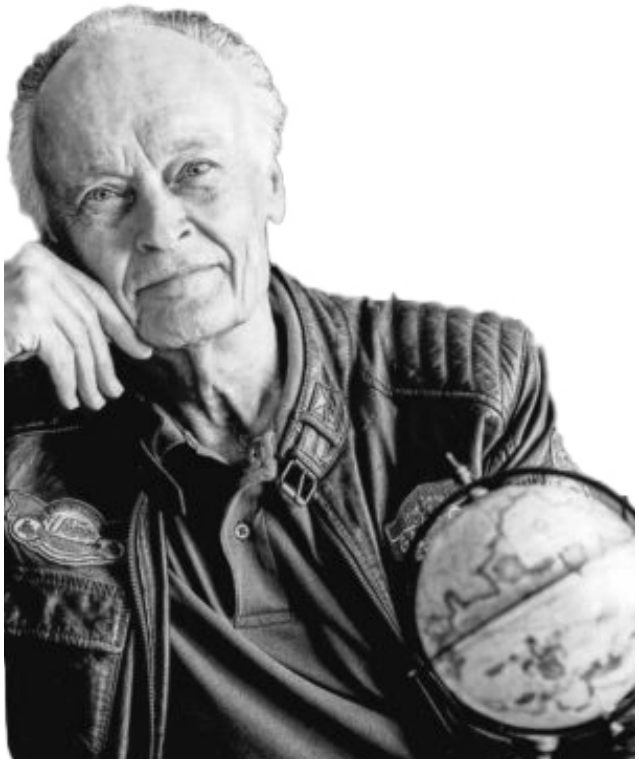
Hans is a board member at BlackRock, the UN Foundation, and the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative. He is also the founder and Chairman of the The World Economic Forum's EDISON Alliance for digital inclusion, which aims to impact 1 billion lives by delivering affordable, accessible and digital solutions in education, healthcare and financial services by 2025. Hans is a member of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Solutions Network, where he helped author the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Born in Hudiksvall, Sweden, Hans earned a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from the University of Uppsala in Sweden.

Mr. Hans Vestberg: LinkedIn | Instagram | X



Mr. Bernard Weber

Founder,
New 7 Wonders



"Our past is our future."

Objective:
At the end of last century, after 25 years of filmmaking, my last film, sponsored by Swissair for its 70th anniversary, was entirely shot and post-produced electronically. For me, this was the clear sign that I had to embark on a journey into this new digital age. So with the global reach that the internet and telephony promised, I began looking for a popular concept, a name or a word that embraced these new technologies.

Impact:
With the New7Wonders campaigns, for the first time in mankind's history, a global polling/voting was possible and was executed with a popular theme that everyone could easily understand and get excited about. Everyone's voice on this planet with access to the internet or mobile telephones could be heard and had a say in what monuments should be elected as the New 7 Wonders of the past two thousand years. In addition, the social-economic impact for countries hosting the elected New7Wonders has been tremendous. Governments who heard about this first movement and whose natural sites were nominated for the second campaign requested an analysis of the benefits/impacts should their site get elected. Five international studies concluded that the social-economic impact was in the billions of dollars over a five year period in terms of job creation, advertising, brand and tourism plus-value/income.

Partnerships:

Like anything that one undertakes, partnerships and knowledge exchanges are essential for success. In our case they were with both local and/or national governments, celebrities, NGOs, and the UN Office of Partnerships, which was a great encouragement to pursue our goal of reaching the largest crowd ever all over our planet.

Investments:

My personal goal in life was never to solely make money. Which also meant that I never had a proper business plan. My priority was to develop concepts and visuals that people would find attractive and encouraging enough to want to become a part of the movement. I was always convinced that I would be rewarded if I was successful in doing so... and so it happened. In terms of financing, as some philosophers have predicted, if you fully engage personally without making compromises and with perseverance the universal energies will help to realize the vision. Exactly this happened at all crossroads.

SDG Impact:

The SDG Goal which I am working towards is the promotion of decent work and economic growth, and I am also closely aligned with UNESCO's mission to preserve and keep monuments accessible for future generations. As my slogan for the first New7Wonders campaign was: "Our past is our future." Only our history and culture can lead humanity into the future.

Success:

The revival of the 7 Wonders of the World, an ancient Greek concept just like the Olympics, was immediately adopted by the world's citizens. It hit a very emotional string and fostered a deeper pride of what is the most important element that humanity leaves behind: it's culture! As a filmmaker I had my eye trained for visual impact. So, to draw attention to the first ever world voting campaign, I produced some spectacular visual feats and events for the TV and print media as they were the main disseminating drivers at the time. I launched New7Wonders with a spectacular amphibious seaplane water landing in the harbor of Sydney just in front of the Sydney Opera House during the 2000 Olympics. This was covered by almost every TV and print media around the world, including China and India who at that time had no or little interest in the Olympics.

