

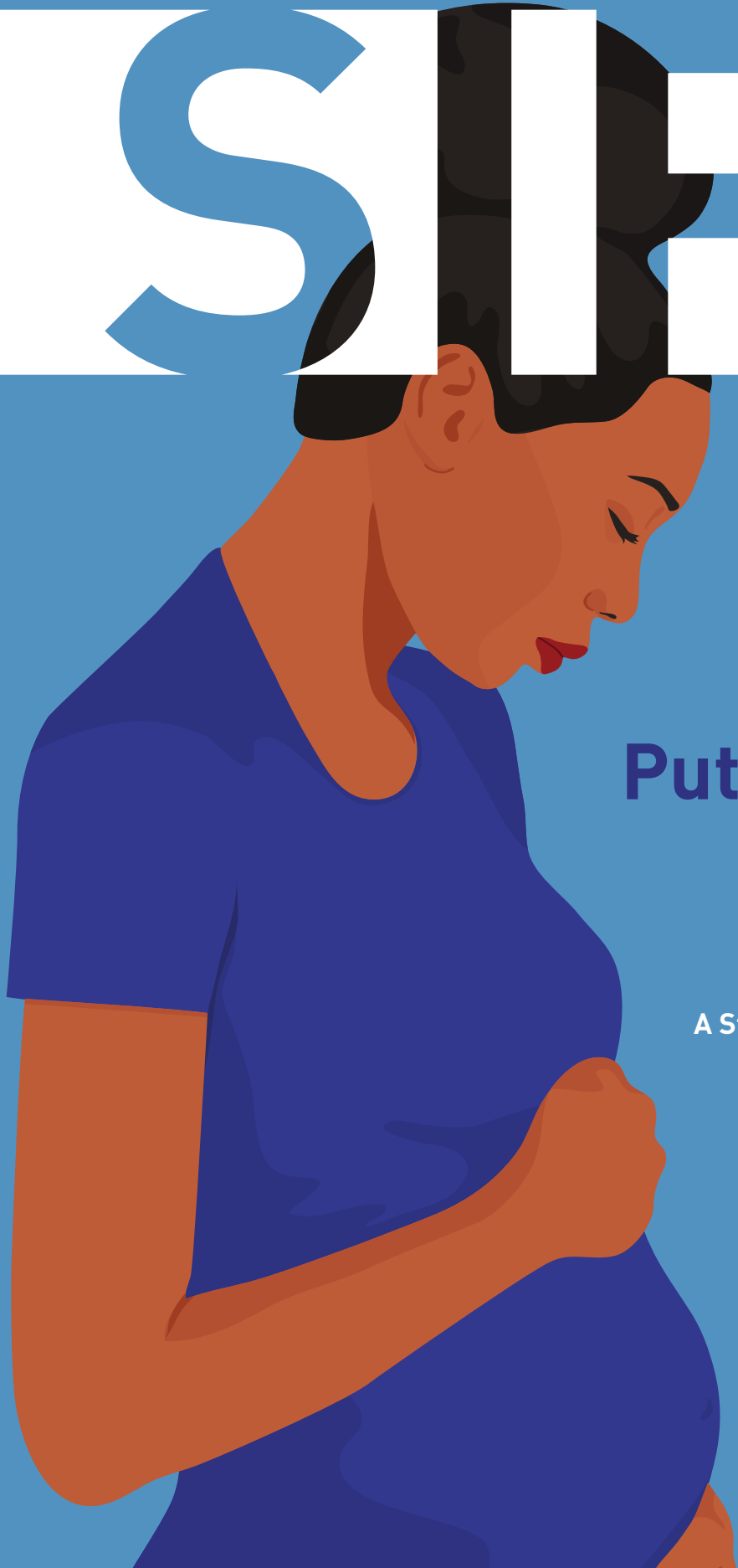


A PUBLICATION OF COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY'S SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

SIPA

MAGAZINE

VOL. XXXII / 2019



Putting Maternal Mortality in the Spotlight

A Student-Designed Campaign Hits MTV

Penny Abeywardena MIA '05:
NYC's Ambassador
to the Global Community

In Conversation with
Gen. Mark Milley MIA '92, Chairman
of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Raphael Smith Memorial
Prize 2019 Essays

SIPA MAGAZINE Vol. XXXII • 2019

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Merit E. Janow

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Welcome to the New *SIPA* Magazine

I am pleased to share with you this newly redesigned *SIPA Magazine*, a signature publication of the Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs. This magazine represents a reimagining of our long-standing publication, *SIPA News*, but with a new look and feel, a greater emphasis on ideas and SIPA's mission and impact, and an expanded focus on our remarkable alumni.

As you will see in these pages, SIPA contributes knowledge and drives solutions to global challenges along many different dimensions:

Our faculty are a mix of scholars and practitioners who bring diverse experiences into the classroom. Whether engaging the core fields of international finance, development, trade and economic policy; energy and the environment; international security; urban and social policy; or human rights and humanitarian affairs, SIPA faculty are expanding our understanding of the world and influencing policy at every level.

Our alumni demonstrate their leadership every day at leading multilateral organizations, corporations and financial institutions, and nonprofit organizations as well as all levels of government. Among many examples, this year we welcomed the appointment of General Mark Milley MIA '92, who is interviewed in these pages, as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Our students come to SIPA for a transformative educational experience that blends classroom instruction, foundational learning, and applied skills. This past year they took their policy passions into the world in myriad ways—helping to rebuild Puerto Rico's electric grid and raising awareness of maternal mortality, among other issues.

Our role as an interdisciplinary hub continued to deepen through the launch of a new research center and several new initiatives, as well as visits from hundreds of thought-leaders, including AOL cofounder Steve Case, Secretary Madeleine Albright, former Chilean president Michelle Bachelet, and General H. R. McMaster, to name just a few.

We thank those who have supported our What Can Be campaign to help shape and drive the next stage of SIPA's evolution as a leading policy school. We give special thanks to our alumni who provided valuable insights and feedback reflected in the new *SIPA Magazine*.

We hope you enjoy this brief glimpse into another successful year at SIPA and our bright future.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Merit E. Janow". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'M' and 'J'.

Merit E. Janow
Dean, School of International and Public Affairs



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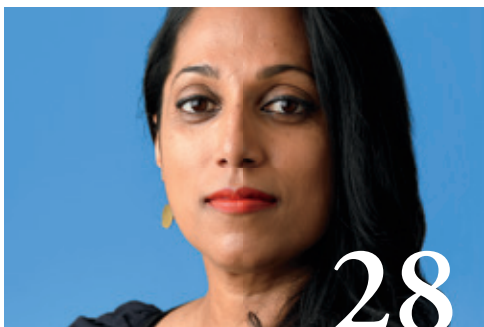
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SIPA remembers Rodolfo de la Garza, Maren Castro Villagrana Jakobsmeier MPA '18, and Herbert Spirer.

IN BRIEF

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICY

Rangel Fellowship Program Supports Future Diplomats

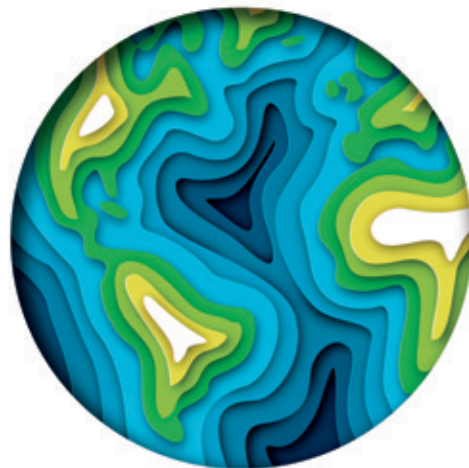
“I cannot tell you how proud I am of who you are going to be.”

So said the longtime congressman Charles Rangel, now retired, in remarks to an audience of 12 SIPA fellowship recipients who will serve as American diplomats in the coming years. The five first-year and seven second-year students are all participants in the Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Graduate Fellowship Program, a U.S. State Department initiative that encourages diversity and excellence among foreign service officers.

The fellowships provide up to \$37,500 per year for graduate school tuition and other expenses. Participants complete two summer internships and receive additional mentoring to help prepare them for positions in the U.S. Foreign Service, in which they serve for at least five years.

Joining Rangel at the February 5 gathering were SIPA faculty members Ester Fuchs, who introduced the congressman, and David N. Dinkins, the 106th mayor of New York City, who has been a professor of professional practice in public policy at SIPA since 1994.

—Alexandra Feldhausen MIA '19



ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

SIPA Establishes New Center for Environmental Economics and Policy

In September, SIPA announced the establishment of the Center for Environmental Economics and Policy (CEEP), which will study the causes of environmental change, the consequences for humanity, and policies to prevent and possibly reverse harmful change to ensure sustainable development.

CEEP will provide a forum for policy-makers, researchers, and students to come together around these topics and share new research worldwide. Its work will be defined in part by the integration of analytic approaches of economics with natural sciences and engineering. Wolfram Schlenker, professor of international and public affairs at SIPA and the Earth Institute, and Douglas Almond, professor of international and public affairs and of economics, will serve as the center's inaugural codirectors.



TECH AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Dean's Public Policy Challenge Announces Winners

Innovations around infant nutrition and sustainable herding were among the winning concepts in this year's Dean's Public Policy Challenge Grant competition, announced at the 2019 #StartupColumbia Festival on April 5.

The annual competition, which is now in its sixth year, invites students to propose innovative projects and prototypes that use technology to solve important public-policy problems. The winning teams were allocated a total of \$65,000 in prize money to support the implementation of their projects.

The first-place team, Project Danso, is working to develop a smartphone-based medical device that will digitize the anthropometric measurement process of infants and children (namely, collecting information like height and weight) in order to instantly evaluate their nutritional status. Project Danso received \$25,000 for implementation.

—*Claire Teitelman MPA '19*

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICY

SIPA Hosts Its First China and the World Program Workshop

The conference room on the ninth floor of the International Affairs Building proved too small to hold all those interested in attending the Columbia-Harvard China and the World Program (CWP) Workshop on February 27. A standing-room-only crowd gathered for the event's keynote address, signifying a warm welcome for the program in its first year at SIPA.

The event was a rare opportunity to attend a discussion with both directors of CWP—Thomas Christensen, professor of international and public affairs at Columbia, and Alastair Iain Johnston, the Governor James Albert Noe and Linda Noe Laine Professor of China in World Affairs at Harvard.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICY

Students Explore Tactics, Terrain, and Technology via "Staff Ride" at Gettysburg Battlefield

The "staff ride" is a military teaching technique that traces its origins to the 19th-century Prussian army. Back then, commanders and their staff officers would explore historic or future battlefields on horseback, analyzing the terrain and seeking the kind of martial insights that are hard to glean from maps, books, or lectures alone.

On October 13, 2018, students from SIPA's International Security Policy concentration joined this unique tradition. Trading horses for muddy boots, a group of 26 ISP students explored the Civil War battlefield at Gettysburg with an eye on the interaction of real-world terrain, military technology, and tactics.

The trip also included a visit to the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, where students dined with the college's faculty and staff and analyzed the purpose and utility of historical military equipment like Sherman tanks and Bradley Fighting Vehicles.

Leading the outing was Professor Stephen Biddle, whose experience includes advising U.S. commanding generals and teaching senior officers from militaries around the world. During discussions around sites like Little Round Top, tourists would linger to listen to Biddle's analysis.

—*Dominick Tao MPA '19*



HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

Elisabeth Lindenmayer Retires as UN Studies Director



SIPA faculty member Elisabeth Lindenmayer retired at the end of the 2018–19 academic year from her position as director of SIPA’s specialization in International Organization and UN Studies. She will continue to teach as an adjunct professor and lead Capstone workshops.

A former assistant secretary-general of the United Nations with special expertise in peacekeeping, Lindenmayer joined SIPA in 2009 as an adjunct professor. During her time at SIPA, she has taught highly popular classes on topics including peacekeeping and peace building in Africa. She has also advised multiple Capstone teams. Among her many

pathbreaking activities, in 2012 she led a team of students to North Korea in the first such trip sponsored by a U.S. university.

Lindenmayer was feted on April 29 at a reception, which included remembrances from students, alumni, and faculty colleagues.



HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

GPPS Celebrates Five-Year Anniversary at Alumni Day

During SIPA’s 2019 Alumni Day, the Gender and Public Policy specialization gathered more than 30 alumni and friends to celebrate its five-year anniversary. The program hosted a breakfast for specialization alumni and other “honorary” alumni who helped start the process that led to the specialization’s creation. The breakfast also featured a panel discussion among alumni representing UNDP, Madre, and the National Association of Latino Elected Officials.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

Attiah Named NABJ 2019 Journalist of the Year



The National Association of Black Journalists named Karen Attiah MIA ’12 of the *Washington Post* its 2019 Journalist of the Year.

In a statement, NABJ president Sarah Glover said, “Karen has courageously used her commitment to her craft to provide thought-provoking commentary and insights that have led to positive dialogue and the visibility of issues that have not only impacted people of color and minority communities, but also journalists around the globe. I’m especially proud to see how Karen has propelled the tragedy of [Jamal Khashoggi’s] death into a purpose-driven calling to further the cause for press freedom.”

DID YOU KNOW?

Maryam Banikarim ’89BC, MIA ’93, ’93BUS, and Kirsten Imohiosen MPA ’03, were among the 10 Columbia Alumni Medalists honored at University Commencement in May in recognition of their service to the Columbia community. Banikarim is an executive in residence at Columbia’s School of Professional Studies. Imohiosen is chair of the SIPA Alumni Association.



INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICY

SIPA Hosts Third Annual Cyber 9/12 Policy and Strategy Competition



Hosted in cooperation with the Atlantic Council, the event was run by students in SIPA's Digital and Cyber Group with generous support from sponsor Morgan Stanley.

This year's competition was built around hypothetical cases of ransomware at an airport, fraudulent financial transactions, and the creation of a social media bot and an IoT (internet of things) bot.

It was also the biggest yet, attracting 28 teams from schools as far away as Texas. But by 1 p.m. on Saturday, only four remained: two from SIPA, one from West Point, and one from Harvard's Kennedy School. After a grueling 36 hours, a team comprising SIPA students CJ Dixon MPA '19, Katherine Kirk MPA '19, Caitlin Strawder MPA '19, and Claire Teitelman MPA '19 took home first place.

Even as many members of the SIPA community left campus on November 2, 2018, to begin a well-deserved fall break, more than 100 students, faculty, volunteers, and cybersecurity experts roamed the halls of the International Affairs Building. They were participants in the third annual NYC Cyber 9/12 Competition, a policy and strategy competition in which students from across the country competed to develop policy recommendations tackling a fictional cyber catastrophe.



GLOBAL ECONOMY / TRADE / DEVELOPMENT / FINANCE

Hua Appointed World Bank VP and Treasurer

In October 2018, Jingdong Hua MPA '03 was appointed vice president and treasurer of the World Bank.

In his role as treasurer, Hua is responsible for the World Bank's \$200 billion debt portfolio and an asset portfolio of nearly \$200 billion managed for the World Bank Group and 65 clients, including central banks, pension funds, and sovereign wealth funds. He oversees a derivatives portfolio of \$600 billion for hedging and risk management, and payments and annual cash flows of over \$7 trillion equivalent. He also leads the World Bank Treasury's training and advisory services in analytics, debt management, asset management, and financial solutions for its clients.

Hua is also responsible for the debt issuance of the World Bank (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development) and the International Development Association and oversees capital markets operations for the International Finance Facility for Immunization, for which the World Bank Treasury is the Treasury manager.

Hua was formerly vice president and treasurer at IFC, a sister organization of the World Bank.



GLOBAL ECONOMY / TRADE / DEVELOPMENT / FINANCE

Karla Henriquez Presents Capstone Findings in Barcelona

In July, Karla Henriquez MPA '19 attended the meeting of the Ibero-American Center for Urban Strategic Development in Barcelona to present recommendations from her SIPA Capstone team's project "Urban Interventions to Activate Public Spaces in Santiago de los Caballeros." The team conducted research to identify historic-center street-management models to support the activation of public spaces in the historic center of Santiago de los Caballeros in the Dominican Republic.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICY

Eight Students Selected as Presidential Management Fellows for 2019



PMF PRESIDENTIAL
MANAGEMENT
FELLOWS PROGRAM

Congratulations to the eight SIPA students selected to join the Presidential Management Fellows Class of 2019!

This year's SIPA-affiliated finalists are Andrew Bariahtaris MIA, Stephen Denoms MIA, CJ Dixon MIA, Kirsten Holland

MPA, Casey Luskin MIA, Julia Koppman Norton MPA-ESP, Tyler Quillico MPA-DP, and Katy Swartz MPA.

As in past years, SIPA excelled in the assessment process; our students and alumni represent two-thirds of the 12 PMF finalists selected from Columbia University. The prestigious management program received 4,045 applications overall and ultimately chose 351 finalists—approximately 8.7 percent of the applicants. All told, the 2019 fellows represent 56 disciplines and 113 academic institutions worldwide, and 12 percent are veterans.

10 SIPA MPA in Development Practice

GLOBAL ECONOMY / TRADE / DEVELOPMENT / FINANCE

MPA in Development Practice Celebrates 10th Anniversary

To celebrate 10 years of educating an ever-growing community of development practitioners, the MPA-DP program welcomed 52 alumni representing all graduation years back to SIPA for three events during April's Alumni Day and Reunion.

"When we started off 10 years ago, our primary focus was to end extreme poverty and hunger, meet the Millennium Development Goals, and address the needs of rural Africa," said Glenn Denning, director of the MPA in Development Practice program. "Today, we are more global, more entrepreneurial, more sustainability- and resilience-oriented, and more balanced in terms of rural and urban development."

"The program remains driven by the notion that complex problems like climate change, food security, and disaster recovery require a multi-sector approach to finding solutions. Our enduring focus is *practice*. Our graduates are practitioners, skilled in the art and science of getting things done—we are not spectators."

To that end, summer 2019 found 48 MPA-DP students in professional placements with 33 organizations spanning 36 countries, with some traveling to multiple countries. Highlights include the ACToday project of the IRI (International Research Institute for Climate and Society) in Italy, Guatemala, and Colombia in partnership with Columbia World Projects; the Clinton Health Access Initiative in Cambodia; Innovations for Poverty Action in Myanmar; and Lidya in Nigeria, Poland, and the Czech Republic.





ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

CGEP Journalism Initiative Welcomes New Cohort

The Center on Global Energy Policy's Journalism Initiative educates journalists about the various disciplines associated with the energy sector, including policy, markets, finance, climate change, technology, and geopolitics. On June 11, CGEP welcomed a new cohort of 20 journalists from seven different countries for a three-day seminar.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICY

D.C. Career Trip Visits Eight Cyber Companies

On July 16 and 17, SIPA organized a cybersecurity career trip to Washington, D.C., for current students and recent graduates, visiting eight locations over two days. The SIPA contingent visited Verisign, FireEye, the Cyber Threat Alliance, the Department of Homeland Security: Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, Facebook, the Atlantic Council, the Department of Defense, and the Cyberspace Solarium Commission. There was also time for a networking social with a mix of current students, alumni, and industry professionals.



