

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT WEEK

OCIC INNOVATION LAB 2023

Arts-Based Engagement
Toward Social Action,
with a focus on Climate Change



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CONTEXT

There is an urgent need to comprehensively address the global climate crisis and reduce the rate and impact of global warming. There is also growing recognition that the impacts of climate change are borne disproportionately by those populations and countries that have historically been the least responsible for present-day emissions. The consequences of climate shocks are thus unevenly distributed across regional and social boundaries. Emerging economies are disproportionately burdened by unprecedented climate impacts, and they are often ill-equipped to adapt their current climate strategies to the situation unfolding around them. The consequences of climate shocks are also unevenly distributed across regional and social boundaries, especially for vulnerable groups such as children, women and girls, and visible minority groups. It is against this background that OCIC chose to focus on climate as a key area for our IDW 2023 programming.

As a part of International Development Week 2023, OCIC hosted our annual Innovation Lab in two parts: our virtual Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation: Realities From Across the Globe panel held February 2, 2023; and our in-person full-day workshop focused on 'Arts Based Engagement Towards Climate Action'. Knowing the importance of taking climate action now, and recognising the incredible work being done globally to combat the negative impacts of climate change, we sought to provide a platform for OCIC members and partners to highlight, in their own words, their experiences with climate change in an international cooperation context and to help equip Ontarians with new skills to use in their local and global advocacy efforts.

PART 1: CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION: Realities From Across the Globe Virtual Panel Highlights



Catherine Stewart
*Canada's Ambassador
for Climate Change*



Ameena Ilahi
*Executive Director of
Rooftops Canada*



Demba Coundoul
*Director of Programs
with the JGI Senegal*



Sonya Santolin
*Director of Board
Secretary with Firefighters
Without Borders*

After insightful opening remarks from Catherine Stewart, Canada's Ambassador for Climate Change, on Canada's role domestically and internationally in the areas of climate finance and biodiversity development; and introductory remarks from moderator Ameena Ilahi on a Pakistani perspective on the panel themes; speakers were invited to respond to a number of questions relating to their work, their approaches to community-led development in the context of climate projects, and how they engage the public in their work. Some key takeaways from this session were:



Locally designed solutions are the key for sustainable action on climate issues



Collaboration is needed among actors at all levels- government, local communities, local service providers, funders, NGOs, partners, and everyone in between. Global problems need global collaboration



We need to take a proactive approach to climate change issues, including focusing on prevention

[VIEW THE RECORDING OF THIS SESSION HERE](#)

PART 1: CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION:

Realities From Across the Globe Virtual Panel Highlights

“You know as well as I do, that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time. We need to act now to protect our planet, and to create a cleaner and more prosperous world now and for the future. Everyone needs to get involved - young people; Indigenous peoples; the private sector; the NGO community - we all need to come together to challenge the status quo, to think outside the box and to make changes in our communities.”

Catherine Stewart

Canada’s Ambassador for Climate Change

[Read Ambassador Stewart’s opening remarks here](#)



PART 2: ARTS BASED ENGAGEMENT FOR CLIMATE ACTION WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS



Joao Luiz DeFranco

*Communications Officer at
Global Affairs Canada*

The day began with introductory remarks by Joao Luiz DeFranco, touching upon the work of Global Affairs Canada (GAC) in engaging civil society on international development, and the impact of this work locally and globally, thus recognizing the importance of IDW.

This was followed by artist-workshops which aimed at providing accessible and meaningful opportunities for the participants to explore new ways to connect with themselves, their story, and others.





WORKSHOP FOCUS: *Filmmaking/Documentary*

ARTIST: *Kasha Sequoia Slavner*

Focus of the presentation:

Kasha's presentation, *Impactful Storytelling for Climate Justice*, highlighted the evolution of her craft as a documentary filmmaker over the past 10 years. She shared lessons learned about the practice of documentary filmmaking, and its potential for social impact. The presentation invited the audience into deep inquiry about the media's role in mobilizing action for social and environmental justice. It also challenged us to think about how we can utilize the power of storytelling as a tool for tangible, transformative change.