Personal Story:

Right from the start of New7Wonders the feedback from citizens from around the world was overwhelming. In the year 2000, no social media networks existed and communication was only possible via email. With up to 17-28,000 emails per day received from

literally every corner of the world (225-countries), it surpassed all my expectations and has accumulated over 600 million votes cast so far.

Some examples:
August H. from SPAIN: 7Wonders, 7reasons to love and believe in our world!

Jose S. from MEXICO: N7W: the global soul of man (of all races, of all cultures, of all times), shines here!!!

Vicky Z. from GREECE: Thank you for giving people the right to vote for History!

Anny W. from CHINA: N7W is the wealth of all the people in the world.

Elcio D. from BRAZIL: WOW! That's the most important and democratic change that I have ever done!

Cem O. from TURKEY: The Winner is the World!

Looking Ahead:

I am now at a crossroad to either archive New7Wonders historically as the millenniums first ever global vote in the history of mankind or to bring it into the future with young enthusiasts and investors by creating a periodical, dynamic movement like the Olympics or the FIFA World Cup.

Vision for the Future:

There are so many wonders in the world (and many new ones being added) which deserve special care and attention. Eventually, they will also need conservation, so there is practically no limit for campaigning and electing New 7 Wonders in the future. I believe that a new generation of enthusiasts and investors could take the New7Wonders concept into the future to continue to promote and preserve these amazing cultural and historic sites around the world.

Biography:

1952 Born in Geneva/Switzerland
1960-70s French/German bilingual education
Beginning 1970s Film school at NYU in NY
Mid 1970s Training and start of filmmaking in Rome/Italy
1980 Second citizenship and living in Canada
2000 Launch of New7Wonders in München7Germany and Sydney/Australia


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Featured Stories

Mr. Sergio Fernández de Córdova

Executive Chairman, PVBLIC Foundation



"The challenges we face are immense, but so are the opportunities. True progress lies in pursuing what others deem impossible and redefining what has never been done."

Vision for the Future: Technology, Nature, and Humanity in Harmony

Bridging Innovation and Sustainability in the 21st Century

In the 21st century, humanity faces a pivotal moment where technological advancement must harmonize with the urgent imperative to safeguard our planet. Data, once seen solely as an economic asset, is now understood as a human right, a sovereign resource, and a natural entitlement that transcends borders and ecosystems. When harnessed responsibly, data has the potential to drive a new economic revolution—one that honors human dignity, upholds national sovereignty, and respects the rights of nature. Recognizing data in this broader context places it at the heart of efforts to scale technology, finance innovation, and address the evolving challenges of an increasingly digitized world.

As the Founder and Executive Chairman of the PVBLIC Foundation, my journey as an entrepreneur over the past 37 years has taught me the importance of understanding the complex interplay between technology and society. But it's my personal story that drives this vision. I immigrated to the United States from Peru at the age of nine, confronting the overwhelming challenge of adapting to a new culture while carrying the expectations of my historic family. These hurdles, which initially felt like barriers, became

opportunities. The mindset of never giving up became my way of life—an ethos that has fueled my entrepreneurial path, helping me build ventures, navigate financial challenges, and contribute to a global vision for progress.

From this perspective, I approach our collective challenge in the 21st century: how can nations and global organizations find the best way to create harmony between technology, nature, and humanity? How do we give back by restoring value and respect to everything we encounter? I believe we can. Based on my personal journey—working across public, private, and policy sectors worldwide—I propose a vision for how we can harness technology's full potential while ensuring that we respect nature and uphold human dignity. In this article, I will focus on three critical areas: Scaling Transformative Innovation, Building the Infrastructure of Tomorrow, and Securitizing Nature-Based Assets.

Scaling Transformative Innovation: Data as a Human, Sovereign, and Natural Right

Data is the lifeblood of the modern age. Like water and air, it is essential not only for economic development but also for the well-being of people and the planet. Data, as a human right, ensures equity and inclusion; as a sovereign right, it allows nations to control their resources; and as a natural right, it serves as a tool to measure and protect our ecosystems.