AROUND THE WORLD

DEAN JANOW VISITS GENEVA, PARIS TO DISCUSS GLOBAL TRADE

Dean Merit E. Janow participated in two European conferences focusing on global trade. On June 8, she joined the roundtable discussion "Update and Assessment of Negotiations, Explorations, and Reform Discussions in the WTO" at the G2 Annual Conference on WTO and Global Economic Regulation in Geneva. On June 21, the dean was in Paris for the BNP Paribas 2019 Global Official Institutions Conference, where she discussed "U.S. Policy and Its Implications for Global Trade." Janow also participated in conferences in China, Italy, Japan, and Singapore.



UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA HONORS ECONOMIST SVEJNAR

Slovenia's University of Ljubljana designated economist Jan Svejnar, the James T. Shotwell Professor of Global Political Economy and director of the Center on Global Economic Governance at Columbia SIPA, as an honorary senator of the university.

The recognition was bestowed on December 4, 2018, at a ceremonial meeting of the university's senate. It commended Svejnar for his "exceptional contribution to the international standing of the University of Ljubljana and to strengthening the research potentials and achievements in the field of economics."

The honor came as the university prepared to celebrate the 100th anniversary of its founding in 1919.

SIPA ALUMNUS WINS SEAT IN EU PARLIAMENT

Congratulations to Damian Boeselager MPA '17, who was elected to the EU parliament from Germany in May. He's the first representative of the new Volt party, which he founded with classmate Andrea Venzon MPA '17.



FACULTY BRIEFS



GLOBAL ECONOMY / TRADE / DEVELOPMENT / FINANCE

Faculty Team Focuses on Issues Linking Cyber Risk to Financial Stability

In December 2018, SIPA's Project on Cyber Risk to Financial Stability (CRFS) published the working paper "The Ties That Bind: A Framework to Assess the Linkage between Cyber Risks and Financial Stability." The working paper outlines the transmission channels through which cyber risks can transform into financial systemic risks and the ways in which those risks can amplify or dampen systemic impacts. CRFS is led by Jason Healey, director of the Program on Future Cyber

Risks and a senior research scholar at SIPA; Patricia Mosser, director of the Initiative on Central Banking and Financial Policy and a senior research scholar and senior fellow at SIPA; and Katheryn Rosen, SIPA adjunct professor of international and public affairs and former deputy assistant secretary for financial institutions policy of the U.S. Department of the Treasury. The project team also includes Merit E. Janow, the dean of SIPA.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND
FOREIGN POLICY

Biddle Research Funded by the Office of Naval Research

Congratulations to Professor Stephen Biddle, whose research project “Empirical Analysis for Meeting Great Power Challenges” has been funded for three years by the Office of Naval Research. According to Biddle, the project will address the topic “Power, Deterrence, Influence, and Escalation Management for Shaping Operations.”



GLOBAL ECONOMY / TRADE /
DEVELOPMENT / FINANCE

G20 Eminent Persons Group Publishes Reform Recommendations



The G20 Eminent Persons Group on Global Financial Governance,

which counts SIPA professor Takatoshi Ito among its members, published the report *Making the Global Financial System Work for All* in October 2018. The report recommends “reforms to the global financial architecture and governance of the system of International Financial Institutions (IFIs), so as to promote economic stability and sustainable growth in a new global era.”



ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

Sandalow Develops Comprehensive *Guide to Chinese Climate Policy*

David Sandalow of the Center on Global Energy Policy developed a new *Guide to Chinese Climate Policy*, which provides information on China’s emissions, the impacts of climate change in China, the history of China’s climate change policies, and China’s response to climate change today.

NEW FACULTY

SIPA WELCOMES SANDRA BLACK AND KEREN YARHI-MILO TO THE FACULTY



The economist Sandra Black, a highly influential and accomplished labor economist, joined the SIPA faculty this fall. Black’s research focuses on the role of early life experiences on the long-run outcomes of children, as well as issues of gender and discrimination.



Also joining the faculty is political scientist Keren Yarhi-Milo, whose work is infused by a strong interest in the links between theory and policy. She has written two books that explore elite decision-making in foreign policy as well as multiple articles in top journals of political science.

GLOBAL ECONOMY / TRADE / DEVELOPMENT / FINANCE

Revealing the Hidden Impact of China's Land Reform



China's land reform in 1978–84 unleashed rapid growth in farm output and household income. In new data on reform timing in 914 counties, SIPA's

Douglas Almond and coauthors Hongbin Li and Shuang Zhang find an immediate trend break in the fraction of male children following the reform. Their article "Land Reform and Sex Selection in China" in the April 2019 *Journal of Political Economy* finds that among second births that followed a firstborn girl, sex ratios increased from 1.1 to 1.3 boys per girl in the four years following reform. Larger increases are found among families with more education. The land reform estimate is robust to controlling for the county-level rollout of the one-child policy. Overall, they estimate, land reform accounted for about 1 million missing girls.



GLOBAL ECONOMY / TRADE / DEVELOPMENT / FINANCE

CGEG Policy Briefs Shed Light on Latin American Corruption Scandal

A series of policy briefs from the Center on Global Economic Governance examine the investigation, called Operation Car Wash (*Operação Lava Jato*), into what could be the largest corruption scheme in Latin American history. This project was co-sponsored by the Center for Development Economics and Policy (CDEP), Columbia Global Centers | Rio, and the Latin America Initiative at Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy with the goal of shedding light on a complex problem that has affected the lives of millions. The briefs are written by Paul F. Lagunes, associate professor of international and public affairs.

GLOBAL ECONOMY / TRADE / DEVELOPMENT / FINANCE

Pop-Eleches Research Finds That Education Enhances Economic Decision-Making

In *Science*, Cristian Pop-Eleches and collaborators from Cornell, Seoul National University, and KDI School of Public Policy and Management in Sejong, South Korea, explored how education can enhance economic decision-making. Four years after providing financial support for a year's schooling to a randomized sample of 2,812 girls in secondary schools in Malawi, Pop-Eleches and his colleagues presented the subjects with a set of decision problems that test economic rationality and found that "education intervention enhanced both educational outcomes and economic rationality."



ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

Bordoff Op-Ed Addresses the Green New Deal

In his essay "Getting Real about the Green New Deal" in *Democracy: A Journal of Ideas*, Center on Global Energy Policy founding director Jason Bordoff explains how to make sense of the Green New Deal and offers a specific policy proposal for what it would look like to give meaning to the Green New Deal's climate change ambitions.

Naidu Receives American Antitrust Institute Award



In recognition of his outstanding contribution to antitrust scholarship, Suresh Naidu was selected as a recipient of the 17th Annual Jerry S. Cohen Memorial Fund Writing Award for his 2018 article with Eric A. Posner and

Glen Weyl, “Antitrust Remedies for Labor Market Power” in *Harvard Law Review*. Naidu and his coauthors propose methods for judging the effects of mergers on labor markets and extend their approach to other forms of anticompetitive practices undertaken by employers against workers.

Mercadal Awarded Grant



Ignacia Mercadal, assistant professor of international and public affairs, received a Columbia University Junior Faculty Diversity Grant for her research “Shades of Integration: Wholesale Electricity Markets in the U.S.” The

Provost’s Grants Program for Junior Faculty Who Contribute to the Diversity Goals of the University is a key component of Columbia’s ongoing commitment to maintaining a diverse and thriving faculty body.



Hertel-Fernandez Wins APSA Book Award



Alexander Hertel-Fernandez, assistant professor of international and public affairs, received the American Political Science Association’s Robert A. Dahl book award for *Politics*

at Work: How Companies Turn Their Workers into Lobbyists. The Robert A. Dahl Award is awarded annually to an untenured scholar who has produced scholarship of the highest quality on the subject of democracy. *Politics at Work* was also the winner of APSA’s 2019 Gladys M. Kammerer Award, which is given annually for the best book published during the previous calendar year in the field of U.S. national policy. Hertel-Fernandez’s latest book is *State Capture: How Conservative Activists, Big Businesses, and Wealthy Donors Reshaped the American States—and the Nation*.



ASKING THE DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

SIPA professor Dipali Mukhopadhyay
finds hope in the future through her students.

BY BRETT ESSLER



Dipali Mukhopadhyay's influential scholarship on state formation and rebel governance in Afghanistan and Syria has been realized through often-dangerous fieldwork in conflict zones. Her pursuit of that knowledge, which can take her far outside the ivory tower, has been recognized through generous support from the Carnegie Corporation, the Eisenhower Institute, the Smith Richardson Foundation, the U.S. Institute of Peace, Harvard Law School, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and the U.S. Department of Education.

A former postdoctoral fellow at Princeton University, Mukhopadhyay is a faculty affiliate at SIPA's Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies and teaches classes on international security, including Conceptual Foundations of International Politics. She is the author of two books: *Warlords, Strongman Governors, and the State in Afghanistan* (Cambridge University Press, 2014) and, with Kimberly Howe, *Good Rebel Governance: Revolutionary Politics and Western Intervention in Syria* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

The following conversation has been edited for length and clarity.

Q What is the focus of your research?

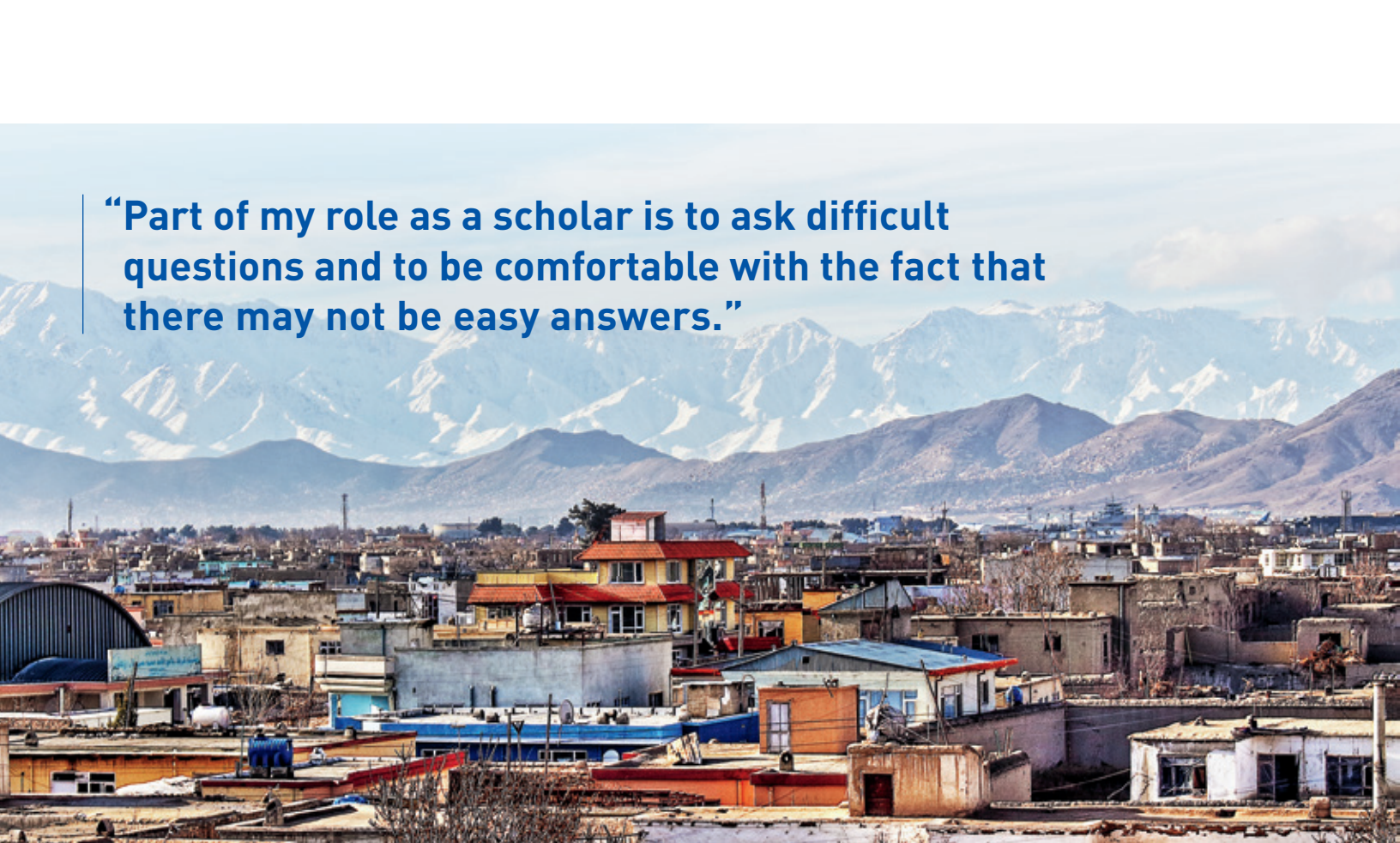
I focus on the relationships between political violence, state building, and governance during and after war. I'm interested in countries that we tend to think about as having weak states or failing states or fragile states and looking for the kinds of politics that keep those states together.

Q Your research then entails your actually being in the field in some of these areas. Can you talk about your experience?

I'm doing qualitative fieldwork for the most part. I've been working for the first part of my career primarily on and in Afghanistan. I started traveling to Afghanistan in 2004 and conducted my research for my doctoral dissertation there a few years later. I have been traveling back there ever since. I've spent a good amount of time in the capital, Kabul, but I am also very interested in political dynamics that bring the periphery, as we call it—sort of the provinces, towns, and cities that are on the edges of the country—bring them into relationship with the capital, with the center. So I've also spent quite a bit of time in two major cities in the northern and eastern parts of the country.

Q It's essential to your research to be on the ground in those places, but it also can be dangerous in some cases. How do you balance that?

Doing fieldwork in war zones or conflict zones is challenging, and it's also very exciting. It's challenging because you are dealing with questions of your own security on a day-to-day basis. But part of what is difficult about it is, the more comfortable that I have become in the countries that I study—in particular, Afghanistan; I have also done work on the Turkey-Syria border—I've built relationships with people that I trust to help take care of me, and helped me make the right decisions. But more generally, the environment for researchers, for journalists, for aid workers in conflict zones empirically has become much more dangerous and much more difficult terrain to traverse. So I'm constantly weighing the risks with the benefits. And in general, I have found myself drawn back time and again, and have decided that understanding these countries and their politics on their own terms with people whom I find incredibly interesting and inspiring, that it's worth the risk.



“Part of my role as a scholar is to ask difficult questions and to be comfortable with the fact that there may not be easy answers.”

Q And that gives you a different perspective than someone in an ivory tower, just writing this from an academic sense?

Yes. A lot of academia and social science now, because of methodological and technological advances, is done about faraway places from the U.S., in universities, in very exciting ways, in what we might call the ivory tower. For me, that work is really interesting and really valuable, but it remains very important to stay connected to the truths of the places that we're actually studying.

In my case, that has meant building relationships with Afghans and Syrians and really giving them the opportunity to articulate their own politics in their own words and on their own terms. There's no way to do that except to travel to those places.

Q What is your outlook for Afghanistan in terms of governance and policy?

I have a complicated set of views on the future of Afghan politics and the future of the country. In the short term, I'm very concerned. I've seen the experiences of my own colleagues and friends and people with whom I have built relationships over now almost 15 years, and the kinds of insecurity that they face. And the challenges that they face are getting more and more acute with every day.

On the other hand, in the medium-to-long term, I'm incredibly optimistic about the country. Partly that's because the kind of academic point of view that I take is one of a longer term. And so I recognize that there are ups and downs in the ways in which states build and rebuild themselves across history; there always have been. And I think Afghanistan is going through that growth process right now, and it's a painful one.

But I also think I've seen incredible progress and, in particular, a kind of resilience and commitment on the part of the new sort of young generation of Afghans to take all of the opportunities that they have been given since 2001 and invest them back into their country. And that makes me ultimately very optimistic.

Q Do you have a similarly optimistic view about Syria?

Studying Syria has been the most difficult intellectual experience of my career, in large part because it's very hard to find hope and optimism in Syrian politics. I'm working on a book right now with Kimberly Howe at Tufts University. She and I have been studying the politics of the Syrian opposition. And we're deeply inspired by the kinds of struggles that ordinary Syrians have experienced and the kinds of commitments that they've made to a different kind of politics. And we're committed in this book to telling that story.

But it's impossible to look at Syria today and not feel a profound amount of despair about what the country has been through, and a recognition that we're probably not even close to seeing the end of that suffering. And so that's a very difficult truth to grapple with but it's a very important one, because it reveals to us so much about the limits of international relations and international law. It forces us to think much more creatively and with a lot more innovation about how we can do international relations better. And that's a very important task for us, especially as students of global affairs at Columbia.

Q How do you take your experience from your scholarship and your field research and share that with the students in your classroom?

Teaching for me has been entirely integrated into my approach to scholarship. I think that's one of the privileges of teaching such great students like the ones that we have at SIPA. What I do in the classroom is to bring my own experiences—from field research, from things that I'm writing, from things that I've read—and create conversations in the classroom with students that first allow them to take their own experiences, their preconceptions of what they've learned elsewhere, and test them and debate them and engage with them critically. But then what I also do is ask them for their feedback on my own work, on my own thinking.

What I have found with SIPA students is that they are incredibly willing to take intellectual risks in the classroom and to think far outside the box. And the more that you challenge them, the more they rise to that occasion. And so it's always been an experience of conversation for me in the classroom with my students. In many cases, that conversation continues long after they finish a course with me. They go on to write more, they publish, they bring that work back to me, and they carry those conversations forward in the work that they do.

Professionally, they stay in touch with me. I've actually continued to work with some of my students as they've gone back to the field sites where I did my own research, and they themselves have become experts and I draw on their expertise myself. So it's always a process of dialogue, and a very challenging and interesting one at that. And that's why, for me, I don't see a line really between my work as a scholar and my work as a teacher.

Q Do you think that the research you do impacts policy and impacts peoples' lives?

I think it's always a very important and difficult question for a scholar to understand what her impact really is. For me, it was very important from the very beginning of my career to be engaged with people who are actually making policy.

So I spent parts of my early career in the U.S. Department of Defense, at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and engaging with military officers and enlisted soldiers before they deployed to various theaters of conflict, because I really wanted to make sure that the work I was doing was speaking to the kinds of questions and issues that they faced.

Part of my role as a scholar is to ask difficult questions and to be comfortable with the fact that there may not be easy answers. And that's something that makes it challenging to engage with policymakers who have to make decisions right now. But my experience has been that aid workers and soldiers and diplomats are actually very interested in having these harder conversations.