Discussion:

During the presentation, Kasha broke down some of the principles and ethics of equitable storytelling. Being mindful about the kinds of stories we choose to tell and our connection to the subject is a key pillar of achieving justice through the filmmaking process. The audience was invited to share their own reflections on the types of narratives they feel are missing from mainstream media, and what kinds of stories could empower social and environmental change. This resulted in a lively and engaging discussion about concerns about ways in which narratives are crafted around these impacted peoples and communities, as well as positive examples of storytelling they've observed. The audience also shared personal reflections upon what specific, climate-related issues matter most to them.

Key Take-aways:

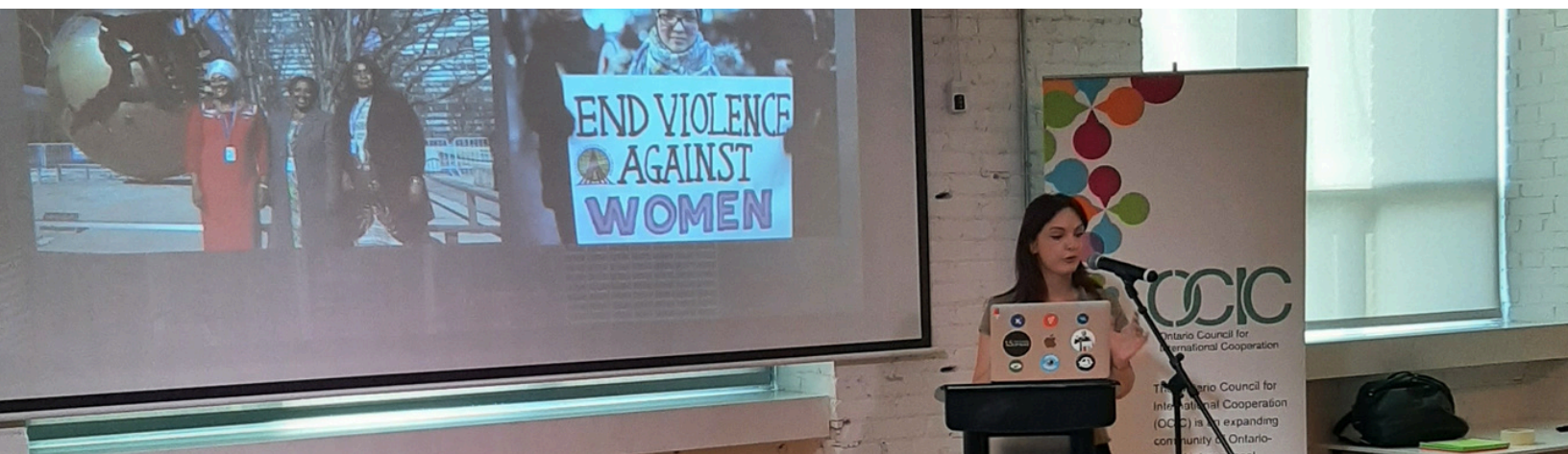
- Filmmaking and storytelling are collaborative processes and require trust-based relationships to ensure you're centering the needs of the community you're featuring.
- Films and stories are powerful tools to build empathy, educate and mobilize action. Beyond the screen, there are ways to expand the impact of a story, to drive concrete steps towards political, policy or social changes through impact and outreach campaigns.
- Be thoughtful about your relationship to the story you're telling, whether it be your privilege and positionality, or personal experience. Intentionality in the way you tell stories is critical, especially because stories have the power to reinforce existing narratives or shift our beliefs and values.



"I was moved by the thoughtful questions and insights from the young people in attendance, who asked about becoming more active on social impact projects they cared about, and shared their feelings of inspiration and motivation to take action on those ideas."