Acknowledging these rights is only the first step. With the emergence of innovative financial mechanisms and technologies, changes in how we manipulate and optimize data are inevitable. If harnessed wisely—particularly in the realm of geospatial data—data will become the engine of sustainable development, economic growth, and resilience, especially in vulnerable regions like Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

The recognition of geospatial data as a new asset class is critical. Through global data initiatives like the SDG Data Alliance, countries are gaining the ability to protect and capitalize on the value of their natural resources. This shift promises to transform the global economy by fully realizing the value of ecosystems, driving decision-making from national governments to local communities.

Infrastructure of Tomorrow: Quantum Computing and Space-Based Data Centers

In the digital age, infrastructure goes beyond roads and bridges. Quantum computing is

emerging as the infrastructure of tomorrow. Though still in its infancy, quantum technology will redefine how we process data, solve complex problems, and safeguard information. It will offer secure, scalable, and energy-efficient solutions, particularly for least developed nations, allowing them to leapfrog traditional infrastructure models.

For developing nations, the promise of space-based data centers coupled with quantum computing offers an unprecedented opportunity to modernize without overburdening their environments. By utilizing quantum-powered infrastructure in space, countries with limited land and resources can access first-world technologies on a level playing field, driving local economic development.

Preservation + Conservation = Value Creation: Securitizing Nature-Based Assets

Our future depends on how we value and protect the natural environment. Preservation and conservation are no longer just moral imperatives—they are critical drivers of economic value creation. Geospatial technologies now allow nations to unlock development financing by quantifying the value of their natural resources. By leveraging Real World Natural Assets (RWNA), such as forests, wetlands, and marine ecosystems, countries can incorporate nature's value into their balance sheets, as outlined in UNCTAD's Beyond GDP initiative. This not only enhances liquidity but also lowers the cost of capital, transforming natural resources into powerful tools for both economic empowerment and environmental preservation.

Initiatives like the Development Bank for Resilient Prosperity (DBRP) are at the forefront of this transformation. By recognizing the intrinsic value of nature-based resources, DBRP bridges gaps within traditional gold and fiat-based financing models. This innovative approach integrates the tangible value of ecosystems—such as carbon sinks and biodiversity hubs—into the global financial system, making conservation a financially viable and sustainable endeavor.

How Do We Achieve this Future? Be Bold Be Resilient!

The path to global sustainability hinges not only on technological innovation but also on reimagining how we adapt and finance these innovations to serve both humanity and nature. Quantum computing, geospatial data, and revolutionary financial mechanisms are not just tools—they are the pillars upon which a more equitable, resilient, and sustainable future will be built.

In the years ahead, the global economy will be increasingly shaped by initiatives that place data, environmental stewardship, and human dignity at the forefront of progress. This paradigm shift will guide us toward a future where technology serves as a steward of the planet, and economic development goes hand in hand with conservation and sustainable growth.

The challenges we face are immense, but so are the opportunities. True progress lies in pursuing what others deem impossible and redefining what has never been done. As we shape this future, we must be bold, resilient, and unwavering in our commitment to building a world where technology, nature, and human dignity coexist in harmony.

Biography:

Sergio Fernandez de Cordova is the Founder and Executive Chairman of the PVBLIC Foundation, a global leader in shaping policy to advance public-private partnerships, media innovation, and sustainable development. His work has positively impacted over a billion people across more than 100 countries, advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through key initiatives such as the SDG Fund, SDG Data Alliance, Family Offices for Sustainable Development, SDG Media Zone, and the Development Bank for Resilient Prosperity, among others.

Sergio's contributions have earned him several international honors, including America's Ellis Island Medal of Honor and knighthoods from Spain and Ethiopia, in recognition of his work in promoting international relations and community empowerment. His educational background includes a Bachelor's in Sociology from Rutgers University, the Birthing of Giants® program at MIT, and executive diplomas in International Law and Diplomacy from the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR).

Author: Sergio A. Fernandez de Cordova, Executive Chairman & Founder PVBLIC Foundation

Mr. Sergio Fernández de Córdova: LinkedIn

Mr. Ismail Serageldin

Co-Chair of the Board of Nizami Ganjavi International Center and Former Vice President of the World Bank



"We need a new approach."

Financing the SDGs and Our Response to Climate Change

Huge needs:

It is now widely accepted that beyond the conventional projects and programs that increase the human and social capital of the poor, that promote gender equality, and address all the needs of the SDGs, our actions on climate change (SDG 13) need to cover: Mitigation, Adaptation and Resilience. On the whole, the scale of the investments required for such a transformation has been variously estimated at between **$2 - 5 trillion dollars** per year for several decades. But even if we have access to the money, where are the well prepared projects and programs?