I see my work as an opportunity to give them the time and space to reflect in ways that they don't get to do every day and to come back to me and have those conversations, and that's why I write opinion editorial pieces. That's why I engage in discussions on a regular basis in Washington with civilians and military folks involved in policymaking. And that's, for me, the biggest advantage of being at

SIPA, because we are taken seriously by policymakers and we take policymakers seriously. That allows for really fruitful, ongoing dialogue. It's not about immediate solutions right now. It's a much longer, deeper conversation, and it's one I really value.

Q What makes you hopeful?

This is a time when I think it's easy to get really nervous about the state of our politics, about the state of the world more generally, and in the places that I study, there's a lot of bad news. What makes me incredibly hopeful—and the reason why I am still committed to being an academic and being a teacher—is what I learn from and experience with my students, in large part because I think they are unafraid of asking the really difficult questions. And that is something that is hard to find today.

I think a lot of people are comfortable putting out easy answers, and a lot of those answers are simplistic, they're not necessarily based on empirical facts, and they're often really divisive in their implications. And what is extraordinary about being at Columbia and being at SIPA is that we have constructed a community in which people who are from very different backgrounds and very different points of view are actively and consciously engaging one another in constructive debate about how to make the world a better place.

That is not about being naive or overly optimistic. It is about being really honest about the profound challenges that we face domestically and abroad. And what gives me hope is that every year, that conversation gets better here. And I think that the better that conversation is here, the better our graduates will be prepared to go into the world and in small but significant ways actually make it better. And that, for me, fills me with hope, because I think there are enormous challenges but there is also an incredible number of young people who are truly committed to tackling them. And as long as we're all trying, then our hope remains justified. [!\[\]\(b4eeff342f60cc7bcd67d869b4fedca2_img.jpg\)](#)

THE CASE FOR Free Trade

BY JEENHO HAHM MPA '19

SIPA's Arvind Panagariya, the Jagdish Bhagwati Professor of Indian Political Economy, is an expert on trade who served in the cabinet of the Indian prime minister Narendra Modi from 2015 to 2017. As vice chairman of the National Institution for Transforming India, also called NITI Aayog, Panagariya helped lead a think tank within the government that provided strategic and technical advising on key issues. He is also a former chief economist of the Asian Development Bank and has worked with the World Bank, the IMF, and the UN in various roles.

Panagariya's latest work, *Free Trade and Prosperity* (Oxford 2019), is the first book-length defense of free trade that focuses on developing countries. In it he combines empirical evidence with historical cases to dispel myths and demonstrate the critical role of trade in growth as well as poverty reduction. Panagariya recently spoke with *SIPA Magazine* about his book.

Note: The conversation took place before the May 19 conclusion of India's elections, which increased the majority held by Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party.



Q You've already authored more than 15 books on trade. What made you decide to write this book in particular?

The first 15 to 20 years of my work was mostly on the theory of international trade, which is my core area of my specialization. But coming from India, I also think about economic development. This book is where trade and economic development meet. What I found was that several books have been written making the case for free trade, but almost all of them are written in the context of developed countries. A lot of writings exist on developing countries and free trade, but there is no single source where you get a full-scale defense of free trade with developing countries at its center. That was the motivation for this book.

Q Do you believe that countries will adopt varying trade policies, with some pursuing free trade and others pursuing protectionist policies, or will most once again converge on a certain global norm?

We're at the crossroads right now. For many decades, the United States provided the necessary leadership to create a multilateral trade system, which initially started with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and culminated in the World Trade Organization. The United States saw it as its own mandate to have a set of rules which are followed by all the countries, and it led to a huge amount of liberalization, in different phases.

Now a large number of developing countries are becoming important, and the interests have clashed. The United States now feels that it has been hurt by its own openness; at least the political leadership sees it that way. And that, of course, has led the United States to become more defensive, which has had a detrimental effect on the world. That's in the global context. If the global system starts to unravel, then domestic political economies start to assert themselves. We'll see a temporary setback.

But I remain an optimist. In spite of actions that the United States has taken against China, China against the United States, and some of the other countries against one another, on the whole, the global economy remains open. If you look at numbers for global trade—over \$17 trillion in

merchandise trade and another \$4–\$5 trillion in services trade—these are large numbers. So if any country wonders if it can benefit from free trade, there are a lot of opportunities.

Q What's the best way to engage someone who has a very different view on trade from yours? This is especially important for current students who will be future policymakers.

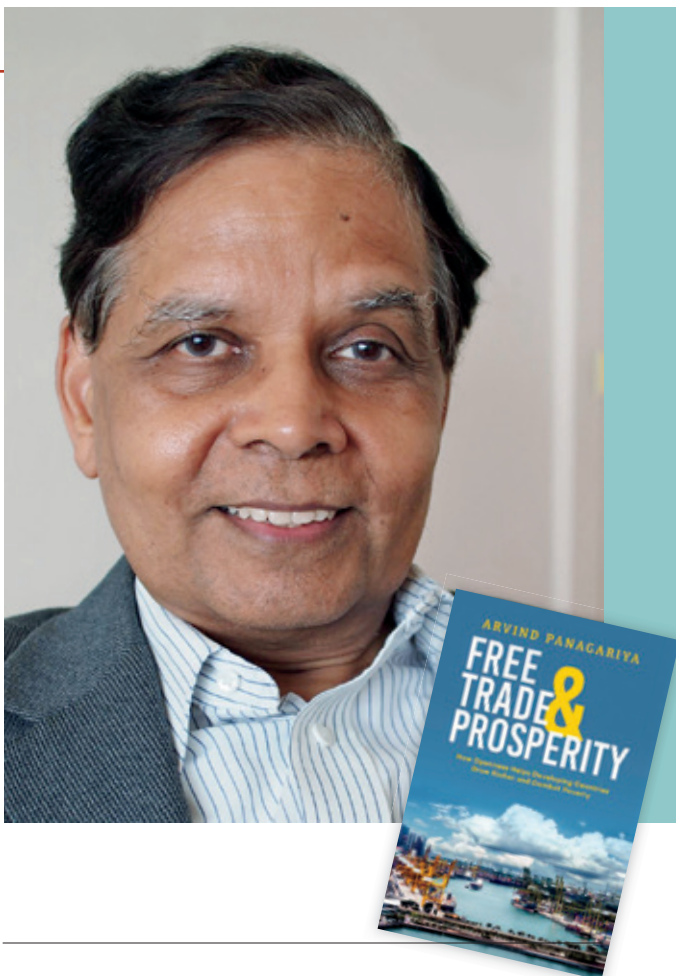
That's why I wrote the book! Somebody has to be willing to engage. If someone has already made up their mind that trade is not good for them, it's harder. So I don't expect them to change their minds, but there are a lot more people with open minds who are willing to look at the evidence. This book provides very solid evidence.

In the end, choosing between free trade and protectionism, you have to ask where protectionism has resulted in prosperity—and it is pretty hard to find evidence of that.

Q You've worked in the Modi government as a cabinet minister, and you've defended his policies. What's your response to those who criticize the government policies in the economy and other areas?

In my personal view, the government has made huge progress and embraced much-needed economic reforms. Thanks to many reforms by two prime ministers in the 1990s, India grew very fast from 2003 to 2011. But during the years of high growth, the reforms stopped and the growth rate fell. In the last five years, the reforms came back to infrastructure building, including in roads, civil aviation, railways, and waterways.

In terms of social reforms, progress has been made in health, education, and other areas. India never had a good bankruptcy law, but now there is a modern one called the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC). A myriad of taxes have been consolidated into the goods and services tax. There is also a Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), which uses one's biometric data to make transfers. It has cut out a lot of leakages in the system. Demonetization has gotten bad press, but I personally think that if you're going to do something about corruption, this has to be one of the steps.



“I remain an optimist. In spite of actions that the United States has taken against China, China against the United States, and some of the other countries against one another, on the whole, the global economy remains open.”

Q What do you think is the most important economic issue that the next Indian government must address?

Going forward, reforms on labor law, use of land, and privatization of public-sector enterprises need to start. Thirty-five public-sector enterprises have already been approved for privatization.

We also need reform on higher education—the current governing structure for higher education was placed in 1956, which is antiquated and needs to be replaced by a new law. Compared to any other country, India has too much interference in the institutions of higher education, from state governments to the central government body called the University Grants Commission, and within university administration. We need autonomy. I started this process before I left, and some progress has already been made. But we need a new higher education law to clean up the existing cobwebs and allow autonomy. In the United States, once you get a license from your state government, there isn’t much interference in how to run the university. That model has worked very well.

Q What is your advice for students?

At the university, study analytical skills very hard. Once you go into the field, you’re confronted with too many facts. You need the ability to extract those facts and think through. Otherwise, you’ll be overwhelmed by the facts. If you want to bring real change, you need to be there. It varies by country, but in India I felt it was especially true. In the United States, there’s a continuum of ideas among universities, think tanks, and government, but that’s not the case in India. When it comes down to convincing politicians, you need to be inside politics. It helps. So study your skills and go into the field. [👉](#)



Power to the People

A team of SIPA students designs
and implements an off-grid solar PV
system with battery storage to
help victims of Hurricane María.

BY KATHRIN HAVRILLA-SANCHEZ



On September 20, 2017, all of Puerto Rico—including the small island of Vieques—was plunged into blackness as sustained winds, heavy rainfall, and severe flooding from Category 5 Hurricane María completely destroyed the electric power grid. With emergency supplies already depleted from Hurricane Irma’s landfall two weeks prior, the situation for Puerto Rico and its people quickly became dire due to a severe lack of food, potable water, and medical care.

In October of that same year, six enterprising students in SIPA’s Energy and Environment (EE) concentration, together with a student in Columbia’s MS in Management Science and Engineering program, began brainstorming ideas for their EE Practicum, a hands-on field work project in which student-led teams tackle cutting-edge issues in the energy and environment sectors.

This past summer, this group’s Post-María Puerto Rico project came to a thrilling culmination as a 7 kilowatt (kW) off-grid solar photovoltaic (PV) system on the roof of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Puerto Rico (BGCPR) clubhouse in Vieques went online. This supplemental power source, together with a 27 kilowatt hour (kWh) battery storage system, not only enables the BGCPR clubhouse to satisfy up to 100 percent of its own energy needs but also helps the Vieques community move closer to energy independence and regular, reliable power—even in times of crisis.

A Real Approach to a Real Problem

Formerly known as the Global Collaboratory, the Energy and Environment Practicum helps empower students as they explore their career interests and build their experience in the global energy and environment field. While designing and implementing their projects, teams receive financial support thanks to contributions from Columbia University’s Center on Global Energy Policy and the Earth Institute. They also benefit from expert guidance from industry leaders and Columbia faculty, such as EE concentration codirectors, Wolfram Schlenker and David Sandalow; Philip LaRocco of SIPA; and Geoffrey Heal of Columbia Business School.

“The EE Practicum is very popular with students,” says Sandalow. “It’s an excellent way for them to both learn and make a difference. Our students have worked on challenges close to home, such as helping New York City meet its goals

for deploying electric buses, and around the world, such as bringing solar power to African villages and cooling technologies to poor neighborhoods in Bangladesh.”

When the call for EE Practicum applications went out in fall 2017, Rashide Assad MPA ’18, Eskedar Gessesse MIA ’19, Rodrigo Inurreta MIA ’19, David Maravilla MPA ’18, Rodrigo Paz y Rocha ’18SEAS/BUS, Alejandro Valdez MPA ’19, and Lara Younes MIA ’19 naturally gravitated toward each other through a shared interest in energy and climate resilience.

“The devastation in Puerto Rico was at the top of everyone’s minds at the time,” recalls Gessesse, who moved to the U.S. from Ethiopia to attend Mount Holyoke College and earn her undergraduate degree in environmental and developmental studies. “The idea of coming up with something practical to help the people of Puerto Rico recover—instead of a theoretical, research-based project that would create data but no solutions—really appealed to all of us.”

Seeking the Right Partner in a Time of Great Need

Vieques, a small island located off of Puerto Rico’s eastern coast and home to 9,000 residents, emerged as a viable location in need of assistance. During María, the underwater power-transmission lines that funneled electricity from Puerto Rico’s main island to the more remote Vieques were heavily damaged, leading inhabitants to produce what little power they could through inefficient, unsustainable, and sometimes-dangerous diesel generators since the hurricane hit.

While the seed of the idea to deploy some kind of renewables-based microgrid on Vieques appeared quickly, it took more time and consideration to flourish.



“It was somewhat a long process to really cement the foundation for the Post-María Puerto Rico project,” says Inurreta, a graduate of the Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM) and a former political-risk consultant in the Mexican oil and gas sector. “We first started talking with federal government agencies and international organizations but realized that avenue was going to take longer than we wanted.”

The team found advice and direction from Joaquín Avilés Lopez, founder and CEO of i4SD, a global social enterprise focused on smart and connected infrastructure and its applications for sustainable development. Avilés, together with John Humphrey, an energy systems engineer, assisted the team with envisioning a system that could be replicable throughout Puerto Rico.

“We then started engaging NGOs in February 2018,” recalls Inurreta, “and came up with the idea that a small solar-powered system in a community center could be scaled and reproduced in different locations.”

Rooftop solar systems are an excellent choice in Puerto Rico, as they can endure winds of up to 155 mph—less than 1 percent of the rooftop solar systems in the country were damaged by Hurricane María, according to local solar installers.

In addition, local stakeholders, including the University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez, provided the team detailed information about Vieques, the situation of the power grid, and the political and economic circumstances of Puerto Rico.

\$92 billion

All told, Hurricane María is the third-costliest tropical cyclone on record, wreaking approximately \$92 billion of damage, mostly in Puerto Rico, as well as causing an estimated 2,975 deaths in the Commonwealth.

Source: CBS News

With the technical piece beginning to take shape, the team traveled to Vieques over spring break in 2018 to find the right community partner for the project. The students sought an organization that had played a key role in relief efforts on the island and was able to provide nonprofit services to the community in nonemergency situations. The BG CPR surfaced as the top contender.

“The BG CPR of Vieques was by far the most efficient and most engaged of the NGOs we met with,” says Inurreta. “Both sides of the partnership wanted this to be sustainable in the long run, and the BG CPR was in the midst of upgrading their community center to better serve the people on the island. By boosting the available power at the center,

it could serve as a food distribution point, a cell phone charging station, and a signal booster for satellite Wi-Fi during emergencies, as well as function as a learning space and social center in nonemergency times.”

The SIPA team met with Patricia de la Torre, private partnership director at the BG CPR, who has worked with the nonprofit youth organization since early 2017—before María hit.

“When the students reached out with their idea of making the Boys & Girls Clubs in Vieques more of a resilient hub and community center, we thought it was brilliant,” says de la Torre. “They have been very focused and proactive along the way, from taking the lead on the design of the project to identifying the correct funding source. They’re an amazing group, and Columbia also gets some credit because they’re promoting how important community-based projects are in the energy sector.”

Running the Numbers

After the SIPA team and the BG CPR decided to work together in this pilot project, they signed a memorandum of understanding to coordinate efforts and facilitate the deployment of a PV system with battery storage.

To generate power at the time in 2018, the Vieques BG CPR clubhouse was using a diesel generator as well as a 6 kW solar PV system with two 13.5 kWh Powerwall batteries lent to them by Tesla for humanitarian services after the hurricane. The PV system generated about one-third of the power needed to run the BG CPR facility, but with the energy stored in the batteries it could cover almost 50 percent of the facility’s load requirements during any given day.

Through data analysis, the team calculated that the BG CPR clubhouse needed an additional 7 kW PV system with two additional 13.5 kWh Powerwall batteries. This system was estimated to cost upwards of \$40,000, and the plan was to finance half with fundraising and half with loans taken out by the BG CPR. However, as part of their ongoing work to facilitate the project, the team was able to help secure a \$50,000 grant in fall 2018 from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) to fund the new system in its entirety.

“When I was younger, I was interested in becoming a priest, so I was very familiar with the CCHD, which is the domestic anti-poverty program of the U.S. Catholic Bishops Conference,” says Inurreta. “I reached out to them to find out if the Post-María Puerto Rico project qualified for a grant, and they were very happy to hear from me—it turns out that they were looking for projects to fund in Puerto Rico because they had set aside money specifically to help victims of Hurricane María.”

In October 2018, Tesla also decided to donate the original solar PV system and storage batteries to the BG CPR.



A Lasting Impact in Puerto Rico

In July, Gessesse, Inurreta, Valdez, and Younes gathered together in New York City for two momentous occasions: a celebration for the 2019 graduates, and, with Assad and Paz y Rocha attending via conference call from Mexico City, to select a company to supply the BGCPV system with storage—the final step of the Post-María Puerto Rico project.

“That was a great way to wrap up our time at SIPA,” says Inurreta. “At that time, the appointed provider confirmed they would bring the hardware to Vieques in three weeks’ time and the system would be up and running in another two weeks.”

In September, the team traveled again to Vieques to assess the installation of the solar PV system and storage before finalizing their report to the CCHD on the completion of the project and its impact on the community. With the power stored within the batteries at any given time, the system should be able to supply enough electricity for the BGCPV clubhouse to operate normally for at least 8 hours. This added capacity is crucial—the first few hours after an emergency are key because the need to communicate with people and organize relief efforts is the greatest.

“We are beyond proud that we have been able to make a real difference in Vieques,” says Inurreta. “In conversations that we had at SIPA and in Puerto Rico, it was important to us that we not offer aid by saying, ‘Oh, we’ll just fix this for you the way we think it should be done.’ Communities want to be able to help themselves and be a part of creating their own solutions.

“We have helped the BGCPV gather the tools they need, and now it is in their hands to keep it up for their citizens. That responsibility and strength is a powerful thing.”

De la Torre, who remembers well the struggles of the Vieques BGCPV club to serve as the community’s emergency power distribution center after María had left the island completely disconnected, is prepared to take on that challenge.

“It’s a blessing to have the Vieques clubhouse moving toward energy resiliency,” says de la Torre. “Thanks to this initiative, we are ready to serve our community as an energy hub when the next crisis hits—a place where people can not only gather for the small things, such as charging their phones to stay in touch with loved ones, but also the major ones, such as keeping life-saving medications like insulin cold.”

Continuing to Heal

While Vieques and Puerto Rico have recovered in some ways since Hurricane María’s damaging landfall, there is still much work to be done. As of September, Vieques still didn’t have a functioning hospital. Residents had to take the ferry to the mainland for emergency services, including heart attacks, labor and delivery, and other major health issues. Also, the second-largest employer on Vieques, the W Hotel, still had not reopened since María.

Happily, the BGCPV has continued its good work thanks to the SIPA EE Practicum: because of their connecting with the CCHD, they were able to secure another grant to fund the Youth Development Institute, a sister organization that works in advocacy and public policy for children that live in poverty in Puerto Rico.

As for Gessesse, her experience with the Post-María Puerto Rico project has had a major impact on her future—in August, she began working at the World Bank in its Caribbean Energy Resiliency Program, helping countries in the area to rethink their power-sector planning and strategy and reliance on the grid.