Kasha Sequoia Slavner

Filmmaker





WORKSHOP FOCUS: *Visual Arts*

IN COLLABORATION WITH

ARTIST:

Justin Murgai



Focus of the presentation:

Justin's presentation shared Aida Muluneh's Water Life art series - vibrant photographs that address the impact of living without access to safe, clean water on women and girls in Ethiopia, while drawing attention to other communities around the world suffering from water scarcity, including Indigenous communities here in Canada. The photographs emerged from a dialogue about art and its purpose and the role of art in advocacy. The presentation focused on the themes and intricacies of this powerful body of work and the issues of water and sanitation and how Africa is represented by aid organizations and in global media.

[SEE JUSTIN MURAGI'S PRESENTATION, INCLUDING AIDA MULUNEH'S WATER LIFE PHOTO SERIES HERE.](#)

Discussion:

Justin highlighted how the lived experience of the artist in Ethiopia led to her artistic vision for this project. Participants discussed the importance of the artist having an open commission when creating this project, as its purpose was about changing narratives on Ethiopia and reengaging people on a familiar topic– bringing a new voice and perspective to the global water crisis. In addition, there was some conversation about water as a human right, and the global water crisis and providing services not only abroad but in Canadian communities as well.

Key Take-aways:

- Art is a powerful tool for advocacy.
- Art as a tool for engagement and shifting narratives and perspectives by bringing the stories of people elsewhere closer to home.
- Art is a tool to tell a familiar story in a new and different way.
- Women are powerful agents of change and can be empowered through access to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene.

"As someone who has been both a visual artist and an advocate for access to clean water and sanitation, I was thrilled to share how Aida Muluneh's Water Life art series brings these two worlds together. Through her work, we can begin to understand how women around the world experience life differently due to the lack of access to clean water, and we hope it encourages understanding and motivates people to find innovative ways to advocate for people's human right to access clean and safe drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene. Art not only has the power to bring people together but is a powerful way to tell someone else's story, and these stories are essential for social change."

Justin Murgai

CEO of WaterAid Canada



PARALLEL WORKSHOPS

WORKSHOPS:



PODCASTING

Amanda Cupido



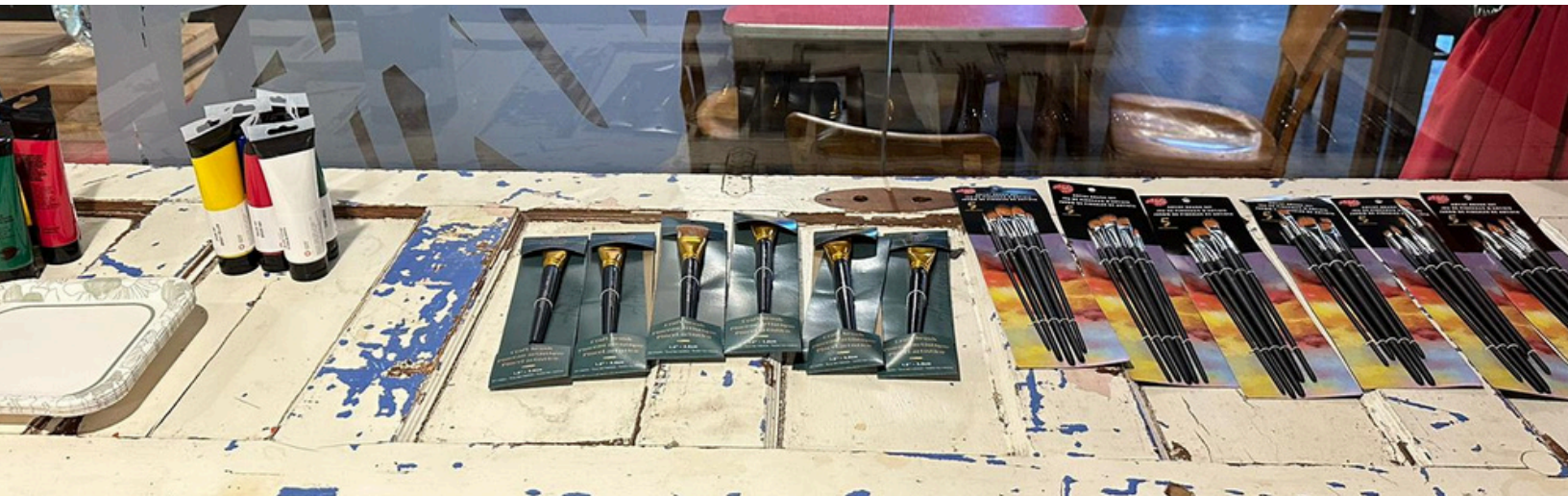
PHOTOGRAPHY

Sid Naidu



MURALISM

*Karen Natalia
Villanueva*



PARALLEL WORKSHOPS

WORKSHOP FOCUS: *Podcasting*

ARTIST: *Amanda Cupido*

Award-winning podcast producer, radio executive, university instructor, author, and entrepreneur



Focus of the presentation:

Amanda's Podcast Like a Pro workshop focused on a wide range of practical podcasting topics, including a brief history of podcasting, podcasting best practices, podcast formats, creating podcast artwork, how to conduct an interview, what microphones to look for, how to record an interview, and how to upload your podcast. Participants also had a listening session from other podcasts to help them identify how they might want to craft their message.





Discussion:

The session started by asking people to share what podcasts they were listening to (if any)! This session was open to active listeners and those with no podcast listening experience. It was great to hear about the wide range of experiences within the group. After learning a bit about the history of podcasts and listening to best practices, participants were invited to share why they were interested in podcasting and if they had any ideas for the kind of show they might want to make. This sparked a discussion about how podcasts can be used for social impact. Participants were then invited to write an opening script for their own podcast and participate in a mock interview, modeling the new skills they had just learned.

Key Take-aways:

- Podcasting is a powerful medium and listenership continues to grow year-over-year, in Canada and around the world.
- There is no one type of “podcast voice” – everyone’s voice can lend itself to a podcast.
- Take the time to develop your podcast idea and be strategic with the topic, guests and branding
- Successful podcasts are authentic, entertaining, informative, easy to access and have a consistent release schedule.



PARALLEL WORKSHOPS



WORKSHOP FOCUS:

Photography

ARTIST:

Sid Naidu

*Photographer and
creative entrepreneur*

Focus of the presentation:

Sid's workshop We Have A Story To Tell: Photography for Social Impact focused on providing attendees insights and understanding into the world of storytelling through photography, emphasizing social impact narratives. The workshop provided a primer for attendees on the essential and technical skills necessary for crafting compelling photo-based stories and provided practical examples to demonstrate how these stories can be effectively shared with the world, fostering meaningful engagement and amplifying their impact.





Discussion:

The photography for social impact workshop began by highlighting Sid Naidu's creative works as a documentary photographer and other artists contributing to social impact storytelling around people and the environment. Technical aspects of the workshop guided participants through the three-stage production process, providing insights to build an understanding of developing stories through planning, photography stories through composition to create narratives and editing stories by understanding different criteria for how to select images to accompany written narratives. The technical discussion also provided fundamental tips for creating strong images and discussed ethical storytelling.

Key Take-aways:

- As a social impact photographer, ask yourself why the image or narrative you are documenting is important to share with the world.
- Representation matters in storytelling. Always ensure a diversity of voices are represented to include narratives not always at the table.
- While the faces and languages change in different settings, the structures we operate out of can be similar to finding unifying themes to connect stories and draw a contrast.
- Art can change the world by building dialogue and moving people toward action. Photography is an essential tool for sharing stories for change.
- As a documentarian, some of the most valuable stories you can capture are those you are closest to as a practitioner.



PARALLEL WORKSHOPS

WORKSHOP FOCUS: *Muralism*

ARTIST: *Karen Natalia Villanueva*

Social Worker

Focus of the presentation:

Karen’s presentation aimed to build a space for participants to engage in both the theory and practice of arts-based methodologies for community engagement through the medium of muralism. Participants were immersed in muralism through producing a collective mural that reflected the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals #6 Clean Water and Sanitation, and #13 Climate Action.