Project identification, preparation and appraisal:

There are enormous difficulties in **identifying specific project ideas** to advance Mitigation, Adaptation and Resilience in most of the poor countries, then **preparing** these projects to the degree that they could be **appraised, FUNDED** and **implemented.** Who will do that? I believe that we need to mobilize the Multilateral Development Banks

(MDBs) as well as the UN agencies (UNDP, UNESCO, WHO…etc.). Together they can play a major role in assisting the governments in identifying and preparing projects to respond to the challenge of climate change in addition to giving a broader push to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

ODA and variations cannot provide all the funding required:

In the aggregate, we need a massive program of $2-5 trillion annually to help the world rise to the challenge of climate change as well as finance the SDGs. But with total Official Development Assistance (ODA) from the OECD countries amounting to only about $200 billion annually, and that is for all sectors, not just climate related ODA. The various multilateral Green Funds deploy another $30 billion or so. The MDBs, including the World Bank, are mostly giving loans that could add another $50 billion or so to annual disbursements.

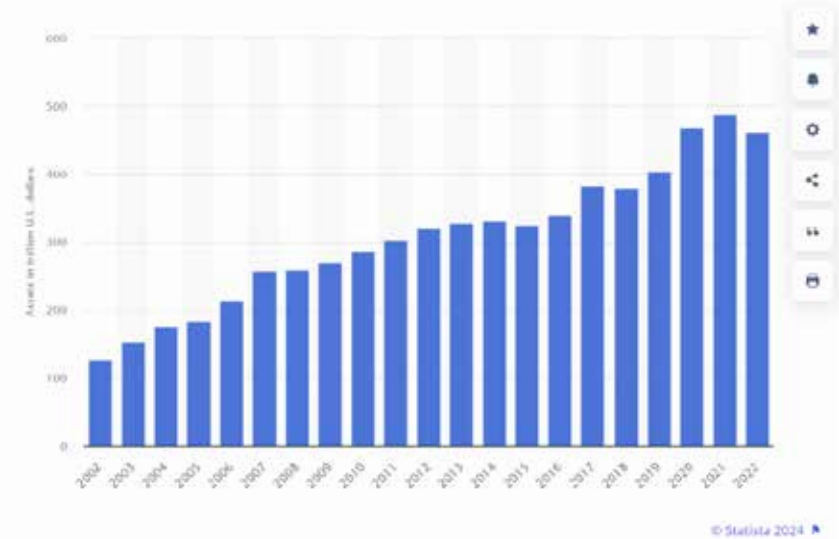
So it is very unlikely that by adding incrementally through the existing mechanisms of development finance, or adopting new twists that still rely mostly on tax revenue from the high income countries and loans from multilaterals, that we will reach the requisite $2-5 Trillion required annually. And there is no possibility for the countries of the Global South to generate the requisite resources out of their own limited budgets, when they are also crushed by a serious debt overhang.

A new Approach:

We need a new approach. A new approach that would raise the needed 2-5 trillion annually to finance a portfolio of policies and projects that would benefit the Global South in responding to the challenges of climate change with proper Mitigation, Adaptation and Resilience interventions, and implement the SDGs.

The limited public funds available should be used to prepare the projects, and then de-risk such projects by (i) international multilateral political and financing **guarantees**, (ii) project-specific **insurance** and (iii) **hedge facilities** for currency variations, so that the investments can become attractive to private sector financing. If such de-risked projects are then assembled (sliced and diced) into portfolios with regional or sectoral characteristics and are actively marketed in a sufficiently liquid fashion to allow investors to buy fractions of what would be portfolios of collateralized debt obligations appropriately mediated by a reformed – repeat reformed – international banking system, the trillions of dollars needed become more approachable. Why? Because the 2024 assets of financial

institutions world-wide are more than $460 trillion U.S. dollars[1].



The value of assets of financial institutions worldwide increased overall from 2002 to 2022, and despite minor fluctuations amounted to more than $460 Trillion U.S. dollars.
Source: Statista. Research Department, Jan 31, 2024.

The use of the approach suggested here would enable us to use the limited public funds to tap into that enormous amount of private finance that would be otherwise unwilling to fund the needed projects in the poor countries directly, noting that the amounts we are seeking to mobilize for these investments are only about 10% of global annual savings.

Note that many of the programs and projects suggested are inherently difficult to implement in many of the poorest countries, with weak institutions and unstable politics, and thus we should expect a number, say 15%, of them to fail. But the portfolios could be stable if we can count on some 85% of the projects to be successful.