“When I was being interviewed for the World Bank, nearly every single question was about the project in Vieques,” says Gessesse. “Our EE Practicum project has been one of the highlights of my graduate school experience—it’s wonderful to have gained the knowledge and expertise I did, but nothing feels as good as knowing that what we learned is helping real people get through real problems.” [👑](#)

Putting Maternal Mortality in the Spotlight

MTV picks up SIPA-student-designed campaign to raise public awareness.

BY BRETT ESSLER



L-R: JUSTINE LAVOYE MPA-DP '19,
JENISE OGLE MPA '19,
AND MARIA JOSÉ DIAZ MPA '19
PHOTO: BRIAN MILLER

“It gave me goosebumps.”

That was adjunct professor Stephen Friedman’s visceral reaction to a pitch by three MPA students in his course the Art of Creating Social Impact Campaigns.

“WE’RE IN THIS FAST-PACED TELEVISION MEDIA ENVIRONMENT, AND THEY ARE LOOKING AT US AS THE EXPERTS ON THE CONTENT AND THEY’RE GUIDING US THROUGH THIS WHOLE CREATIVE WORLD. IT’S REALLY EXCITING.”

JENISE OGLE MPA ’19

The students’ idea—to raise awareness of the disproportionately high rates of maternal mortality in the U.S.—was a “punch in the gut” Friedman was not expecting.

Over a 25-year career in media and consulting that included a stint as president of MTV, Friedman has repeatedly launched innovative, socially impactful campaigns that helped bring awareness to many critical issues, including the genocide in Darfur.

The course, which he taught for the first time at SIPA in the fall of 2018, seeks to apply the principles of storytelling to, as the public policy academic Marshall Ganz has said, translate “values into action.”

“The most complicated part of the class is, How do you translate a complicated social issue into something that gets past your analytic framework and hits you in the gut?” Friedman says, “because you have a lot of students at SIPA who are trying to do great things in the world and they come at it with an analytical rigor—an important rigor—but the most successful campaigns must also appeal to your emotions and values in order to change behavior.”

That fall day in class, Friedman heard a pitch from Maria José Diaz MPA ’19, Justine LaVoye MPA-DP ’19, and Jenise Ogle MPA ’19 that creatively used narrative technique to address what a recent article in *Harvard Public Health* magazine called “a human rights crisis.”

According to a 2017 UNICEF report, the global maternal mortality ratio declined by 44 percent from 1990 to 2015. However, data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) showed that pregnancy-related deaths in the United States increased from 7.2 deaths per 100,000 live births in 1987 to 18.0 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2014, a rate higher than any other country in the industrialized world. A 2018 report from nine U.S. states revealed that 60 percent of all pregnancy-related deaths were preventable.

The disparity between white and black mothers is even more staggering, according to the CDC: 12.4 deaths per 100,000 live births for white women compared with 40 deaths per 100,000 live births for black women. The *Harvard Public Health* article also noted that for African American mothers, “the odds of surviving childbirth are comparable to those of women in countries such as Mexico and Uzbekistan, where significant proportions of the population live in poverty.”

“We have black women dying all the time from this, and the community doesn’t really know why they are at risk,” Ogle says. “For someone like myself who is African American, I didn’t know this, and I think the reason to focus on the social aspect of this issue is because there is a lack of awareness.”

“NOT ONLY DID THE STUDENTS PITCH US THIS BREAKTHROUGH IDEA, THEY JOINED OUR TEAM THROUGHOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CAMPAIGN.”

CHRIS MCCARTHY, PRESIDENT OF MTV, VH1, CMT, AND LOGO MEDIA



A STILL FROM THE
“SAVE OUR MOMS” PSA (MTV)

Despite the dire statistics, the health of African American mothers has been under-reported, only recently gaining some media attention because of Serena Williams’s story of a near-fatal birth experience and Democratic presidential candidate Senator Elizabeth Warren’s proposal to offer hospitals incentives to lower African American maternal mortality rates.

The reasons for this crisis are wide-ranging and, according to Ogle, stem from years of systemic racism and bias. A recent study by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) found that 8 out of 10 pregnancy-related deaths in that state could have been prevented with “one or more reasonable changes to the circumstances of the patient, provider, facility, systems, or community factors.”

The students—all of whom had career experience in policy roles related to public health and gender—say they were astounded by the statistics.

“Even at SIPA, where we are studying policy,” LaVoye says, “this is still an issue that many people don’t know about at all.”

The students researched other awareness campaigns focusing on the issue of maternal mortality, many of which targeted the medical community. They decided to aim their

messaging at mothers and their support networks, emphasizing the warning signs of the common causes of pregnancy-related deaths—like hemorrhaging, infections, and clots—and educating about self-care once new mothers leave the hospital.

“We saw in our initial research that most of the focus was on generating awareness among the medical community,” Diaz says. “It was interesting to see there was a gap when it came to the social aspect—pregnant women and people supporting them.”

The group’s creative proposal referenced recent pop-culture touchstones that blend

cinematic storytelling with social activism—including Childish Gambino’s “This Is America” and Beyoncé’s “Lemonade”—along with powerful PSAs like “Sandy Hook Promise.”

Friedman was blown away by the approach, which employed a double narrative and a surprise ending: “The creative storytelling was elevated and palpable.”

“We want to emphasize that even during very joyous moments like having a baby, having a gender reveal, having a baby shower, that you also have to be wary and think about the warning signs as well,” Ogle says. “We want pregnant women to be there when their baby is born.”

The creative concept hooks the viewer by establishing a joyful tone as an expecting couple plans for the birth of their child. As the narrative continues, it becomes more somber, implying that the child is in danger—only to reveal that it is the mother who has died during childbirth. After flashing back through a sequence of opportunities to mitigate risks for pregnant mothers, the video concludes happily after all, with the mother alive and well and holding her new baby.

On the last day of the course, Friedman was talking to his successor at MTV, Chris McCarthy, and told him about the emotional student pitch he couldn’t shake.

“He said, ‘You never get goosebumps,’” Friedman remembers. Friedman initially did not think the campaign would be right for MTV, but he had piqued McCarthy’s interest. With television properties like MTV’s *Teen Mom* and *Dear Mama* on VH1, McCarthy felt the demographics were perfect for a campaign focused on maternal health.

“When Stephen shared the creative pitch from the SIPA students, I knew it was something that would resonate with our audience because the topic intersects with so many of the issues in which our audience is engaged—family, health care, and the life stage of young parenthood,” says McCarthy, who is president of the MTV, VH1, CMT, and Logo networks. “Stephen is a mentor and a pioneer in the field of social impact, and with his guidance and the students’ creative campaign, I felt we had a powerful way to address this important issue facing our audience.”

As the project progressed, strategic partnerships were secured with Every Mother Counts, an organization founded by model and activist Christy Turlington Burns,



A STILL FROM THE "SAVE OUR MOMS" PSA (MTV)

and Black Mamas Matter, a collaboration between the Center for Reproductive Rights and Black Lives Matter.

Then Lena Waithe—the actress and screenwriter who recently made history as the first African American woman to win a comedy-writing Emmy—signed on to produce and narrate the PSA.

The students were brought on board as consultants to the project and planned to continue after the video launched on Mother's Day. The campaign also featured a companion website, saveourmoms.com, which encouraged viewers to learn more about the issue.

"Not only did the students pitch us this breakthrough idea, they joined our team throughout the development of the campaign," McCarthy says. "They helped with research and getting to know the nonprofits working on this issue. They were in lockstep with our team and the campaign partners as key decisions were made around the messaging and call to action. Before the launch of the campaign, we looked to the students to provide feedback on the final video treatments and online resources."

"We were still those [SIPA] policy students but now we were in this fast-paced television media environment, and they were looking at us as the experts on the content and they were guiding us through this whole creative world," Ogle says. "It was really exciting."

The students' ambitions for the campaign's reach have grown as it evolved from a fictional project to a reality.

"I hope," says Diaz, "a lot of people see it so that we can improve the community's sense of responsibility for women's maternal health."

"Over half of these deaths are preventable," says McCarthy, "and our hope is that this campaign will help sound the alarm about this serious issue and help moms receive the care, services, and support they need."

Before enrolling in Friedman's class in fall 2018, Diaz, LaVoye, and Ogle had never met. Now they are bound together in ways they never expected.

"Learning from Maria José and her experience in Chile and throughout the different public and private sectors, and from Jenise, a woman who is from the U.S. but has a very different lived experience than I do, I think that's a very powerful thing," LaVoye says. "I know that they will be on speed dial."

Friedman hopes that the students' maternal mortality campaign is just the beginning.

"That's what was great about the students in the class," he says. "I think students in every group presentation had a creative nugget like that, which had the potential to find its way into the world and have a positive impact."

A week before the campaign was to air, Diaz, LaVoye, and Ogle had a chance to see a close-to-final cut of the video. They were pleased to see their artistic vision was intact.

"I watched it," says LaVoye, "went into shock, and then cried." 🙏

"WE WANT TO EMPHASIZE THAT EVEN DURING VERY JOYOUS MOMENTS LIKE HAVING A BABY, HAVING A GENDER REVEAL, HAVING A BABY SHOWER, THAT YOU ALSO HAVE TO BE WARY AND THINK ABOUT THE WARNING SIGNS AS WELL. WE WANT PREGNANT WOMEN TO BE THERE WHEN THEIR BABY IS BORN."

JENISE OGLE MPA '19

CONNECTING LOCAL TO GLOBAL

Penny Abeywardena MIA '05
is New York City's ambassador
to the global community.

STORY BY AGATHA BORDONARO
PHOTO BY CHRIS TAGGART



When you walk into Penny Abeywardena's bright corner office, you've gained a window onto the world. Literally. Amid sweeping views of the city's towering skyscrapers and bustling avenues, the United Nations building rises dramatically from across the street, a portal to the global community. It's a fitting backdrop for New York City's commissioner for international affairs to host foreign ambassadors, form partnerships, and collaborate on issues of international import.

But this same office is also firmly representative of New York City itself—and its people. On the floor near the door, visitors will notice a colorful, three-tiered rack of women's shoes, housing everything from daytime flats to Sergio Rossi heels. After all, like many new moms, Abeywardena is running after a toddler before getting to work, where she makes a footwear switch at her desk.

"Ambassadors see my shoe rack all the time," she says, laughing.

Abeywardena brings this same genuineness and transparency to her role as commissioner for international affairs, in which she serves as the primary liaison between the city and its extensive diplomatic corps. With the United Nations headquarters, 193 permanent missions, 116 consulates, 70 international trade missions, and numerous UN affiliates like UNICEF and the United Nations Development Programme, New York has the highest concentration of foreign diplomats in the world.

"I essentially have the privilege of being New York City's ambassador to the global community," Abeywardena says. "How do we make New Yorkers feel the value of being host to the largest diplomatic corps, and how do you get [that corps] to feel more engaged with us? Given the political climate, city leadership and diplomacy are more important than ever, and we're proud to be driving subnational leadership on issues like climate and migration."

It wasn't always this way. Historically, the role of the commissioner for international affairs was to ensure that the diplomatic corps could navigate New York City smoothly from an operational perspective. "[The office] was primarily focused on mitigating diplomatic incidents, security issues, and enforcing the parking program," says Abeywardena, adding that her office still handles these tasks. But with the support of Mayor Bill de Blasio MIA '87, Abeywardena has transformed the Mayor's Office for International Affairs into a true partner to the global community—a place for exchanging best practices and collaborative problem-solving.

"My office's programming allows us, as New Yorkers, to better engage beyond borders," she says. So, while Abeywardena and her team bring "the New York City values of diversity and inclusion, and leadership on climate and other issues to [the UN] to help push the larger global conversation," she says, they're also asking, "How can we learn from the global community?"

To help drive these conversations, Abeywardena first legitimizes New York City as a source of knowledge and experience by pointing out its size—in terms of its population, infrastructure, systems, and economies.

"It's as big as, if not larger than, 141 countries," she says. "If New York can get something done, then other cities and countries can realistically consider it."

Abeywardena also acknowledges the structural inequities that challenge New York City and makes it clear that she wishes to learn from others, especially from megacities like São Paulo and Nairobi.

This balance of give and take in these conversations has proved invaluable to Abeywardena in effecting change during her tenure.

TURNING HER PAST INTO THE CITY'S FUTURE

Abeywardena is particularly well suited to helping foreigners feel welcome. That's because she knows firsthand what it's like to feel like an outsider.

Born in Colombo, Sri Lanka, to Sinhalese-speaking parents, she immigrated to the United States at the age of four. Her parents settled first in the San Fernando Valley in Southern California and eventually moved to Culver City, California, in Abeywardena's teen years. Not only was she one of the only nonwhite and non-Latino members of her community, but she was undocumented. She became a citizen at the age of 15 after being granted legal status the year prior by President Ronald Reagan's Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, known informally as the amnesty law.

"I was very aware of being different," Abeywardena says. "I know that kind of insecurity, and my desire to protect the most vulnerable in my community has informed all of the consequential decisions in my career."

After stints volunteering for women's rights organizations and interning at Human Rights Watch, as well as taking her first trip back to Sri Lanka at the age of 19, Abeywardena became committed to "women's rights issues with an international lens."

She went on to earn her bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Southern California in 1999 and her master's in international affairs from Columbia's School of International and Public Affairs in 2005. Even in graduate school, Abeywardena's entrepreneurialism shone.

"SIPA allowed me to develop my own curriculum," she says. "I wanted to have a human rights lens on women's issues in sub-Saharan Africa while also learning how to run a nonprofit. SIPA offered me this opportunity, and so I took classes at Columbia Business School and at the law school. It made my graduate education extremely worthwhile."

A few years after graduating from SIPA, Abeywardena had assumed the role of director of the newly created girls and women integration program at the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI). In this role, she advised multinational corporations, philanthropists, NGOs, and other institutions on gender-focused development initiatives while also expanding the number of CGI member organizations that invested in these initiatives.

"I was that kid that always got in trouble for talking too much," Abeywardena says, "[but it] has served me well as an adult. My ability to get people invested in ideas has proven integral to shaping opinion and effecting change."

This knack for effective communication, as well as her innovative thinking and commitment to social justice, caught the eye of Mayor de Blasio, who was hoping to revamp his office of international affairs to create better synergies between the UN, the consular corps, and the city.

Upon assuming the commissioner's role during the 2014 UN General Assembly, Abeywardena took an entrepreneurial approach upon her entrée into government work.

"I restructured [the office] soon after I joined," she says. "We functioned as a startup for the first two years. We created roles and hired people, and we made things up. I believe the saying is that we 'built the plane while flying it.' We identified gaps and saw new opportunities. We asked questions and were committed to finding creative solutions—what all good startups and entrepreneurs have to do."

LOCAL IMPACT GOES GLOBAL

Abeywardena and her team target four primary areas in their work: youth engagement, public policy, economic development, and the diplomatic corps.

In 2015, to engage the city's youth, Abeywardena's office rolled out the NYC Junior Ambassadors program. Through this program, seventh graders from all five boroughs of the city are invited to get involved with the UN and help address the world's most pressing challenges. The students, who typically come from the most vulnerable and disenfranchised neighborhoods in the city, are asked to select a Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)—a collection of 17 global goals set forth by the UN General Assembly in 2015 for the year 2030—learn about it, understand the global movement behind it, and then do something to address the issue locally.

"SDG 14, for example, is 'life below water,'" explains Abeywardena, referring to the global effort to conserve and sustainably use oceans, seas, and marine resources. "We now have, in the South Bronx, junior ambassadors who are activists helping to clean up the South Bronx River, one of the dirtiest waterways in New York City, which they walk by every day to school. They are taking something so global and lofty—an issue that could feel insurmountable—and bringing it back home. They are having an impact."

As part of this program, Abeywardena joins UN ambassadors on visits to speak with junior ambassadors at their schools. The commissioner sees this as another benefit of the program: students engaging with an immigrant woman of color—"somebody that looks like them," as she puts it—in a powerful position. "Many of the students in the junior ambassador program are first- or second-generation immigrants, and having a relatable role model can have lasting impact," she notes.

On the policy front, Abeywardena's team has made numerous advancements, including leading a global coalition of cities during the UN's Global Compact for Migration negotiations and launching the Global Vision | Urban Action initiative. Abeywardena is proudest

of the GV/UA initiative, which maps the mayor's OneNYC development agenda—the city's strategic plan to address issues like poverty and climate change—to the SDGs. This creates a common framework for talking about New York's progress, allowing ambassadors to adapt the city's successful programs to their home nations, Abeywardena explains. The GV/UA platform organizes site visits, UN events, and panel discussions to facilitate this exchange of information.

To further the GV/UA program, Abeywardena's team has created a voluntary local review, or VLR. The VLR is a tool to help subnational leaders frame, assess, monitor, and communicate their work and success in addressing the SDGs. The idea is based on the voluntary national review (VNR), which member states submit to the UN during the annual High-Level Political Forum to showcase their nations' progress regarding the SDGs.

At its core, the VLR showcases the leadership of mayors and governors on issues of worldwide importance, such as climate and migration. It's important, Abeywardena says, because these subnational leaders represent an increasingly important constituency when it comes to addressing such global issues, given the abdication of responsibility in these areas by national governments in the U.S. and abroad. The VLRs are also intended to highlight what isn't working.