Discussion

Participants were divided into two groups and were assigned an SDG that would guide their work during the session. They were provided with art materials necessary along with hand made aprons by the Regent Park Sewing Studio (RPSS)*. During the first part of the session, participants were immersed in a land acknowledgement activity that introduced them to Anishnawbe culture. Drawing and painting from the very beginning and connecting to Indigenous peoples and their ancestors allowed for fluidity of ideas and contact with their inner selves.

An important aspect of this workshop was for participants to build connections between community engagement, street art, muralism and social justice. This topic raised questions and ethical dilemmas between participants as they explored the difference between social justice art and vandalism. Many of the participants shared with others about examples of artists from their home countries that use muralism as a form of activism. Karen provided participants with a guide

on how to develop a plan and the multiple facilitation approach available to them when using muralism in community engagement.

While theory is important, participants were also eager to get to the art! In their respective groups participants shared how they already or will incorporate the assigned SDG into their community development work, and were tasked to create a visual representation on canvas. Each group navigated agreements and disagreements to come up with the final art pieces. During the debrief of the workshop participants expressed positive feedback of art in their lives, and the impact of this workshop in the work that they do.

*The RPSS is a social enterprise comprised of immigrant women and newcomers living in Regent Park who want to share their skills and love for fashion. We were thrilled to have them produce handmade OCIC aprons for participants, to use during the workshop and as a memento of the session with Karen.

Key Take-aways:

- Recognize the characteristics of street art and muralism as a form of resistance and action.
- Determine the work plan components when engaging in muralism.
- Identify four facilitation approaches when using muralism for community engagement and development work.

"I had an amazing experience participating in Karen Natalia Villanueva's Muralism workshop. During the workshop we learned about the history of muralism and how it can be a tool for social change. We also had an opportunity to collaborate and create art for the UN SDGs. Our group worked together to design a mural that celebrates SDG 6 - Clean Water and Sanitation. It was a unique experience to participate during International Development Week."

- Caylin Sun

Participant



Participant Profile & Feedback

Participants included those interested in reflecting upon their relationship to climate in a local, national, and international context, and in building their skills in arts-based communication. This included International cooperation sector professionals, youth, educators and community mobilizers.

**60
Unique
Participants**

35 ONLINE &
26 IN-PERSON

"OCIC's Innovation Lab allowed me to explore the power of art to engage others in meaningful conversations about climate action and other global issues. It has helped me to learn how to express myself creatively to share my personal experiences and perspectives in a way that inspires people to take action."

- Khalil
Participant

94%

agreed or strongly agreed that the Innovation Lab motivated them to take action on global issues

Contributor Bios

DEMBA COUNDOUL

Demba Coundoul is the Director of Programs with the Jane Goodall Institute Senegal since 2020. He has more than 15 years of experience in administrative, financial and human resources management in organizations in Senegal and Europe. He brings his experience in local development and women's economic groups support in the BCR project.

AMANDA CUPIDO

Amanda Cupido is an award-winning podcast producer, radio executive, university instructor, author, and entrepreneur. She is the founder of Lead Podcasting, a podcast production company that specializes in developing podcasts for thought leaders and organizations. In addition, Amanda is the program director at AM 640 Toronto, where she leads a team of producers and radio hosts. Amanda's expertise in storytelling through audio formats has led her to train executives and professionals across the globe. She is the author of the Amazon bestseller, *Let's Talk Podcasting: The Essential Guide to Doing it Right* and is a sought-after speaker who has spoken at numerous renowned organizations including CIBC, Deloitte and Sid Lee. Amanda has also spoken at the largest podcast conferences in the world including PodFest, Podcast Movement and the Toronto Hot Docs Podcast Festival.

Amanda is passionate about empowering the next generation of media professionals to hone their audio storytelling skills. She is a part-time university lecturer and has helped to redefine the radio courses at both Seneca College and Toronto Metropolitan University. Amanda believes that communication through audio formats helps to enhance human connection and hopes to inspire organizations to use audio storytelling to foster learning, growth and community.

Amanda has a Bachelor of Journalism from Toronto Metropolitan University and a Master of Professional Studies in the Psychology of Leadership from Penn State University.