Reducing the debt of the global south through debt swaps[2] and restructuring the debt burden with some debt forgiveness for the poor is a necessary and helpful addition to the

[1] The value of assets of financial institutions worldwide increased overall from 2002 to 2022, despite minor fluctuations and a drop in 2022. In 2022, the assets of financial institutions worldwide amounted to 461.2 trillion U.S. dollars, a small decrease compared to the previous year. published by Statista Research Department, Jan 31, 2024 retrieved from https://www.statista.com/statistics/421060/global-financial-institutions-assets/#:~:text=The%20value%20of%20assets%20of,compared%20to%20the%20previous%20year. Accessed 02 May 2024

[2] See discussion in the IMF blog: Kristalina Georgieva, Marcos Chamon, and Vimal Thakoor, "Swapping Debt for Climate or Nature Pledges Can Help Fund Resilience", IMF Blog, December 14, 2022.

massive program described above, as would some mediation of the short-term aspects of the returns to the investors and the long-term return from the investment to the poor country[3]. Thus, giving an **expanded mandate to the IFIs** will be required, as they will remain important players in funding the SDGs and in dealing with the debt overhang.

Do we need a new international institution?

It has been suggested that it would be desirable to create a new Public-Private Sustainable Development (Green) Facility[4]. It would work with the IFIs in the preparation and formation of the portfolios and it would mediate the sliced and diced portfolios to the private sector. And it could also deal in Carbon Credits which could potentially become an important source of financing climate mitigation, despite the persistent difficulties of ensuring the carbon market's integrity persist[5].

As to the **governance of this new facility**, it can be designed to allow the participation of four groups: (i) The private sector giant hedge funds and investment banks, (ii) the rich countries (including the superpowers) (iii) the middle income emerging market economies, and (iv) the poor countries (the most likely beneficiaries of a large part of these projects and investments). Paid-in and callable capital (proportional to the size of the economy or the size of the private sector funds) would still be part of weighing the votes (possibly adding population as a complement to determine the weighted votes of countries). This would give the Private Sector participating institutions a powerful voice in how the portfolios are created and how they are marketed. However, each of the four groups has distinct votes, and action requires agreement by the majority of each of the four groups. Thus, the poor countries' group can veto any policy or proposal if 51% of their votes go against it, whatever the other three groups say.

Envoi:

So, we must stop just trying to add to the existing ODA mechanisms to reach the requisite funding. We need to rethink funding structures, deployment vehicles, and finance mechanisms to maximize the effectiveness of public funds used to ensure that they

[3] Thus, we will need one more contribution from public funds to help bridge the short-term financial returns and the longer-term economic returns, and it could come from sovereign wealth funds and some large philanthropies.

[4] See the proposal by Hafez Ghanem: in Hafez Ghanem, The World Needs a Green Bank, Policy center for the New South, PB - 06/23, February 2023

[5] See the Special Report By Brookings (April 2024), Reforms For A 21st Century Global Financial Architecture: Independent Expert Reflections On The United Nations 'Our Common Agenda' (Lead Authors Wafa Abedin, Brahima S. Coulibaly, Hafez Ghanem, Eswar Prasad, And Marilou Uy) – especially chapter 2 addressing – inter alia - debt and Carbon Credits.

support and accelerate private sector engagement. A possible new "Green Bank" may be required, but we would still need to seek new or expanded roles for the International Financial Institutions (IFIs). But the proposal above is feasible, and the sooner we move towards implementing such measures the better it will be for providing a much-improved outlook for the vulnerable populations in the world, and for future generations.

Mr. Ismail Serageldin: LinkedIn

Executive Team

Dr. Gregory W. Barton

Dean of the Honors College and Global College, Long Island University (Project Director)



I was first inspired to become involved with Vision for the Future because of my students. It seemed like an amazing opportunity for them to be part of something impactful on a global scale. As an educator, I'm always looking for ways to give my students experiences that push them beyond the classroom, and Vision for the Future presented exactly that. However, as I became more involved, I realized the reach and impact this project could have—not just on my students but on learners and audiences worldwide. It's rare, especially in education, to have the chance to contribute to something that can make such an immediate and widespread difference.

As I explored the contributors' stories, two themes stood out to me: passion and risk-taking. These are values I work to instill in my students daily by encouraging them to take bold steps and pursue their passions with a fearless sense of purpose. Throughout the narratives of the changemakers, I was reminded that those who genuinely make a difference are the ones willing to take risks and dedicate themselves fully to their vision.

My vision for the future is centered on addressing a systemic issue that I believe is at the core of many of the world's problems: access to quality education. Too many young people across the globe are being left behind because they are not receiving the educational support they need to succeed in life. We must elevate education from just a policy issue to a societal one. We must ensure every individual, regardless of their background, has the tools, opportunities, and support to reach their full potential. Only then can we build a future of equity and opportunity for all.