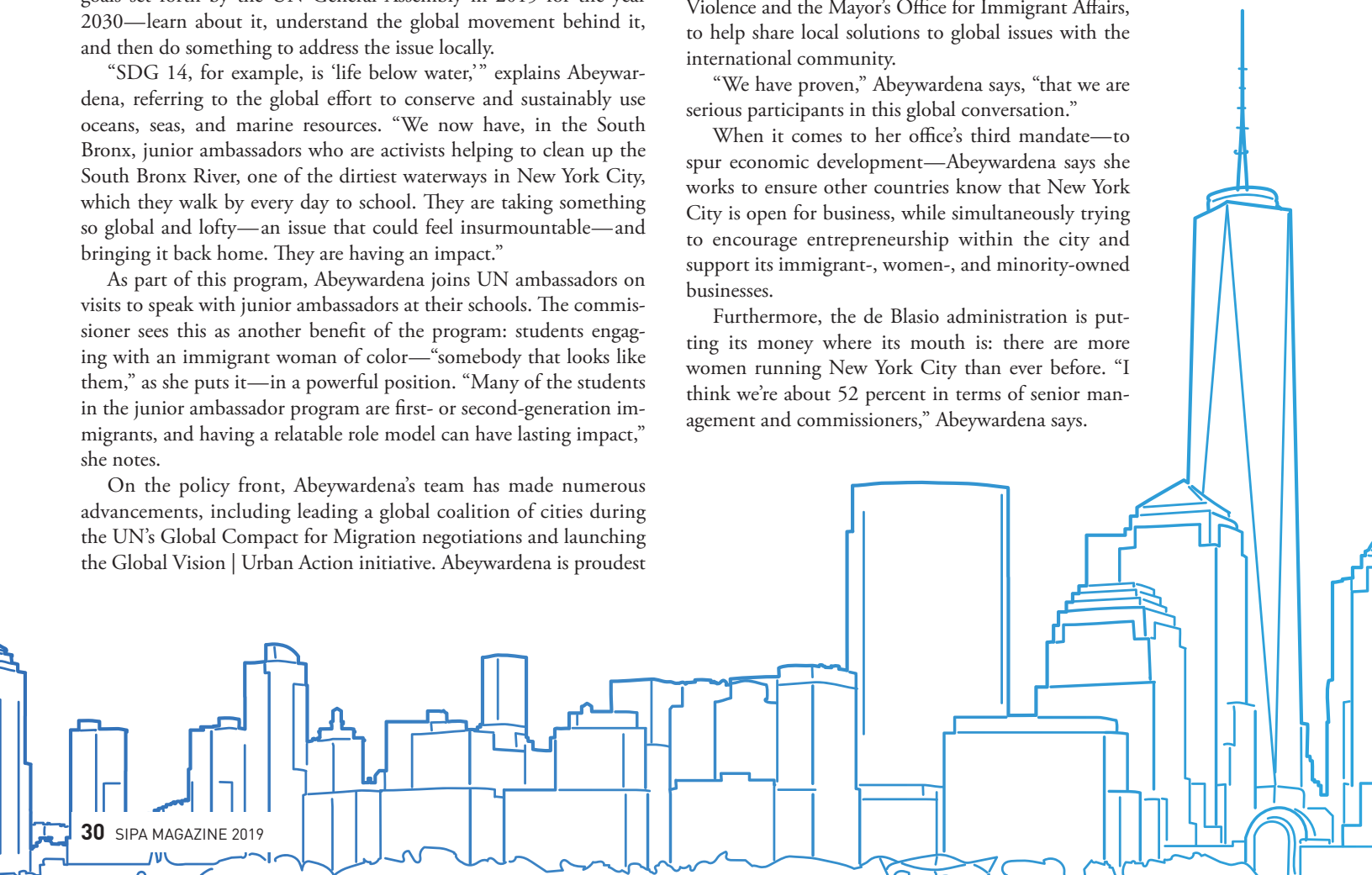
"We work to be public and transparent about the challenges," she says, "so that our colleagues from different countries see us and say, 'We have a great model, a better way to do that. Can we connect?'"

Through programming dubbed "Connecting Local to Global" (CL2G), Abeywardena's office also partners with other city departments, including the Office to Combat Domestic Violence and the Mayor's Office for Immigrant Affairs, to help share local solutions to global issues with the international community.

"We have proven," Abeywardena says, "that we are serious participants in this global conversation."

When it comes to her office's third mandate—to spur economic development—Abeywardena says she works to ensure other countries know that New York City is open for business, while simultaneously trying to encourage entrepreneurship within the city and support its immigrant-, women-, and minority-owned businesses.

Furthermore, the de Blasio administration is putting its money where its mouth is: there are more women running New York City than ever before. "I think we're about 52 percent in terms of senior management and commissioners," Abeywardena says.



This commitment to diversity has led to new, economically significant policies and procedures for the administration, such as its paid parental leave policy, which the mayor signed into law in 2016. The policy offers six weeks at 100 percent salary for maternity, paternity, adoption, or foster care leave—and up to 12 weeks fully paid when combined with existing leave.

“I got to live the policy,” notes Abeywardena, who was the first woman at the commissioner level to have a child while in the role and to take advantage of the city’s new parental paid leave. “I’ve seen the way it’s impacted staff. We have a different approach to the way that we think about how people take care of their families and themselves. It makes me feel really good about where I’m at right now.”

It also reflects the more holistic approach that Abeywardena’s office takes when engaging with the city’s consular corps, which is its final and perhaps most pressing mandate. Here, too, Abeywardena and her team have rolled out new measures and revamped existing programs to be more proactive about working with this important diplomatic corps.

One of the first things Abeywardena did on the job was transform her office’s mostly ceremonial “courtesy meetings,” in which she would briefly meet newly appointed diplomats to introduce herself and her office, into much more robust, actionable exchanges.

“During my first three months,” she says, “I was like, ‘These are the most powerful people representing their countries here. How are we not talking about the issues that matter to their communities or what they’re doing in terms of these issues?’ So [now] when I meet with an ambassador or consul general, it’s about asking, ‘Where are the areas that we are commonly aligned, and how can we further those issues?’”

Abeywardena’s office routinely offers itself as a resource to diplomats and immigrants, and it responds respectfully and swiftly to diplomatic incidents. This relationship building, which has been critical to her office’s success in many areas, was really honed during Abeywardena’s time at SIPA.

“Not only did Columbia give [me] an excellent academic foundation, but it’s in New York City—it’s the people,” she says. “There’s a community to it. I’m still friends with many of my SIPA classmates, and quite honestly, the other half with whom I’m still cordial I see at the UN or development meetings. The ‘SIPA mafia’ is a thing. Seriously, it allows you to have the richest experience in international affairs, full stop.”

Thanks to this network and her belief in and commitment to relationship building, Abeywardena’s office has been able to enlist

the help of the diplomatic corps to roll out some key initiatives. For example, when the mayor launched IDNYC—a government-issued identification card available to all New York City residents over the age of 10, regardless of immigration status—his administration wanted to ensure that the city’s undocumented residents weren’t the only users, lest the card become a symbol of someone’s legal status. Abeywardena’s office turned to the diplomatic corps.

“We [made] sure that the most senior people in their communities—the consuls general, UN ambassadors, in fact, the UN secretary-general—got one,” Abeywardena says. As a result, the consulates “became a very important middle ground for [immigrants] to understand what New York City will do, and what the NYPD will do, to protect you while you are here in New York City.”

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES


Abeywardena says she believes the ultimate role of her office in this political environment is to serve as a “beacon of sane public policy” when it comes to issues that matter around the world, such as climate action and gender equity, and to demonstrate that NYC is a leading force in and wants to collaborate with the international community. To achieve this, two of her key objectives, she says, are to ensure everyone she works with at the UN or in a consulate feels that they are being heard and to help transition any disagreements into compromise and actionable policy. You might argue she’s tasked with being—just like her counterparts across the street—diplomatic.

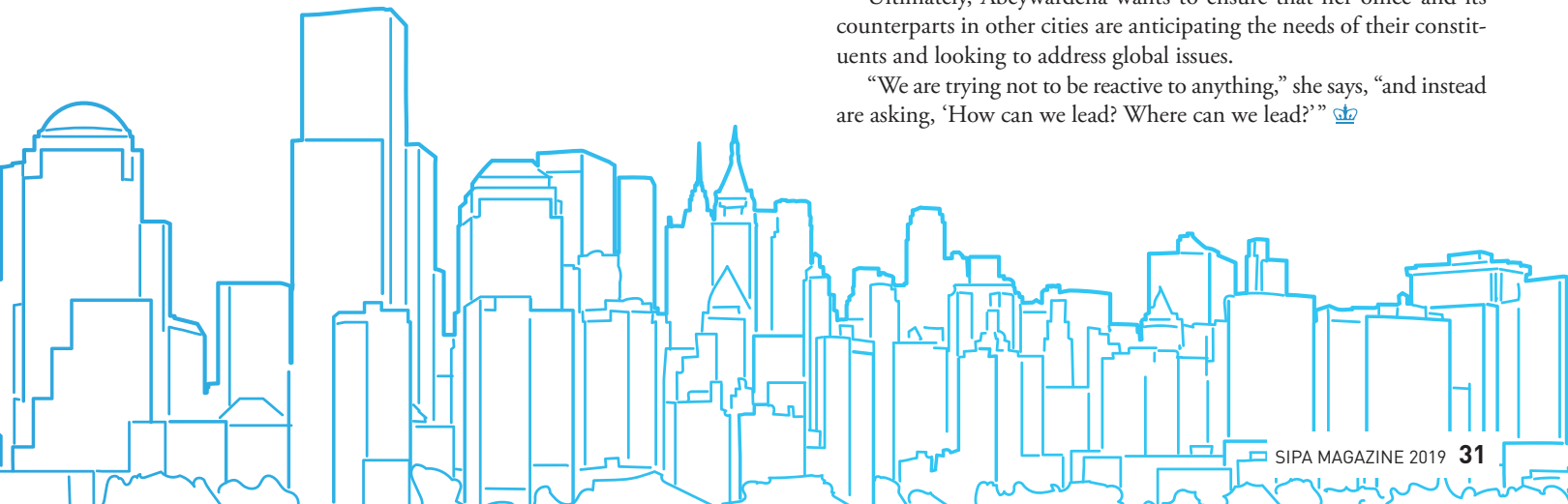
“The most challenging thing is how to channel issues that feel very personal and very raw into effective public policy and programs,” Abeywardena says. “As a survivor of domestic violence and as an undocumented immigrant for much of my childhood, the headlines that dominate our news are very, very personal to me. It’s just about how we’re navigating today’s politics to make sure that we are having an impact in an effective way.”

At the end of the day, Abeywardena adds, “people are willing to work with you if they feel good about you, if they feel like you listen to them even if you disagree with them, that you aren’t wishing them ill. That is something that I spend a lot of time doing.”

Looking ahead, Abeywardena wants to expand some of her office’s current work, creating tools and programs like the VLR that continue beyond her administration. “I believe very strongly that this is turning into a movement that will live beyond this office,” she says of the VLR. “I see either private foundations or the UN taking it up. I would love to see and want to invest in cities having a strong voice in multilateral institutions, starting with the UN.”

Ultimately, Abeywardena wants to ensure that her office and its counterparts in other cities are anticipating the needs of their constituents and looking to address global issues.

“We are trying not to be reactive to anything,” she says, “and instead are asking, ‘How can we lead? Where can we lead?’” 







In

Conversation

General Mark Milley MIA '92, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, on Major Geopolitical Threats, the Use of Robots, and What We Can Learn from History Books

Q The military has a unique role in creating leaders. We are trying to create leaders at SIPA as well. How do you think about leadership?

First, I would give great kudos to the U.S. military for being essentially a leadership factory. We train and develop leaders from the earliest time of their entry into the military, and we do it on an industrial scale.

We place great emphasis on formal education in addition to practical experience, and we place great emphasis on competence and character. Can you communicate clear vision and intent? Can you get results? Can you organize and develop teams? Your competence and character are constantly emphasized, evaluated, taught, and reinforced. We expect people to be honest, speak truth to power, selflessly serve the nation and the Constitution, and demonstrate a high degree of humility. These leadership characteristics are not unique to the military but are certainly emphasized within the military.

On July 25, General Mark Milley MIA '92 was confirmed by the U.S. Senate as the 20th chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The appointment is the culmination of years of experience in deployments around the world—in Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Colombia, Egypt, Haiti, Iraq, Panama, and Somalia—and in military leadership, most recently as the U.S. Army's 39th chief of staff. Milley's heroism in battle and deep knowledge of military history led President Donald Trump to pick the Massachusetts native and graduate of Princeton University, Columbia SIPA, and the U.S. Naval War College as his top military adviser and leader of the nation's more than 2.1 million soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen.

Just weeks before he assumed his new role as the military's highest-ranking officer, Milley spoke by phone with SIPA dean Merit E. Janow about a wide range of topics, from the history of battlefield technology and the seismic shifts in global power to the role of the Joint Chiefs in U.S. democracy and the military's rich history of leadership training. The interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Q Is there anything particular to your own vision of leadership that you would like us to better understand?

I think fundamental to the leader is sharing success when there's victory and immediately and unequivocally taking responsibility and identifying that which went wrong if things fail, your organization fails, or you fail.

For me, it is about the team. I try, to the extent humanly possible, not to use the pronoun "I" or "me" or "my" but "we," "us," and "team."

That is important unless things go badly, which is when you assume responsibility and accountability, fix it, and have a deep, honest, genuine sense of humility.

Q What do you see as the major geopolitical threats to the United States, and what do you think about the strategic competition with China and Russia?

I believe we are experiencing one of the greatest shifts in geopolitical power in known human history—the incredible “rise over run” with respect to China and its economic development.

Such a fundamental shift in power only happens every couple of centuries. China has experienced extraordinary economic growth since Deng Xiaoping opened its markets and China joined the international trading system. It has become the manufacturing center of the world.

We are seeing an enormous shift from an Atlantic-centric geo-economic world to a Pacific-centric geo-economic world. When you have such a shift, the country developing that economic power quickly develops military power in order to protect its growth, its assets, and its way of life. China has been developing serious and significant military capabilities, and they have been doing it now for several decades.

Does that make China a threat? It is a threat in some areas, such as intellectual property, and it is a potential threat militarily. However, I don’t think China today is the enemy of the United States, and we have to be very careful about using that term. “Enemy” to me means you are engaged in an active form of war of some kind. Great powers are always in competition, and I think it is accurate to say that the United States is in competition with China and that China is a challenge.

We have to be careful as we go forward with this relationship, because I think it is going to be the defining relationship in the world. We have to approach it in a very nuanced, mature, professional way, with a high degree of realism and restraint.

I think we also have to deal with Russia in a very serious, mature, professional way, with a high degree of realism and restraint. They have their own interests, a very capable military, and an incredibly capable nuclear force.

But there are also areas of convergence, and the United States can work with Russia or China to achieve common goals that are of benefit to all three countries. We are in an era of great power competition, and both countries—for different and historical reasons—are a challenge to our national security. We must take them very seriously and monitor them very closely.

Q How may new technologies transform conflict and the challenges facing the U.S. military? And how should the United States be thinking about and responding to such challenges?

We are in the midst of a fundamental change in the character of war, primarily driven by selected technologies and demographic changes.


Today, 50–60 percent of the six billion people on earth live in urban areas, and it is estimated that by mid-century, there will be eight billion people in the world and more or less 85–90 percent will live in highly dense urban areas. Militaries are going to have to fundamentally shift their doctrine, their equipment, their organizations, and their leadership development in order to prevail in highly dense urban areas.

The second big driver of the change in the character of war is emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence. We have yet to start thinking about the consequences of artificial intelligence. There needs to be significant intellectual thought put into its national security applications. I also believe that over the next two decades, robots will begin to dominate the conduct of warfare. I could perceive a day in the not too distant future when you’ll have pilotless air forces, sailorless navies, or armies that don’t have people in their tanks.

The last really significant piece is cyber. The whole idea of the speed and scope of cyber is enormous, and the ability of either side to master cyber warfare and to master that domain could be decisive in a future conflict.

Q You’ve spoken often about the need to modernize the military. What does that mean to you?

When I was chief of staff of the Army, I laid out three fundamental lines of effort: readiness, modernization, and people. Readiness is the ability to fight right now, which involves training, manning, and equipping the military. Modernization is readiness in the future. We have to be able to see and visualize future operating environments as far forward as we can in an uncertain world and marshal our resources. The third priority is people. Our weapons are only as good as the people operating them. We have to invest in people, which goes back to your first question about leadership, development, and training.




The operation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is unknown to most people. What is the decision-making process among the joint chiefs, and how do they offer guidance or ideas to the president of the United States?

The joint chiefs include the chairman, the vice-chairman, and the chiefs of staff of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and National Guard Bureau. Each of the chiefs has a duty and a responsibility to provide their independent best military advice to the president when asked—except the chairman, who has to provide his best military advice all the time. The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is the principal military adviser to the president of the United States.

The key words there are “principal” and “adviser.” Many people don’t fully realize that the chairman of the joint chiefs and the joint chiefs as a body have no directive authority. They cannot issue orders in their own name. They publish those orders only in the name of the secretary of defense or the president of the United States.

The chairman of the joint chiefs and the joint chiefs as a corporate body are strictly and exclusively advisers on the best employment of the military, and that is important because it underlines one of the fundamental roles of the U.S. system, which is apolitical civilian control of the military. That guards against something that would be anathema to a republic or democracy.



I served as a judge on an international court, and we had to write opinions and try to reach consensus, which sometimes meant we stayed at the table for as long as it took. As you think about the operation of the joint chiefs, do you start with the assumption that there could be a diversity of thought or a difference of views, or do you drive toward consensus?

Driving toward consensus takes time. Sometimes you have time, and in other cases, situations are unfolding rapidly. The joint chiefs will meet, look at a given situation, and analyze it from a military perspective to the best of our ability with the best-known intelligence. Some of us will have different views because of our experience, education, and background, but the chairman is required to present the dissenting views as well as the consensus views.




How do you view the U.S. military’s role in regional conflicts?

The United States has commitments and interests that span the globe. We are engaged in lots of regions—Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America—and we will continue to be until directed otherwise.

The U.S. military needs to have the capabilities to protect those interests in all the domains of war—space, cyber, air, sea, and land—and we need to do this globally, at a very high end against a major power and on the lower end against terrorists and insurgents.

We need to have a wide variety of tools in our kit so that when the president is faced with a crisis or a situation, he has multiple options from which to choose on behalf of the American people. The United States is a global power, and we must have a military that has the capability to project globally, based on the defined role of the United States defined by our civilian leadership.


There are many who think we shouldn’t have to do this globally, but that is a decision for the American people, the civilian policymakers of the United States, and the United States Congress.



Can you share any advice for graduate students pursuing careers in international security?

I think it is important to learn from history. I try to read several books a week if I can to learn from others’ experiences. Everyone’s life experience is limited, but history and the library are unlimited. The basics still apply, so learn a lot from history.

I would also emphasize to any student—whether high school, undergraduate, graduate, PhD, or current serving professional—not to take anything at face value. Apply critical-thinking skills, apply the Socratic method, always ask why, what, who, when, where.

And keep an open mind. Don’t think that you’re the only person who has all the answers. Be a lifelong learner and keep reinforcing the basics, but at the same time recognize, if not master, the changes that are occurring. 

1 DAVID N. DINKINS LEADERSHIP AND PUBLIC POLICY FORUM
Award-winning journalist **Maria Hinojosa** called for an emphasis on the human stories of the immigration crisis in her keynote address at the 22nd annual David N. Dinkins Leadership and Public Policy Forum on April 10.

2 CRFS INAUGURAL STATE OF THE FIELD CONFERENCE
SIPA's Project on Cyber Risk to Financial Stability (CRFS) hosted its inaugural State of the Field Conference, which focused on issues linking cyber risk to financial stability concerns, on April 12 at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

The CRFS project is led by **Jason Healey** (*center*), director of the Program on Future Cyber Risks and a senior research scholar at SIPA; **Patricia C. Mosser** (*right*), director of SIPA's MPA in Economic Policy Management program; and **Katheryn Rosen**, SIPA adjunct professor of international and public affairs and former deputy assistant secretary for financial institutions policy of the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

3 "LATIN AMERICA AND THE UNITED STATES: BACK TO THE FUTURE OR AHEAD TO THE PAST?"
Longtime Chilean diplomat **Juan Gabriel Valdés** spoke at SIPA on April 17. Valdés, who served as Chile's minister of foreign affairs and later as the country's ambassador to the United States, was the George W. Ball Adjunct Professor for spring 2019.