JOÃO LUIZ DEFRANCO

João Luiz DeFranco is currently a Communications officer at Global Affairs Canada. He graduated in international relations in Sao Paulo, Brazil, from Faculdades Rio Branco. He specializes in photography and has worked for ten years as a national and international media photojournalist. He has also worked in magazines and with popular music concerts traveling throughout Brazil as a social media manager, photographer and videographer.

AMEENA ILAHI

Ameena Ilahi has over 20 years experience in international development with a strong focus on the nonprofit sector. During International Development Week 2023 she was the Executive Director of Rooftops Canada. Previously she served as the Country Director for Relief International in Pakistan, Assistant Country Director with CARE International in Pakistan, and the Deputy Country Representative with The Asia Foundation where she led its human rights and women's empowerment programs. With over 15 years in the field, Ameena brings sound understanding of complex and fragile settings in the Global South and countries in transition including Pakistan, Egypt, Romania, Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia. Ameena has worked in varied development sectors, including human rights, women's economic empowerment, good governance and democratization, emergency response, water, sanitation & hygiene, agriculture, institutional strengthening and capacity building. She holds a B.A. in Sociology/Anthropology from Carleton University in Ottawa, and a M.Sc. in Agricultural Development from the University of London, UK.

JUSTIN MURGAI

Justin Murgai is currently the CEO of WaterAid Canada, a leading Canadian international development organization focussed on improving access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene in the world's most economically disadvantaged communities. Prior to his role at WaterAid, Justin was the interim CEO and director of international programs and advocacy at Engineers Without Borders Canada. Over his 16-year career, he has held a number of leadership roles overseeing humanitarian, development and social initiatives focussed on improving the health, education, empowerment and access to fundamental rights and services for refugees, victims of human trafficking and systemic violence, as well as youth, in Canada, South and South-East Asia. Most recently, he has also worked to support the development of innovative social entrepreneurship ecosystems to address poverty, inequity, and the impacts of climate change in communities across Sub-Saharan Africa.

JUSTIN MURGAI

What is lesser known about Justin is his history as a visual artist prior to dedicating his career to humanitarianism, specifically as a published photographer, lighting designer, artistic director and producer in the performing arts, events, and visual merchandizing industries. Even then, Justin's passion for using art as a tool for bringing attention to social injustice could be seen in his exhibited editorial photography work on topics such as violence against women and his founding of Phoenixation Productions, a social impact initiative that hosted regional campaigns bringing together artists, visionaries, academics, private sector, NGOs and communities to raise awareness and resources for charitable causes.,

SID NAIDU

Sid Naidu is a photographer and creative entrepreneur who uses visual arts as a tool to foster social impact. Holding a Bachelor of Arts in Contemporary Studies from Toronto Metropolitan University, earned in 2010, and an International Development graduate certificate from Centennial College, completed in 2019, Sid established a thriving freelance career over the past five years focused on bridging aspects of the creative industries, education and international development.

Hailing from foreign shores and traversing diverse geographical landscapes, Sid Naidu's documentary works embody a unique perspective of a first-generation Canadian immigrant nurtured in the vibrant cultural hotspot of Scarborough, Toronto. Sid harnesses the power of street art, cultural movements, and global development to inspire his photographic works. He has lived and worked across Asia, Australia, and the Americas, producing collections of image-based stories and collaborating on impactful development projects.

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Sid co-founded Scarborough Made, an organization promoting storytelling in East Toronto via various channels. He founded SNCD, a creative studio that develops social impact projects for diverse clients, from artists to socially-driven organizations.

SID NAIDU

As an influential creator and changemaker, Sid has collaborated with organizations such as Artscape, Action Against Hunger Canada, the City of Toronto, Toronto Metropolitan University, Centennial College, Toronto Community Housing, Toronto Public Library, Toronto Transit Commission, TEDx, and UNICEF. His work is featured on CP24, the Toronto Star, CBC, Complex Canada, BlogTO, Now Magazine, Elle Canada, Photo Ed Magazine, Scarborough Mirror, The Toronto Arts Newspaper, Times of India & Zuma Press. Visit sidnaidu.com for more information on his current works.