I hope to impart one piece of advice to my peers and future generations: never stop learning. No matter how far we progress in life, we are all still students. The key to personal and societal growth lies in our unwavering curiosity and commitment to lifelong learning. By doing so, we ensure that we're always evolving, improving, and ready to make a meaningful impact on the world around us.

Biography:

Gregory W. Barton, Ed.D., serves as the Dean of the Honors College at Long Island University. Dr. Barton received his doctorate from Johns Hopkins University, specializing in Entrepreneurial Leadership in Education. His dissertation focused on improving college readiness through arts, athletics, and family engagement. As a former college athlete and practicing artist, Dr. Barton is passionate about helping students succeed by building college readiness skills in extracurricular activities. Before his work at Johns Hopkins, Dr. Barton received his master's in Historic Preservation from the Savannah College of Art and Design and his bachelor's degree in sculpture and art history from Washington and Lee University. In his current role, Dr. Barton helps students broaden their education and engage in interdisciplinary learning and research that puts them on the best path toward success after college. Before becoming the Dean of the Honors College, Dr. Barton served as the Director of Promise and Associate Dean of Students at the LIU Brooklyn campus. Dr. Barton also has extensive teaching and coaching experience at the high school and college levels, both domestically and internationally.

Dr. Gregory W. Barton: LinkedIn

Dr. Ali Mazzara

President, Geneva Group LLC (Project Director)



In 2011, I became the Founding Director of the JFEW SUNY Global Affairs Leadership Program, established to empower SUNY underserved and underrepresented undergraduate women to become global leaders. From the very beginning, the Dossals – through Global Partnerships Forum – participated in the Program.

I saw firsthand how the Dossals nurtured and supported the young women by including them as colleagues at amazing GPF programs at the UN. These young women have become leaders in finance, education, and government – all with a focus on excellence and equity. This was possible because the Dossals supported the Program and were role models of compassion, diplomacy, and the need to be engaged and do good. It also highlighted the power of a person when they seek to do good, which we talked about many times over the years. Thus being part of "Vision for the Future" is a way to share the stories that have inspired us over the years.

In reading the stories of the contributors, I have been so impressed by their positive impact. As well, I was struck by several key recurring themes: great leaders have a vision for what they want to accomplish and they are willing to put in the hard work to make it happen; that there will be "failures" and times of getting knocked down – but they get up; and that they continue on despite the challenges. They didn't give up and therefore, they could realize their dreams and visions and contribute to positive change in their world and the world.

My vision for the future, is focusing on the importance of role models in our lives. As the Dossals were and are such important people in the lives of my students, so my father, Mr. Buddy Mazzara, was for me in shaping what I value and what I want to contribute to the world. My Dad was a successful small business owner in our town but what really stood out to me was his faith – in action. One of his north star verses in the Bible was from Isaiah, "Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause." Because of this, he was always mentoring young people or opening a door of opportunity for someone who might not have had that support before. He also was committed to supporting justice for people – locally, in the U.S., and in the world. My Dad did this even when it might cost him – which sometimes it did – because it was the right thing to do.

As we go forward, with inspiration from the stories in "Vision for the Future" and in the role models who have blessed our lives, I encourage all of us to be thankful and keep doing good.

Biography:

Dr. Maryalice (Ali) Mazzara is a highly regarded global affairs and leadership expert specializing in designing and implementing international programs and projects for universities, governments, corporations, and non-profit organizations. Highlights include programs with the Aspen Institute, Columbia University, Johnson & Johnson, Samsung, and Save the Children. Dr. Mazzara is also recognized for her leadership in recruiting and developing diverse and extremely effective teams for global programs.

In July 2024, Dr. Maryalice Mazzara founded the Geneva Global LLC, a globally focused consulting company. Geneva Global offers three services: creating global initiatives for corporate and family foundations; designing and implementing special global events and programs; and partnering with Fortune 500 companies to successfully support DEI in their workplaces.

Before Geneva Global, Dr. Mazzara has been the Dean of Global College and the Director of the International Relations and Diplomacy Program at Long Island University, a Director of several programs at SUNY's Global Center, the Education Attaché at the Government of Québec in New York, and the Education Director of an NGO, Global Film Initiatives. Prior to these positions, she was the Education Director at Columbia University's Harriman Institute's Title VI U.S. Department of Education Grant for 10 years.