4 CJEB ANNUAL TOKYO CONFERENCE 2019
On May 28, SIPA professor **Takatoshi Ito** (*right*) joined an esteemed group of policy experts in Tokyo for "U.S.-Japan Relations in a New Era: Trade, Governance, and the Global Economy," organized by the Center on Japanese Economy and Business at Columbia Business School. Ito was joined by Dean **Merit E. Janow**.





5

5 ANNUAL GEORGE BALL LECTURE

Nirupama Rao gave the annual George Ball Lecture at SIPA on October 15, 2018. A former foreign secretary who also served as ambassador to the United States, China, and Sri Lanka, Rao was the George W. Ball Adjunct Professor at SIPA for fall 2018. In her lecture, “Dreamcatching: Can India and China be Friends?,” she reviewed the intermittently contentious, ever-evolving relationship between the world’s two most populous nations.



6

6 REPORTING FROM WASHINGTON

The 43rd Annual SIPA Career Conference and Alumni Reception in Washington, D.C., will be remembered for its unusual context: it took place amid the longest federal government shutdown in U.S. history. (L–R) **Susan Glasser**, staff writer for the *New Yorker*, **Soumaya Keynes**, U.S. economics editor for the *Economist*, and **Rachel Martin MIA ’04**, host of NPR’s *Morning Edition*, joined Dean **Merit E. Janow** for the January 17 keynote panel covering a wide array of issues—from the Trump presidency and the economy to foreign policy and journalism in the new age of disinformation.



7

7 COLUMBIA GLOBAL ENERGY SUMMIT

On April 10, the Center on Global Energy Policy hosted its sixth annual Columbia Global Energy Summit. The forum included keynote remarks and interviews with Washington governor Jay Inslee, FERC chairman Neil Chatterjee, and many other newsmakers. Plenary conversations with senior energy-sector leaders focused on key issues and questions at the intersection of energy policy, financial markets, the environment, and geopolitics. (Pictured, L–R: **Paul M. Dabbar**, Under Secretary for Science, U.S. Department of Energy, and **Kyung-ah Park**, Managing Director and Head of Environmental Markets, Goldman Sachs)

1 CHINA AND THE WEST CONFERENCE

On March 21 and 22, SIPA hosted its fourth annual China and the West conference, “China and the West: The Role of the State in Economic Growth,” convening more than 40 high-level participants in Beijing for roundtable discussions.

The event, led by Dean **Merit E. Janow** (*second from left*) and Center on Global Economic Governance director **Jan Svejnar** (*fourth from right*), focused on key economic challenges facing China and its global partners, especially Europe and the United States.

Lan Yang MIA ’96, chairperson at Sun Media Group (*left*), moderated the panel “The Future of Global Economic Relations: Lessons from China, the EU, the U.S. and Beyond.”



1

2 NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN JUDGES GLOBAL JUDICIAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Yasmine Ergas (*right*, with Judge **Elizabeth K. Lee** ’83LAW), director of SIPA’s Specialization on Gender and Public Policy, discussed “Human Trafficking: Organ Trafficking and Surrogacy Issues” as part of the National Association of Women Judges Global Judicial Leadership Conference at Columbia Law School on June 11. Dean **Merit E. Janow** was also on hand to deliver opening remarks.



2

3 “RIDING THE THIRD WAVE: STEVE CASE ON ‘THE RISE OF THE REST’”

On September 12, 2018, **Steve Case** (*pictured*), who made his mark in the business world as the founding CEO of America Online, visited Columbia University’s Low Library to talk about how an imminent third wave of internet innovation will impact economies, public policy, and entrepreneurship in the near future. He was joined in discussion by former U.S. Treasury secretary **Jacob J. “Jack” Lew**, a visiting professor at SIPA, and by Dean **Merit E. Janow** as moderator.



3



4

4 THE FUTURE OF THE U.S.-JAPAN ALLIANCE

On April 9, Lieutenant General **H. R. McMaster**, a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and a visiting fellow at Stanford University, delivered an address to a gathering of distinguished Columbia University faculty, students, and alumni about U.S. strategy toward the Indo-Pacific region.



5



5 SIPA PANEL ON CENTRAL BANK INDEPENDENCE

The 2019 annual meeting of the Central Bank Research Association (CEBRA) brought academics and central bankers working on policy-relevant research to SIPA, Columbia University, and the Federal Reserve Bank of New York from July 18 to 20. **James Bullard**, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, and other distinguished speakers from across industry and academia joined conference organizer **Patricia C. Mosser**, director of SIPA's MPA in Economic Policy Management program for more than 30 sessions. (Pictured: Professor **Takatoshi Ito** moderates the SIPA Panel on Central Bank Independence.)



6 COMMEMORATING VÁCLAV HAVEL

Speaking before a full house in Low Library on September 27, 2018, former U.S. secretary of state **Madeleine Albright** honored Václav Havel, the Czech playwright and dissident who in 1989 became the first president of newly independent Czechoslovakia and, later, the Czech Republic.

7 NIEJELOW RODIN GLOBAL DIGITAL FUTURES POLICY FORUM

SIPA's annual Niejelow Rodin Global Digital Futures Policy Forum provides a venue to discuss the growing impact of digital technology and data on business, government, and society. This year's event, devoted to the theme "Navigating Digital Transformations: Survive or Thrive?," took place on May 10 at Columbia University's Italian Academy. As in years past, SIPA and Columbia scholars joined business leaders, policymakers, entrepreneurs, academics, journalists, and others to discuss a host of contemporary challenges and possible policy solutions. The 2019 edition was the fifth gathering overall and the first since the event was renamed to honor supporters **Alexander Niejelow** and **Judith Rodin**. (Pictured, L-R: Dean **Merit E. Janow**, **David Sanger** of the *New York Times*, and SIPA Senior Research Scholar **John Battelle**)



8 JAY CLAYTON KEYNOTE ADDRESS

On December 6, 2018, **Jay Clayton**, chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission, delivered the keynote address at a SIPA-hosted panel discussion among financial-sector leaders and influencers at the Harmonie Club in New York.



THE
RAPHAEL
SMITH
MEMORIAL
PRIZE
2019

THE SAHARAN BREATH

NIGORA ISAMIDDINOVA MPA-DP '19

Ever since I can remember, I loved the idea of travel; no, rather a voyage. In my pre-teenage years, Jules Verne's books about adventures, expeditions, and tours around the world were my favorites. Later, I would devour magazine and journal articles about foreign lands, their customs, and lifestyles. The books and the stories transported me to these magical places with exotic landscapes and people that speak, dress, and eat differently. I truly felt these places—I made them my own.

I find myself in the street full of orange-beige sand. Wearing my handmade Mexican huaraches¹ might not have been the best idea. There are palm trees and trees with the most flamboyant flowers, as well as a random cow that's idling on the side in search of food. An occasional yellow and black cab drives by, generously honking to indicate "hey, I'm free for hire" or maybe it's just for fun. Senegal is the first African country I have set foot in. I've been told that it's a good gateway to the African continent—the most forgiving one to a beginner. I do not always know how to take this type of advice. This land proves to be everything and more than I expected.

The sand is ever-present in the streets of Dakar—a daily reminder of the presence of Sahara and the Sahelian region. Dakar, to me so far, has been a blend of the magnificent colors of the fabrics, landscape, buildings, men, and women dressed in the most exquisite attire that make all Paris Fashion Week designers look bleak; the musky sweet taste of air; taxi drivers chewing their *siwak* sticks while listening to the sounds of balafon; djembe and kora on the radio; prayer calls throughout the day; and the kaleidoscopic minibuses that dart across the city stuffed like bell peppers. Most of all, my fascination with the people and their innate grace and swag keep me in awe every day in and out.

One weekend during my summer placement in Dakar, I decide to get out of the city and finally head to St. Louis—the famous St. Louis, the city that served as the French colonial capital from 1673 until 1902, when it was moved to Dakar. It is, essentially, an island nestled between the Senegal River and the Atlantic Ocean on the border with Mauritania. As such, this UNESCO World Heritage site is a transition, a crossroads between the dunes of the Sahara, the waves of the Atlantic, and the flora of the savanna.

The Raphael Smith Memorial Prize is given in memory of Raphael Smith, a member of the Class of 1994 who died in a motorcycle accident while retracing his stepfather's adventure of motorcycling from Paris to Tokyo. The prize, established by his family and friends, is awarded annually to two second-year SIPA students for travel articles that exemplify the adventurous spirit of SIPA. The winners of this year's contest are Nigora Isamiddinova and Sierra Robbins.

Eid al-Adha² is approaching, so every empty lot and corner in the streets of Dakar has turned into a makeshift livestock bazaar—a marketplace for sheep and goats. I reach the bus station from which the *sept-places*³ and buses go into different directions of the country. A young chap guides me to the gathering area. I find a car that looks like it will be leaving soon, negotiate the price, and choose my seat. *Sept-place* taxis don't leave until all the seven seats are claimed and full. Finally, everyone is here and I realize that I'm the only female among seven men. I wonder whether going to St. Louis in a *sept-place* alone was a good idea after all.

I'm sitting on the left side behind the driver, we're squashed, and I'm happy that I'm not in the middle seat. Thank God I brought a big bottle of water with me, but with the heat and humidity, I wonder how long it will last. As we're moving, I keep hearing the sound of sheep bleating.

Strange. At the station, I assumed there were sheep and goats around, but now, here on a semi-highway road, the sound is out of place. Yet, it is so loud and clear as if the goat was sitting next to me. I look across the car and outside the window, perplexed. The goats are nowhere to be found. Wait a second ... it hits me: it is not sitting next to me, but directly above my head on the roof of the car! It is a hot day, and I think about the five-hour long journey under the scorching sun that the poor creature will travel before being sacrificed in the most holy and halal of ways to God.


Our car breaks down before we even get out of the city. The traffic is dense and the new car will take some time to arrive. I leave the car and walk around to find some shade while waiting. Standing next to the car, I lift my gaze and come face to face with the goat tied to the roof. I start conversing with fellow travelers and find the men benevolent. They offer me water and groundnuts during the journey. The replacement car finally arrives about two hours later and here we are—after an eight-hour journey we finally arrive in St. Louis.

St. Louis, the colonial child, I will call you by your true name—Ndar.⁴ You possess a beauty that is palpable, permeates my skin, and strikes me in the softest part of my soul. Like a woman who has aged and has weathered harsh times, your face is wrinkled and a bit faded by experience, but one can see and feel the beauty and grace that you have possessed in youth. Your dusty streets and decrepit buildings, the music emanating from the open doors of the homes as if inviting a stranger's gaze into your abodes, transported me to another world—one of a child's imagination of foreign places, of curiosities and wonders. I have found it—the faraway land of dreams and magic, where anything is possible—isolated and yet in the middle of it all, between the desert and the ocean.

The next day, I wake up early around 6 a.m. I go to the rooftop of the modest bed and breakfast that I'm staying at. It offers an unobstructed view of the brown river and bright fishing boats in front, the dilapidated yet full of character houses around. The sun is slowly rising. In the house next door, a group of boys are huddling in the inner yard around a big metal bowl eating breakfast together.

Throughout the day I discover your street art, the most authentic *thiboudienne*,⁵ a photo gallery, and your beautiful people—the kids at the Koranic school, and the boys that sit by the river learning and reciting verses from the Koran. It feels like the air and time are suspended. My day-long journey has been worth this: I found what I was looking for—a time that stands still. Ndar, your *teranga*⁶ feels more real here than in the bustling Dakar. A writing on the wall says, "*Je veux une suite et pas la fin*"⁷ and that's how I feel about you.

Almost six months later, on the other side of the Sahara in the southern tip of Tunisia, I am reminded of the silence and stillness of time on top of a Saharan dune contemplating one of the most breathtaking sunsets I have experienced so far. The setting sun is the most skillful painter—adeptly playing with the shades of the dunes and the sand. Sahara, the mighty, your winds blow strong. It is the season of *harmattan*, the seasonal trade wind that blows from the Sahara into West Africa. It must be heading to St. Louis, crossing the borders and expanses of Algeria, Mali, and Mauritania. It knows no borders, unlike my brothers and sisters that make the journey in the other direction through your unforgiving terrain.

Later at the campfire, there is an elderly Bedouin man with a soft wrinkled face and light grey blue eyes that transcend kindness and reflect light—I sense that he knows something that I do not yet possess. This is it. I am living out a child's dreams spurred by the stories from my books that have taken me to places where I feel at home and in peace. 



1. Artisanal leather shoes from Mexico.

2. The second Islamic holiday, also known as the Festival of Sacrifice.

Per tradition, a sheep or a goat is sacrificed on this day.

3. Cars whose trunks were transformed to have seven passenger seats.

4. The name of St. Louis in Wolof, the predominant language in Senegal.

5. Rice with seafood.

6. Hospitality in Wolof.

7. French: I want a continuation, and not the end.



THE
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WHAT HOLIDAY? WE'RE WORKING

BY SIERRA ROBBINS MPA-DP '19

The weekend did not start out auspiciously. It was a national holiday in Uganda and the whole team had been looking forward to a day off for weeks. Some of the South Sudanese staff were heading back home to their villages for the long weekend, meeting at predetermined spots at the border and heading over en masse for security purposes. I, for one, was looking forward to a long weekend of lounging, doing nothing, and sweating while doing nothing.

The office director poked her head into the team's office right as I was heading out.

"Oh good, I'm glad I caught you," she muttered distractedly as she typed furiously into her phone—the generator had finally turned back on after being unrevivable for the first seven hours of the workday, and she had emails from around the globe, all demanding to be responded to immediately.

"I just talked to Halima and Kennedy and the three of you are going to go collect farmer stories tomorrow," she said, not looking up from her phone. "Remember to get pictures."

Because the South Sudanese refugees in Bidibidi Refugee Settlement lived among Ugandan host communities and needed access to livelihoods and income, the organization I was interning with was incentivizing Ugandan landowners to form land-sharing farmers groups with refugees, through provision of seeds and other agricultural inputs.

"Oh, but ... tomorrow's ...," I sputtered to her back as she trudged across the compound through the mud created by that morning's downpour, "... a holiday?"

"Thank you!" She shouted as she disappeared through the door of the main office.

So I rose the next morning, unable to sleep very much anyways, as the intestinal worms I had acquired were apparently a nocturnal breed and liked to let me know that they were still very much in my body and getting comfortable. I walked into my bathroom to discover that I'd left the window open the night before, and a handful of white ants had swarmed my bathroom light, shed their wings, and were now crawling all over my shower area. I corralled them into a corner using the worn rubber flip-flops the guest house provided and tried the faucet. Nothing.

“Well at least I’ll get some exercise today,” I mused to my trapped ant friends as I struggled to pour out the jerry can full of water.

After my brief and frigid rinse, I walked out to the breakfast tukul—a little open-air room with a grass thatch roof—to inspect the morning’s choices.

“We’ve got mandaz, spaghetti, another type of mandaz, and ofal this morning,” Blake informed me as I walked in. “Actually I think that the ofal is leftover from yesterday,” he said as he cautiously sniffed the tray.

“Bread or spaghetti, lovely,” I said sardonically as I shook the milk thermos, attempting to dislodge whatever was clogging it. As I poured the milk into my cup of Nescafé, a drowned white ant plopped out.

“Oh, that is disgusting,” Blake offered as he peered into my cup, “and precisely why I keep kicking myself for not bringing my French press.” Blake was with a group of British doctors disseminating low-cost blood pressure monitoring machines—my constant mealtime and card game companions. The journal I’d brought was equal parts a diatribe postulating just how I had managed to gain so much weight while simultaneously being beset by intestinal worms, and musings to the effect of “Blake put his hand on my knee when he rode behind me in the boda boda ... does that mean anything?!” Spoiler alert—it didn’t.

“Meeting the farmers, seeing how the NGO’s seeds actually turned into a product that contributed to a sustainable livelihood, finding something in common with a team member ... transformed my summer.”

Just then, Kennedy, one of the NGO’s drivers in charge of ferrying various staff around in a large SUV, walked in and motioned that it was time to go. We swung by the office to pick up Halima, the Program Officer for our agricultural inputs program, who looked just as thrilled to be working on a holiday as I felt, and pulled onto the dirt path leading to Bidibidi Zone 3. Kennedy reached across the dashboard and pushed a CD in the stereo. The first song that came belting out hit me like a gut punch. It was Johnny Cash—my grandfather’s favorite, who had passed away a few days before my flight to Yumbe. In the flurry of immunizations, visas, and packing, I hadn’t made it to his funeral. I stared straight ahead, eyes wide open, willing myself not to react. I was not prepared to let my colleagues see me cry—an act



more pterodactyl than human when I really got going. And judging by the morning I was having, it was going to be a big one.

Forty-five long, miraculously breakdown-free minutes later, Halima tapped Kennedy on the shoulder.

“Pull over here—I know that farmer,” Halima scrambled out to speak with a group of men sitting in a tukul by the road, and a few seconds later I was motioned out as well.

Over the next five hours Halima and I traipsed through acres of yams, cassava, potatoes, groundnuts, eggplants, and more being grown by the farmers—both host community members and refugees. I learned the names and stories (albeit short versions) of the farmers in the village, how they’d gotten there, and the relationships they’d forged. I learned how to identify a cassava plant and took dozens of pictures of one farmer hugging 20 eggplants to his chest as they spilled onto the ground. I took dozens more of five farmers in front of a cornfield as the rain poured down, posing with straight faces as if they were a boy band. I learned that once the refugee crisis calmed down, Halima wanted to get her master’s in public health. We walked for miles, getting thwacked in the face by branches and cornstalks, emerging from the jungle farmland covered in sweat and mud, grinning ear-to-ear, and laughing.

There was something about that day—meeting the farmers, seeing how the NGO’s seeds actually turned into a product that contributed to a sustainable livelihood, finding something in common with a team member—that not only turned my morning around, but transformed my summer.

“Where’s that Johnny Cash CD, Kennedy?” Halima said as she fiddled with the stereo. “I love his songs.” As soon as it came on, the three of us began belting out “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” at the top of our lungs. As the song came to a close, she turned around to look at me in the back seat.

“Again?” she asked, mischievously. We listened to the same song the entire ride home, and for every ride after that. [👑](#)

ALUMNINEWS

SIPA Graduation 2019

UN high commissioner for human rights Michelle Bachelet tells 802 students from 78 countries: “By looking to construct and advance—rather than to destroy—you will be shaping a life for yourself that holds steady to your principles.”

BY MARCUS TONTI

It was a warm, bright Sunday evening when SIPA’s 2019 graduation exercises began, with students making the short march from Lerner Hall to Columbia’s South Lawn accompanied by the classical strains of “Pomp and Circumstance.” The formal ceremony concluded about two hours later, with dusk descending as rowdy graduates sang along to “New York, New York” and “Empire State of Mind.”

Joined onstage by dozens of SIPA professors, Dean Merit E. Janow congratulated the Class of 2019—numbering 802 students from 78 countries in seven academic programs—on the faculty’s behalf. She called on the graduates to thank the many friends and family, in the audience and elsewhere, who had helped bring them to this point.