SONYA SANTOLIN

Sonya Santolin is a qualified corporate lawyer (member of the Ontario Bar Association) and has experience supporting several international boards. She is experienced in corporate law, corporate governance and sustainability, and corporate and regulatory compliance. Sonya was elected to the Board in September 2019 as the Board Secretary and Chair of the Governance and Nominating Committee.

KASHA SEQUOIA SLAVNER

Kasha Sequoia Slavner is the founder of The Global Sunrise Project and director/screenwriter of the multi-award-winning documentary, *The Sunrise Storyteller*. Since its World Premiere at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in 2017, the film has screened at 61 film festivals internationally and won 31 awards to date, some of which include “Best Documentary” at Carmarthen Bay BAFTA Awards Qualifying Festival, “Rising Star Filmmaker” at Colorado International Activism Film Festival, the “Golden Jury Prize, Youth Visions” at the Social Justice Film Festival, Seattle, “Spirit of Activism” at the Nevada Women's Film Festival, the “Ron Kovic Peace Prize”, and the “Eva Haller Women Transforming Media Award”, My Hero Film Festival, Los Angeles.

Kasha has been a photographer, entrepreneur, and social justice advocate for over a decade, as well as a published book author (*Reflections of the Sunrise Storyteller*) a writer, public speaker and contributor to several publications, including National Geographic Learning. In addition she wrote curriculum (*A GenZ's Guide to Creating Social Change*) and conducts workshops to empower youth engagement on the Sustainable Development Goals.

KASHA SEQUOIA SLAVNER

Kasha is an 14x UN Youth Delegate and was selected as the first winner of the Kim Phuc Youth Peace Prize. In 2019, she was the recipient of the Diana Award and most recently selected as one of the Wonder Grantees for Sustainability by the Shawn Mendes Foundation.

She is long standing member of The Canadian Voice of Women for Peace, one of the Voices of SDG16+ and 2021 Climate Ambassador of the Global Youth Climate Network, Youthtopia Ambassador, as well as a liaison of One Better World Collective, and an alumni of the Yunus & Youth social entrepreneurship program, Global Changemakers & We Are Family Foundation's Global Teen Leaders program. A 2021 Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies Trailblazer, Center for Responsible Leadership, Basel Pacey Award Finalist and a 2022 Commonwealth Youth Awards Finalist, Earth Prize Ambassador, Evolutionary Leader, Artist for Ecocide Law and Leader for Tomorrow with UN Youth for Disarmament and more.

CATHERINE STEWART

Catherine Stewart With over 25 years in the federal government, Catherine Stewart's most recent role was Assistant Deputy Minister of International Affairs at Environment and Climate Change Canada. Since 2014, she has served in senior executive roles at ECCC including as Canada's Chief Negotiator for Climate Change, Director General Multilateral Affairs and Climate Change, and Director General for the Americas.

Prior to joining ECCC, Catherine was Director, Strategic Policy and Integration for the National Fighter Jet Procurement Secretariat and served as an executive at the Privy Council Office. She also worked on defence and security policy at the Department of National Defence over the span of a decade, covering areas such as Cabinet affairs, Ministerial speechwriting and Canada's participation in the NATO Alliance.

Prior to joining the federal government, Catherine worked on a United Nations peacekeeping and electoral mission in Mozambique. She holds a Bachelor of Arts from McGill University and a Master of Arts in Public Administration from Carleton University. Catherine is married and has three sons.

KAREN VILLANUEVA

Karen Villanueva is a Colombian social worker currently based in Toronto, Kanata (Toronto, Canada). She graduated from York University with an HBA in International Development Studies and is a Master of Social Work graduate from the University of Toronto with a specialization in health and mental health. Karen currently holds the portfolio of Deputy Executive Director at Centre of Learning & Development. For the past 7 years, through her community development practice, Karen integrates her passion for popular education, activism and visual arts to foster capacity building in immigrant and newcomer populations.





THANK YOU

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Canada 