Dr. Ali Mazzara: LinkedIn

Mr. Matthew Barton

Creative Director, GALE (Creative Director)



Vision for the Future is a project that does not come along everyday. A group of impressive, motivated and selfless individuals all gathered in one place with one common goal is truly a remarkable feat that I knew I had to be a part of. This includes the heroic Executive Team that humbled me with an invitation to join and shape the direction of the project. I have so much gratitude as I write this to those that were the true force behind this endeavor: Mr. Amir Dossal, Dr. Gregory W. Barton, Dr. Maryalice (Ali) Mazzara, Mr. Howard Buffett, and Mr. Zecki Dossal. I have been given a gift to have a front row seat to the awe-inspiring stories that all of our wonderful contributors bring to the table. To learn exactly how their efforts have pushed our world forward in more ways than I could have imagined has fueled my own fire to continue to do more on my end.

My own vision for the future is one of hope. Hope that with people like those included in *Vision for the Future*, we can maintain a collective consciousness of progress. With the variety of skill sets we all have to offer, I encourage those inspired, in a similar fashion, to use their own tools as a part of a greater team of individuals to get the best out of any situation they might find themselves in. No matter what someone has to contribute, I believe that if we all push for progress, the future can truly be what we make of it. And it is up to those that have gone down this path to continue to take on the most important role of them all: teaching the next generation how to continue to move forward. Without that, it was all for nothing.

Biography:

Matthew Barton is an award-winning Creative Director born and raised in New York City. Matthew currently works at GALE where global consultancy meets world class creativity. He previously worked at other major agencies like MullenLowe and Johannes Leonardo working on the likes of adidas, Amazon, E*TRADE, KFC, Kraft, Velveeta, Venmo, Volkswagen among others.

He received his undergraduate degree at Washington and Lee University in Lexington, VA where he majored in photography and journalism and played four years on the varsity football team. He then received his Masters in Fine Arts in Photography from the Savannah College of Art and Design.

Outside of work, he and his brother co-founded Hamptons Surf Company, a small surf company, lifestyle brand and artist collective based on the Eastern End of Long Island. Matthew also serves on the Associate Board of BUILD NYC, an educational nonprofit which uses entrepreneurship to build career success, entrepreneurial mindsets, and opportunity in under-resourced communities.

Mr. Matthew Barton: LinkedIn | Website

Mr. Zecki Dossal

Senior Director, Henry Schein (Content Director)



I am deeply honored to be a part of such a special initiative that not only highlights the work of visionary leaders but also serves as a beacon for future changemakers. I have been inspired by the profound potential of storytelling to drive systemic change. In each and every narrative featured in this book, I saw not just passion, but the lifelong commitment of individuals striving to create a better world. Each story is a testament to the power of perseverance, collaboration, and the unwavering belief that we can make a difference.

The personal stories of the contributors have been humbling and transformative. I have learned so much from the changemakers whose work spans across continents, sectors, and communities. Their innovative approaches and the unique challenges they faced have opened my eyes to the diverse ways impact can be achieved. It has been incredibly exciting to be part of this endeavor – to witness firsthand the ripple effects that these leaders created, and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to play a small role in amplifying their work.

This anthology is more than a collection of success stories – it is a "learning by doing" tool, designed to inspire others to catalyze their own impact. The stories within these pages offer lessons, strategies, and insights that can be applied by anyone, anywhere, who seeks to drive change.

As we feature these amazing contributors, I am filled with optimism. We are not only celebrating the achievements of today's leaders, we are also creating a platform for future innovators to build upon. This book is a starting point for a much larger movement toward positive social impact – one that I am proud to be a part of.

Mr. Zecki Dossal: LinkedIn | Facebook | Instagram | X

Research Team

Mr. Lucas Hornung

Mr. Hornung is majoring in Mathematics and Computer Science at Long Island University (LIU). In Summer 2024, Lucas was a research intern at the prestigious BNL working on an atmospheric model representation of precipitation formation. He was also selected to be an inaugural member of the United States team at the US-China University Tennis Tournament in Shanghai in August 2024. Lucas will pursue a doctoral degree in Atmospheric Science after graduation in May 2025. to work on research efforts improving our understanding of the microscale processes that govern our global climate.

Ms. Charlotte Jones

Ms. Jones is a Political Science major and International Relations & Diplomacy minor at the Long Island University Honors College. She is a leader at LIU in many areas, including the President of the Honors College Student Council and an NCAA Division 1 Swimmer. In addition, she is an editor for the LIU newspaper, Seawanhaka, and a significant contributor to the Pre-Law Society and Student-Athlete Advisory Committee. Charlotte worked at the UN with the NGO World Information Transfer and is involved with many globally focused initiatives. Her experiences at the UN this past year have focused her interest in having a career in international law with her goal to go to Law School upon graduation in May 2025.