As the assembled students prepare to leave the confines of Morningside Heights, Janow also charged them to bring the fruits of their SIPA education into the world.

“We need your creativity, passion, and ingenuity more than ever to drive solutions to today’s problems, whether economic, political, environmental, or social,” she said. “We know that each of you will go on to achieve remarkable things.”



Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

Michelle Bachelet, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, gave the main address. As Chile’s first female president, Bachelet had served two separate terms, from 2006 to 2010 and again from 2014 to 2018. In between she became the first director of UN Women, the organization’s entity for gender equity and the empowerment of women. Before becoming president Bachelet had previously served as her home country’s defense minister—the first woman in all Latin America to hold such a position—and before that its health minister.

In her remarks Bachelet discussed her own challenging journey—from detention in the 1970s by Chile’s military dictatorship, to exile from and then return to Chile, through the emergence of democracy in the 1990s and her own work to help her country embrace a new day, and new institutions that benefit all.

“I can tell you that in times of crisis—when the future is worried and there don’t seem to be many good options—you will find that core values will ground you,” she said. “So that no matter how unpredictable the winds, you will know that the path you shape through life will be one with integrity.”

Here at SIPA, she suggested, the graduates have learned that “no matter how deeply you examine one topic in international relations, that effort will always feel incomplete, because each topic and each country is connected to so many others.”

“We are not alone,” she emphasized. “Other people matter. Justice matters. Violence, exploitation, discrimination, and injustice have far-reaching consequences. By trying to see matters with full clarity, and understand others’ points of view; by acting with integrity, to advance justice and human rights; by seeking always to build on your love for other people and all forms of life; by looking to construct, and advance—rather than to destroy—you will be shaping a life for yourself that holds steady to your principles.”

As some world leaders lose motivation to address environmental concerns and other important transnational issues, Bachelet said, the task facing graduates is more pressing than ever.

“We need you,” she said. “In a very real sense, it is up to you. Your generation will face the full force of this failure to act. Or, as I am convinced can be done, you will turn the tide and shape a new consensus

to resolve these problems. Because money is no excuse; the cost of human rights action, or climate action, is really very little compared to the terrible destruction and cost of inaction.”

She encouraged students to be farsighted and to live with their great- and great-great-grandchildren in mind.

“You cannot know who those children will be, where they will live, what they will look like, even the languages they will speak,” she said. “... But you can work for all of them. For their well-being, their freedom, the sustainability of their environment, and for their rights as human beings to live in equality and dignity.”

Former SIPASA president JoAnna Kyle MIA '19 followed Bachelet with inspiring words of her own.

“Life doesn’t frighten me at all,” Kyle said, quoting the poet Maya Angelou.

She congratulated her peers for facing and overcoming challenges such as isolation, anxiety, lack of confidence, and financial shortfalls.

“You worked and hustled far more than anyone should have to, to be here today,” she said.

“I know you stood up for yourself, your classmates, and future iterations of students, regardless of the repercussions, by advocating for

issues important to our class I know you stared down your fears of rejection, of failure, of your own mind and body to be here today.”

Dangling from Kyle’s mortarboard was a rainbow-colored tassel—a gift from the LGBT community at her undergraduate college that, she confessed, she hadn’t worn at her graduation seven years ago.

“I was afraid,” she said. “Afraid to be rejected by folks I cared about. Afraid to be honest with myself and everyone else. But I brought that tassel everywhere I moved, from Washington, D.C., to Japan, and here to New York. Today I’m wearing my tassel—not because I’m not frightened at all, but because it’s more important to face fear, to have courage.”

“In our chosen work we will be confronted with difficult policy choices,” Kyle observed. “We can go along with the status quo, or we can face our own fears as we make and support policy that creates a better world for the disenfranchised.

“May we continue to support one another in facing our fears and living our most courageous lives, to create policies and lead in the only way we know how—with courage—because life doesn’t frighten us at all.” [👑](#)

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2019!



A photograph of Congresswoman Elissa Slotkin, a woman with shoulder-length brown hair, smiling and speaking into a black microphone. She is wearing a dark blue blazer over a dark blue top. The background is a light-colored, textured wall.

Congresswoman Elissa Slotkin MIA '03

Graduates Return for Alumni Day 2019

Highlights of celebration include speech by Congresswoman Elissa Slotkin and reunion dinner.

With daffodils in full bloom, almost 300 graduates from around the world came to campus for SIPA's 2019 Alumni Day. Highlights included an address by the School's alumna in the U.S. House of Representatives and a reunion dinner.

In addition to food, drink, and networking, the April 6 event also featured multiple panel discussions of current public-policy issues. Almost 200 alumni representing various degree programs took part in the daytime program, and an overlapping group of 200 attended the dinner at Low Library. All told, alumni traveled from 33 countries, including Bolivia, China, India, Kenya, Syria, and Ukraine.

At a Faculty House luncheon, Dean Merit E. Janow and Kirsten Imohiosen MPA '03, chair of the SIPA Alumni Association, welcomed guests and introduced Congresswoman Elissa Slotkin MIA '03, who gave keynote remarks. Elected in November 2018 to represent Michigan's Eighth District, Slotkin enjoyed a warm greeting from the full house and was roundly applauded at the conclusion of her speech.

Among other things, Slotkin discussed her experience as a student at SIPA in the days and months immediately following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. That event, she said, shaped her career in foreign policy and continues to reverberate today in her role as a newly elected official.

In the years since 9/11, Slotkin said, an "enormous trust deficit" has developed between U.S. foreign policy leadership and the nation's citizens.

"Americans, and especially young Americans, have lost trust in our ability to succeed abroad," she said. "Trust is our currency.... We cannot lead abroad or at home without trust."

Slotkin emphasized the need to rebuild alliances with the nation's international partners, noting that foreign policy should be viewed as "relationships, not transactions."

"An erratic partner is the worst kind," she said. "America's handshake has to mean something."



“Americans, and especially young Americans, have lost trust in our ability to succeed abroad. Trust is our currency ... we cannot lead abroad or at home without trust.”

Congresswoman Elissa Slotkin MIA '03



Slotkin ended her remarks on a personal note. “This is one of the most fun things I get to do,” she said. “Thank you for the thrill of returning here. It’s an honor to be here.”

Afternoon programming included seven discussions that convened more than two dozen graduates, faculty experts, and current students all told. Panel topics included sustainable finance, immigration, and the era of disinformation; one session was devoted to selected Capstone projects.

The day ended with a cocktail reception in Low Library and a dinner attended by almost 200 alumni, with strong attendance by members of the Classes of 2014, 2009, 1999, and 1994. [👑](#)



Top left: Dean Merit E. Janow and Kirsten Imohiosen MPA '03

Middle left: Grace Martin, Elie Chachoua MPA '09, Shweta Kapoor MIA '09, Liraz Arie

Top right: Carlos Diaz MPA '09

Middle right: Class of 2009 10th Reunion

Bottom right: Christopher Kaminker MIA '09

ALUMNINEWS



Maria-Teresa Vivas de Mata
'93BUS, MIA '03, '06GSAS (left)
and guests



Dean Merit E. Janow



Professors Scott Barrett and Michael Nutter

SIPA Hosts Global Leadership Awards 19th Annual Gala

This year's event raised more than \$875,000 to provide critical fellowship support for SIPA students.

BY JEENHO HAHM MPA '19

Well-behaved women never make history—it's time to start misbehaving," said Leymah R. Gbowee, the 2011 Nobel Peace Laureate.

Gbowee gave her poignant acceptance speech in front of more than 350 guests at the Mandarin Oriental in New York City on May 9. She was one of the three honorees at SIPA's Global Leadership Awards 19th Annual Gala, joining Muhtar Kent, former chairman and CEO of the Coca-Cola Company, and Jim Yong Kim, former president of the World Bank Group.

The Global Leadership Awards recognize individuals and organizations that have made exceptional contributions to the global public good through their work in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. This year's event raised more than \$875,000 to provide critical fellowship support for SIPA students and resources to recruit and educate outstanding students from around the world.

President Lee C. Bollinger of Columbia University kicked off the evening by praising SIPA's efforts to "double down on facts, science, and data" in an era when they are imperiled in the public-policy realm. Dean Merit E. Janow of SIPA acknowledged the three honorees and saluted John Coatsworth, a former SIPA dean, as he prepared to step down from his position as Columbia's provost.

The honorees spoke briefly of their efforts to make a difference.

In Kent's time at Coca-Cola, the company set goals to empower over five million women entrepreneurs in a decade, to lend its logistics systems to deliver medicine and provide clean water to underserved communities, and to launch a series of low- and zero-calorie drinks to fight obesity.



L-R: Leymah R. Gbowee, Muhtar Kent, Jim Yong Kim

Kent explained in part how he met his ambitious goal of making the company water-neutral by the year 2020.

"It wasn't understood well at the time," he said. "How can [Coca-Cola] become water-neutral? You're one of the biggest users of water in the world.' And we achieved it five years ahead of our target through reduction, recycling, and replenishment."

Gbowee discussed how inequality and economic hardship often drive conflict, and vice versa. She also urged the audience to speak truth to power.

Kim recounted the story of how his parents met each other in New York as young refugees from the Korean War, using their example to highlight how much living standards in South Korea, and around the world, have improved. He emphasized the importance of fostering growth and job creation and the utility of the global market system in helping countries achieve these goals.

"Without roads, energy, transport systems, access to broadband," he concluded, "there are going to be literally billions of people who, by accident of their birth, will have no opportunity to enjoy what they're looking at on their smartphones."

The three honorees joined Janow for a conversation about pressing global issues. Gbowee said that many young people are taking up arms because they don't see any hope in the future and suggested that things will worsen if proper education and health care systems are not in place after the conflicts end. Kent said that city governments have proven to be more agile and efficient than national ones in tackling global challenges because they must report directly to their residents and constituents.

Offering advice for students, Kim said that understanding what one's own fundamental values are is more important than the field or sector one works in.

Kent said students shouldn't give up, because the world has transformed drastically for the better within the last two decades.

Whenever students have an idea of what they want to do in the future, Gbowee advised, they should write it down and share it with others.

If they tell you that your ideas sound crazy, she said, "then you're on the right track." [👑](#)



BY AGATHA BORDONARO

INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE

The School's transformative \$150 million fundraising campaign aims to support the next generation of thought leaders.

Growing up in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Habib Enayetullah MPA '91 felt he had three career paths available to him: doctor, lawyer, or engineer. While he enjoyed and excelled at the hard sciences—earning his bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in 1989—he found himself drawn more to the social sciences, specifically government policy.

When it came time to apply to graduate school, he took a chance and applied to SIPA in addition to engineering programs. "I always had this concept of giving back to communities," he says. "I wanted to make a difference."

Thanks to a two-year scholarship offer that allowed him to choose SIPA, he's been able to do just that.

In the years since he graduated, Enayetullah, who now serves as senior vice president for real estate and asset management for Hilton Worldwide, has worked on housing policy and finance issues, helped privatize utilities around the world, and negotiated land-use deals with international governments ranging from Africa to Central Asia. And he credits his SIPA education with giving him the tools and broad worldview needed to make this global impact.

"It just opened a new world to me," he says. "It has helped me to think about why governments make certain policies, or why, let's say, the price of cotton is what it is today and why it's different tomorrow. It's really looking at how people make decisions. That's not something that I had any view on before I attended SIPA."



Fellowship recipients Paula Crawford MPA '20 and Zulpha Styer MPA '20 at the Recognition Luncheon for SIPA Leaders



Now Enayetullah wants to ensure other South Asians have the same opportunity. That's why he established the Enayetullah Fellowship, which provides a combination of both current-use and endowed funding for student financial aid. The fellowship targets students from the region, particularly those from underrepresented countries like Nepal and Sri Lanka, who may not otherwise consider non-technical professions.

"I feel that we don't have enough people who are thinkers thinking about broader societal issues—which ultimately is critical to have a balanced society," says Enayetullah, who is an active member of the SIPA alumni community and serves on both SIPA's Advisory Board and the Executive Committee of the SIPA Alumni Association.

The fellowship is also intended to benefit society more broadly, he adds. "[We hope] to get very smart public-policy professionals going back to their South Asian countries and giving back, either directly through governance positions or [by starting] small businesses, which ultimately improves the overall welfare of citizens in those countries."

Envisioning and Building "What Can Be"

The Enayetullah Fellowship and others like it make up a vital piece of What Can Be: The Campaign for Columbia SIPA, the School's ambitious multiyear, \$150 million fundraising initiative. The campaign, which has already raised an impressive \$110 million, focuses on five key priorities that will help SIPA secure its future: increasing student financial aid, endowing professorships in key areas, expanding innovation and research through SIPA's academic programs and centers, improving SIPA's physical and technological environment, and bolstering the Annual Fund to support a wide range of core programs and give SIPA the flexibility to fund new opportunities as they arise.

It has never been more critical for SIPA to strengthen and expand its reach, and that's why the What Can Be campaign was launched: to support the School's commitment to drive progress on the critical issues facing humanity. Every day at SIPA, scholars and researchers strive to develop solutions to global challenges that are complex, large-scale, and urgent—such as climate response, economic inequality, data security, and the cultivation of just societies.



Jessica Marcus MPA '19,
an Abrams Fellow



SIPA awarded more than \$13 million in financial aid in the 2019–2020 academic year. Approximately a quarter of first-year SIPA students received fellowships, and the average award was \$33,000.

But this kind of work is heavily dependent on financial support from alumni and friends to fund our innovative research and academic programs, build out SIPA's areas of expertise, and make the cost of attending SIPA more affordable.

"It is imperative that donors support SIPA, where many graduates choose to go into public service," says Jessica Marcus MPA '19. Receiving an Abrams Fellowship made it possible for Marcus to attend SIPA, where she focused her research on the institutional forces behind homelessness around the world. "Prior to SIPA, I had worked exclusively in the nonprofit sector, which made it difficult to save enough for tuition," she says. "The Abrams Fellowship allowed me to pursue my dream of attending grad school without feeling overburdened by financial constraints."

SIPA awarded more than \$13 million in financial aid in the 2019–2020 academic year. Approximately a quarter of first-year SIPA students received fellowships, and the average award was \$33,000. The What Can Be campaign aims to increase financial aid support and provide half of SIPA's roughly 1,300 students with 40 percent tuition coverage or more.

"The fellowship is the reason I am here at SIPA today," affirms Ira Regmi MIA '20, who credits her Enayetullah Fellowship with allowing her not only to attend SIPA but also to transition her career from the private sector into the public, where she studies the intersection of gender, public policy, and economics.

A Deep Impact

Another important goal of the What Can Be campaign is to endow five professorships in SIPA's traditional areas of strength and subjects of emerging importance. Named professorships are among the highest honors a university can bestow upon its faculty and are vital for attracting and retaining the most talented and respected scholars and researchers.

"Jagdish Bhagwati is the greatest living advocate of free trade and one of the greatest trade economists. He was also the first to begin advocating pro-market reforms in India," explains Arvind Panagariya, the Jagdish N. Bhagwati Professor of Indian Political Economy at SIPA. "As an advocate of free trade and a trade economist with deep research interest in the Indian economy myself, occupying a chair named after him is a great honor for me."

Endowed professorships also bring myriad intangible benefits, he says.

"Named professorships give a certain degree of distinction from regular professorships; this is very helpful in gaining recognition outside one's own core field of research and teaching," Panagariya says. "[And] in my case, my research has progressively moved towards the specific subject—Indian political economy—for which my chair is named."

Fellowships come with similar added value, Marcus adds. Receiving an Abrams Fellowship not only helped support her graduate studies but also affirmed SIPA's commitment to her

“For SIPA alumni who have the financial wherewithal, it behooves us to be generous to our school, which was so critical for us to get to where we are, and to enable people to attend SIPA and do something that, societally, is extremely valuable.”

Habib Enayetullah MPA '91



Habib Enayetullah MPA '91

potential, both as a scholar and as a future leader. “I knew the Abrams Fellowship would offer financial benefits, but I didn’t realize the extent to which it would also offer valuable intangible benefits,” Marcus says. “On difficult days—whether I was feeling behind or struggling with a class—the fellowship served as an important reminder that SIPA wanted me there because I had something important to offer. Knowing that the School had chosen to invest in my education pushed me to take classes outside of my comfort zone and grow academically, personally, and professionally.”

Funding the Future

From encouraging innovation to underwriting high-impact research to giving students the financial help they need to make coming to SIPA a reality, the What Can Be campaign offers a variety of ways for alumni and friends to participate and to support initiatives that create meaningful impact for SIPA—and the world. In whatever way people choose to support SIPA, their contributions help strengthen a school that can bridge the gap between the academy and public policy and can work for global solutions informed by a deep knowledge of the world and local conditions.

“For SIPA alumni who have the financial wherewithal, it behooves us to be generous to our school, which was so critical for us to get to where we are,” Enayetullah stresses, “and to enable people to attend SIPA and do something that, societally, is extremely valuable.”

To learn more about What Can Be and how you can participate, contact Beth L. Mauro, associate dean of development (elm2182@columbia.edu, 212-851-4168), or visit sipa.columbia.edu/whatcanbe. [👑](#)

What.
Can.
Be.

THE CAMPAIGN
FOR COLUMBIA SIPA

CLASS NOTES

STAY IN TOUCH!

Have something to share with us and your fellow SIPA grads? We are always interested in hearing what SIPA alumni are up to. Please submit updates at bit.ly/SIPAClassNotes.



1977



Allan Grafman is the founder and CEO of All Media Ventures and an investment banker at Oberon Securities raising money for growth companies. Feel free to reach out to him at AllanGrafman@allmediaventures.com.

1980

Elizabeth Bassan founded Panagora Group, a social enterprise providing innovative international development solutions that promote sustainability and country self-reliance. After launching only eight years ago, Panagora Group was named 2018 Small Business of the Year by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) for exceptional work in the #global-dev sector, building capacity and fostering innovation in developing countries.

1982

Maddine Insalaco writes: "Since 1995 I have divided my life between New York City and Italy, where I founded a school of landscape painting. In this time, I developed an expertise in the history of early open-air painting, which has resulted in publications, curatorial roles in museum exhibitions, and public projects. I am delighted to announce the publication of my article 'John Robert Cozens, The Sublime and Civita Castellana, A New Discovery' in the winter 2019 issue of the *British Art Journal*." Learn more about Insalaco's work at landscapepainting.com.

1983

Glenn Kessler, editor and chief writer of the *Washington Post's* Fact Checker column, received an honorable mention in the competition for the Toner Prize for Excellence in Political Reporting, awarded by Syracuse University.

Charles Santangelo was interviewed in June by the Federal News Network on cybersecurity and his role as chair of the American Council for Technology and Industry Advisory Council (ACT-IAC) project on identity, credential, and access management (ICAM).