Ms. Alexis Loss

Ms. Loss is majoring in Political Science and International Relations at Long Island University (LIU). She is a leader at LIU Brooklyn, reviving Alpha Lambda Delta and co-reviving the Pre-Law Society. This year Lexi received the “2023 Campus Life Student of the Year” and the “LIU Ambassador” awards. She is also an arts educator and a slam poet who is passionate about implementing effective change. Being a stutterer, Lexi faces challenges every day, which she courageously overcomes. This has influenced her career goals and her decision to pursue research positions that support equity in politics, education, and other key areas when she graduates in May 2025.

Ms. Shaylin Martinez

Ms. Martinez is a Criminal Justice major at Long Island University (LIU). Shaylin is a student leader who revived and then led the Black Student Union as President, seeking to create a supportive community for students of color. She also cofounded a Latinx club, enhancing cultural representation on campus. This past year Shaylin was afforded opportunities to participate in programs at the UN where she shined. Her centered and diplomatic leadership was noticed, and she was selected to be the student representative from LIU to directly to ask a question to U.S. Ambassador to the China during an international event. Ambassador Nicholas Burns was hosted by the National Committee for U.S. China Relations Annual Town Hall and Shaylin was one of only four students globally to participate in the live discussion. The events of the past year underscored her commitment to fairness within the Criminal Justice system and combining it with a career in International Relations specifically foreign diplomacy.

Ms. Elianny (Ely) Moronta Espinal

Ms. Moronta graduated from SUNY Stony Brook with a B.A. in Psychology and Theater Arts, and a minor in Creative Writing and Literature in 2018. At Stony Brook Ely was selected for the prestigious JFEW SUNY Global Affairs Leadership Program where she interned at the Office of the President at the Ford Foundation. She was also a finalist in the Global Citizenship Project. These accomplishments are especially impressive as she immigrated from the Dominican Republic at age 15. Ely's many strengths include her excellent communication skills and a very effective and supportive management style. She has held leadership and management positions in the JFEW SUNY Program as well as iMentor. Ely is applying to graduate school for non-profit management and seeks a career that will allow her to give back and make a global impact.

Ms. Akshaya Sayeerajan

Ms. Sayeerajan is a Biology major on the Pre-Med Track at Long Island University (LIU). She is currently the Treasurer of the Pre-Medical Society at LIU and worked in Summer 2024 as a medical intern at a summer camp in Brooklyn. Akshaya worked at Clinica Esperanza in Roatan, Honduras where she lived for four years as well as small scale clinics in rural areas near her hometown in India. She also has a passion for marine and conservation biology and hopes to combine this passion with career goal of becoming a doctor.

Mr. Charles Wallace

Mr. Wallace is an International Relations and Diplomacy major at Long Island University (LIU), where he is a rising junior and currently attending LIU's Global College's semester in Costa Rica with the hope to become fluent in Spanish. Charlie has many interests including working with youth through in music and sports programs as well as most recently starting a free "learn to code camp" with a colleague. On the music side, he plays guitar, piano, and saxophone, and in sports, he boxes and was on a Division 1 Water Polo Team. Charlie wants to pursue a career in international relations where he can use his love of teaching, music, and the arts to strengthen his diplomatic engagements and hopes to attend a graduate school program that supports this goal.

Vision for the Future

Capturing Inspiring Stories from Global Changemakers

Vision for the Future is a compelling digital anthology – launched during the 2024 United Nations General Assembly – that brings together the powerful voices of visionary leaders and changemakers who are reshaping our world. These individuals have risen to the occasion, offerinvg innovative solutions to some of the most pressing challenges of our time. They have embraced the mandate of the ***Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)***—a universal call to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all. Their stories reflect the real-world impact of aligning with these goals, offering innovative solutions and replicable models that demonstrate how progress is within reach.

These changemakers show how partnerships, investments, and shared vision can ignite change. Their journeys serve as powerful examples of how we can accelerate the implementation of the SDGs, addressing global challenges in a fractured environment. Through their personal stories and impactful journeys, these changemakers provide readers with valuable insights, actionable ideas, and a roadmap to make a difference in their own communities.

Whether you are a policymaker, entrepreneur, student, or citizen, ***Vision for the Future*** invites you to be inspired by these stories and to play your part in realizing the ***Pact for the Future***—a collective commitment to building a more equitable, sustainable world for all.

Join us in this powerful movement, as we learn from those reshaping the world and discover how we can all be a force for change and contribute to a brighter future.

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