1985

Bruce Goldstein wrote in March: "So proud to be watching the confirmation hearing of my good friend and SIPA classmate **Michael J. Fitzpatrick** as his nomination for the post of U.S. ambassador to the Republic of Ecuador is taken up by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee." Ambassador Fitzpatrick began his post in June.

Kevin O'Neil was promoted from credit risk administration to operational risk officer supporting several enterprise-technology domains at KeyBank. In May 2017, he was a guest speaker at a Moody's Analytics user forum on predictive default analytics. In July 2017, he received a master of information systems management degree from Keller Graduate School of Management. O'Neil is also the Class of 2017 Graduate Commencement speaker.

1988

Dilip Susruta Samarasinghe writes: "I have been working with the Board of Investment of Sri Lanka since 2002 and hold the position of director (Media & Publicity), responsible for media dissemination, advertising, the website, publications, and other related work. In addition, I hold the honorific position of vice president of the Alliance Française in Sri Lanka, which promotes French language and culture. I am also a visiting lecturer in international affairs at several institutions."

1991

Charles Gagnon is the new CEO of Volunteers of America Massachusetts after serving as COO of the South Middlesex Opportunity Council.

1992

Doug Brusa writes: “The sun makes wind. The wind makes ocean waves. Can ocean waves make fossil-fuel-free electricity? Certainly yes. The question is, Can ocean waves make electricity efficiently and responsibly towards the marine environment?” Brusa is part of the team at Pac-Wave that is building a full-scale test site in the Pacific Ocean to test devices that convert the motion of ocean waves into electricity. Learn more at pacwaveenergy.org.

1993



Will Wechsler joined the Atlantic Council, a think tank in Washington, D.C., last fall to lead its work on the Middle East and North Africa. Over the

last few months his travels have taken him to Israel, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Yemen, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Germany.

Michele Wucker's recent TED talk “Why We Ignore Obvious Problems—and How to Act on Them” has gotten more than 1.5 million views since it was posted online May 1 as TED Talk of the Day. The talk expands on personal applications of the framework outlined in her 2016 book, *The Gray Rhino: How to Recognize and Act on the Obvious Dangers We Ignore* (St. Martin's, 2016), which China has used in its risk management policies. Watch the talk at go.ted.com/michelewucker.

1994

Elizabeth Rose Daly writes: “At the end of 2017, I completely changed fields and began a new position as the community relations manager of the Frick Collection, a magnificent museum and library on East 70th Street in New York City. I've been able



Michele Wucker '93

to combine my experience in government relations, international business, and community relations with my lifelong love of art. I am thrilled to have been able to make this career leap! To anyone looking to do something similar, just know that while it won't be easy, it is possible.”

1995

Celebrate Your Reunion:
April 25, 2020

1996

Thomas D. Zweifel writes: “Following a brief negotiation with his wife (“Yes, Honey!”) where he had the last word, he moved to Zurich, Switzerland, in 2008.” Zweifel sold Swiss Consulting Group in 2013 and has since worked as an independent strategy and performance expert. He teaches leadership at St. Gallen University, works two days a week pro bono as president of Keren Hayesod (Israel's largest NGO, with a \$220m budget), and has published seven books, including his latest, *Strategy-In-Action: Marrying Planning, People and Performance* (iHorizon, 2014), which received the Silver Award in Business and Finance from Readers' Favorite.

1998



Anisa Kamadoli Costa, who serves as chief sustainability officer at Tiffany & Co. as well as chairman and president of the Tiffany & Co.

Foundation, was named a trustee of the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation.

Stephen Fromhart transitioned in September 2018 from a two-decades-long career in sovereign risk and financial services research analysis to pursue a dream of building from scratch a brick-and-mortar retail enterprise: a curated wine and spirits shop with a specialization in the amaro, an Italian liqueur, whose name means “bitter.” Check out his shop at amarobrooklyn.com, and stop by his store Amaro Spirits & Wine, when you're in Brooklyn.

1999

Talya Tibbon produced and directed the film *Sky and Ground*, the story of a Kurdish-Syrian family of refugees. The film premiered on PBS and won the CINE Golden Eagle award for Best Documentary.

2000

Celebrate Your Reunion: April 25, 2020

Rebecca Needler Dinar started a PhD program in public administration at Florida International University.

2001

Ana Aslan writes: "After 16 years of work at the U.S. Department of Labor, I left my government job to be fully dedicated to my social enterprise Spread the Word (STW). I am now pursuing my dream of building strong communication and trust between workers and managers in factories worldwide."

Christopher Walker, vice president for studies and analysis at the National Endowment for Democracy, testified in June before the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations at the hearing "Rule by Fear: 30 Years after Tiananmen Square." In May, he testified on related topics before the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee and the House Intelligence Committee.

2003

Alveena Bakhshi writes: "I will continue working with large financial institutions as a subject matter expert in credit risk and have a yen for new technologies. The shift in my mind, however, is from delivering better business outcomes to financial inclusion and economic empowerment. Concurrently, a lifelong champion of the cause of at-risk youth, in 2016 Child Soldiers International published a poetical homage I authored, with forewords by fellow alumni who have done remarkable work in the reintegration of child soldiers. Girls make for almost half the child soldiers worldwide. Having been a young single mother myself, and working in the corporate sector, the desire to effect some real changes in the lives of torchbearers of

our future is very strong. I have also been working on building technology-led public-private partnerships in this space. It would be great to do something jointly with fellow alumni. May we continue to build better communities."

Shantha Bloemen writes: "I am director and founder of Mobility for Africa, a new startup social enterprise committed to creating transport solutions for rural communities that are affordable, efficient, and environmentally friendly. By leveraging technological know-how and manufacturing skills from China, Mobility for Africa aims to produce low-cost, quality, renewable electric tricycles that are built for a rural environment. Having spent the last two decades working in international humanitarian and development assistance, most recently for UNICEF in China, I am eager to put my experience into a hands-on venture that I believe will make a difference in rural women's lives."



Karine Jean-Pierre, a lecturer in international and public affairs at SIPA and chief public affairs officer for MoveOn, has announced the publication of her new book, *Moving Forward: A Story of Hope, Hard Work, and the Promise of America* (Hanover Square, 2019). The book is a political memoir and progressive call to arms that chronicles her own experiences—from growing up in New York's Haitian community to working in the Obama White House and charting a path for others to help change the face of politics.



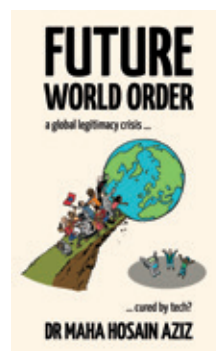
Santiago Pardo became ambassador to Japan from Colombia in April. He previously served as director for Asia of the Colombian Coffee Growers Federation, based in Japan, and chief trade negotiator at Colombia's Ministry of Trade.

2005

Celebrate Your Reunion: April 25, 2020

Olutayo Akingbe is excited to begin her foreign service career in the fall of 2019 as an agricultural attaché for the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Cairo, Egypt.

Charlotte Ashamu was named associate director of advancement and external affairs of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African Art. Ashamu is now based in Washington, D.C., but her work continues to take her across the African continent.



Maha Aziz writes: "I'm excited to share that my book *Future World Order* is out now. It explains how the world will be defined by a global legitimacy crisis in the coming years; norms in geopolitics, politics, economics, and society will continue to be challenged, yet there will be no consensus. The book has been called a 'must-read' (Ian Bremmer) written by a 'global thinker to watch' (Nouriel Roubini) and 'engaged scholar activist' (Parag Khanna). Fifteen percent of profits are going to my brother's memorial fund, which supports charity Peace & Sport's Syrian refugee youth project in Jordan's Za'atari camp."

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Sean Muellers joined Blackstone Real Estate to lead the group's innovation and corporate venture capital activities in the real estate technology space.

2009



Maria Belen Avellaneda worked at the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank and was an adviser to the boards of several public banking institutions. In 2012, she made a bold career change to real estate. Applying investing and negotiation skills learned at SIPA, Avellaneda founded MB-AK Capital Group, with a focus on commercial real estate and residential investment properties. She joined Keller Williams Realty and became one of America's top agents in 2016. She established an impeccable track record advising multimillion-dollar family offices. In 2018, her agency was acquired by Compass, a real estate tech startup founded by Columbia alum Robert Reffkin. The company received support from Soft Bank, Goldman Sachs, and Fidelity Management and has a valuation of over \$4 billion. Avellaneda has become a leader supporting women.

Alejandro Rosales was promoted from senior vice president to executive director in the Financial Institutions Group (FIG) at Santander Corporate & Investment Banking (SCIB).

Morten Svendstorp writes: "In April I started a new position as the director of the Energy Governance Program (EGP) at the Danish Energy Agency. Through the EGP, Denmark works with authorities in the U.S., UK, Holland, Germany, and South Korea to promote renewable energy in those countries based on the successful

Danish transition to sustainable energy sources. By sharing Denmark's regulatory experiences and technologies, we work with our partner countries in advancing offshore wind, energy efficiency, biogas, and district heating. Connecting with alumni working with these technologies (be it in business or government) in the five countries would be highly appreciated."

2010

Celebrate Your Reunion: April 25, 2020

Petra Dunne, partnership development manager at the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP), writes: "I manage and grow a portfolio of institutional and corporate donors, support proposal development, prospect research, grants management, and donor compliance. With over 13 years of experience in international development, I worked for various nonprofit organizations in NYC and abroad, including the Asia Foundation in Afghanistan, the Pacific Forum in Hawaii, Education Pioneers, WaterAid America, and the National Committee on American Foreign Policy."

Israr Khan was promoted to director general at the National Centre for Rural Development in Islamabad, Pakistan.

In November 2018, **Heidi Rosbe** joined the International Rescue Committee, where she plays a key role with the Ahlan Simsim program, a partnership with Sesame Workshop and the 2017 recipient of the prestigious 100&Change \$100 million grant

awarded by the MacArthur Foundation. Ahlan Simsim ("Welcome Sesame" in Arabic) brings critical early childhood development (ECD) programs to the Syrian response region, targeting refugee and host community families in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. Previously, Rosbe spent over eight years as deputy director of the peacebuilding organization Encounter working on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. She has served as an adjunct instructor at NYU's Center for Global Affairs, teaching the graduate course Peacemaking and Peacebuilding, and has consulted on numerous international peacebuilding and conflict-transformation programs and projects, including designing the youth peacebuilding program for Project Common Bond, a summer program for youth from around the world impacted by political violence. Rosbe is also a volunteer mediator with the New York Peace Institute. She lives in New York with her husband and two young children.

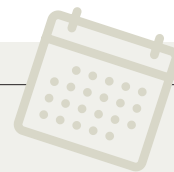
Sandra Scharf writes: "After 10 years in New York, I recently moved back to Europe and now live in Amsterdam. I am working as an expert consultant on the topic of leadership development and capability building to help unlock the full potential of individuals and organizations. I focus my work primarily on public- and social-sector clients."

2011

Jason Alcorn was named the first vice president of operations for the American Journalism Project, a new initiative to reinvigorate mission-driven local news through venture philanthropy.

SAVE THE DATE!

Alumni Class Day and Reunion Dinner 2020 will be held Saturday, April 25, 2020. Visit sipa.columbia.edu/alumni for more information.



J. Nathan Bullock was appointed executive director for academic program development at Delaware Valley University. He concurrently serves as an instructor in DVU's undergraduate and graduate programs.

Kelsey L. Campbell joined the Renne Public Law Group in San Francisco in March as an associate attorney. She represents public entities in civil litigation and labor negotiations. After SIPA and before law school, Campbell was a Presidential Management Fellow and foreign affairs specialist in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. During four years at the Pentagon, she specialized in U.S.-Russia relations, arms control, and strategic stability and had the opportunity to work in Pakistan and with partners in Japan, Australia, and throughout Latin America.

Lenny Pridatko is pleased to announce the publication of his revised *Columbia University in Pictures* coffee table book (Luminance, 2019). The new edition showcases the University's origins, growth, and current global reach with images of Columbia dating back to the 18th century.

2012

Victor Casanova Abos published a biography of Marcelino Orbés, a Spanish artist who became one of the most famous clowns of his time. Charlie Chaplin considered Orbés an early professional reference, and Buster Keaton said that he was the greatest clown that he had ever seen. However, demand for his performances fell with the rise of cinema, and he had a difficult time finding work. Penniless and alone, he shot himself in a hotel in 1927, surrounded by keepsakes from the height of his career. The book, *Marcelino: Muerte y Vida de un Payaso* (Pregunta Ediciones, 2017), will also be translated into English.



Joseph Nyangon '12 and Jennifer Kincaid were married on November 17, 2018.

Carlos Cuevas, executive vice president at Somos, was named one of Crain's *New York Business's* "40 Under 40" for 2019.



Carlos Cuevas '12

Joseph Nyangon and Jennifer Kincaid were married in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, on November 17, 2018. Following a honeymoon—hiking and touring the chateau-esque-style Biltmore House and Estate in Asheville, North Carolina—they have moved to Philadelphia, where Kincaid is a resident surgeon at the Thomas Jefferson University Hospital, after spending two years in Malawi

working on a research project funded by the National Institutes of Health on breast cancer detection and prevention in collaboration with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Nyangon completed his PhD at the University of Delaware and is a postdoctoral researcher in energy economics and engineering systems.

2013

Alexander Müller writes: "After graduation, I worked as an economist for Brazilian banks—BTG Pactual and Itau—based in Chile and Mexico. In June 2018, BofA Merrill Lynch hired me to be the head of Andean Region, Central America, and Caribbean economics at the global research team."

Aaron Pierce writes: "I recently had the privilege of launching EDiGlobal with three core business lines, including GDIGlobal (gdiglobal.org), after designing and piloting a hybrid university program in Uganda. This program, called the Private Christian Hall, is expanding to the U.S. and Brazil in fall 2019. EDi also launched the first Portuguese-language homeschool program in Brazil during the first quarter of 2019."

2014

Jean Paul Laurent, founder and CEO of the Unspoken Smiles Foundation, received the Clinton Global Initiative's Alumni Honor Roll recognition at CGI U's 11th annual meeting in October.

Sarah Logan published *The Struggle for South Sudan: Challenges of Security and State Formation* (I.B. Tauris, 2019), coedited with Luka Biong Deng Kuol of the Africa Center for Strategic Studies.

2015

Celebrate Your Reunion:
April 25, 2020



Katherine Duceman and **Bryan Plummer** recently returned from their honeymoon in the South of France. Duceman is a senior research associate at

the Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship. Plummer has started his own social enterprise, called SIGNALYTIC, which is developing innovative technologies and financing models to improve the medicine supply chain in Uganda.



Bruna Santos writes: "I am honored to be selected as one of the 2019 Eisenhower Fellows for my work with local governments at the city and

state levels to support projects aimed at promoting sustainable development and strengthening democracy. Participating in a program composed of women and men from Latin America working in different areas of knowledge and with diverse backgrounds will be an excellent opportunity to further develop my leadership skills in order to keep confronting entrenched interests and generating positive impact in Brazil."

2017

Natasha Avaneessians, chief of staff of the Long Island Rail Road, was named one of *City & State's* "2018 New York City 40 Under 40 Rising Stars."

Ignazio Bellini writes: "I got married in September 2017, and in June 2018 I was promoted to project manager for AECOM and transferred to Dublin, Ireland, from New York."

Paul Della Guardia writes: "After completing my MPA, I worked at the World Bank building public financial-management data tools for developing countries, which was a valuable experience that allowed me to pursue my passion in fiscal policy while also traveling extensively. I am now a financial economist at the Institute of International Finance, where I focus on global capital markets, frontier markets, and sustainable finance. SIPA has been a wonderful launching pad for this phase of my career and a great starting point to develop new skills that I am honing in pursuit of the CFA and other certifications."

Sara Kaddoura writes: "I recently changed industries, moving from the private sector working for L'Oréal as a product developer incorporating sustainability practices into the supply chain to the public sector working as a budget analyst at the New York City Mayor's Office of Management and Budget overlooking the DEP (Department of Environmental Protection)."

2018

Andrés Osorio, an economist, has been appointed director of the recently created Office of Productivity and National Entrepreneurship (OPEN) in Chile's Ministry of Economy.

Jorge Salem writes: "Just want to share amazing news. A couple of months after graduation, I decided to move back to Peru to go back to the mining industry. I was hired by Antamina mining company, which is the



Jorge Salem '18 (second from right)

largest mine in Peru and one of the largest in the world! I am responsible for developing and implementing the company's social viability and surrounding communities' sustainable development strategy. The MPA-DP degree and my experience in the Columbia Center for Sustainable Investment have been phenomenal at providing a framework that allows me to reconcile two different worlds (the one belonging to a mining company and the one from a rural agrarian community) and help us live in harmony while fostering development through direct investment, tax-for-works strategies, and leveraging public funds for investment in nutrition, education, and health."

2019

Jacob Gross writes: "I had an op-ed published in the *New York Daily News* on June 4, 'A Better Way to Diversify Elite Schools: Don't Scrap the Test, Just Don't Make It Gameable.' It is about the Specialized High Schools Admission Test (SHSAT), a standardized test used as the sole admissions criterion for many of New York City's elite public high schools. Critics say the test is unfair to black and Hispanic students because wealthier families pay for test prep, and Mayor de Blasio proposed a reform that scraps the test. I presented my own policy recommendations to improve diversity at the schools." [!\[\]\(9f3852d68d41e1e95bc4ec10e81aba4b_img.jpg\)](#)

SIPA'S NOTABLE ALUMNI

From *Wait Wait ... Don't Tell Me!* to the World Bank, SIPA's more than 22,000 alumni are working across industries in over 160 countries.



1 KAREN ATTIAH MIA '12
Attiah was the late Jamal Khashoggi's editor at the *Washington Post*. Since Khashoggi's murder last year, Attiah has tirelessly sought justice on his behalf.
Photo courtesy of the Washington Post

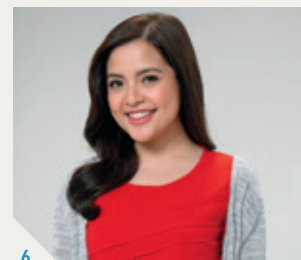
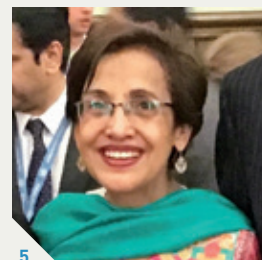
2 NEGIN FARSAD MPA '04
A comedian, actress, writer, and filmmaker, Farsad hosts the political-humor podcast *Fake the Nation* and is a regular panelist on NPR's *Wait Wait ... Don't Tell Me!*



3 ERIC GARCETTI MIA '95
Garcetti is the 42nd mayor of Los Angeles, first elected in 2013.

4 JINGDONG HUA MPA '03
Hua is vice president and treasurer of the World Bank. He was previously vice president and treasurer of IFC.

5 TEHMINA JANJUA MIA '89
Career diplomat Janjua is Pakistan's new ambassador to China. She was formerly Pakistan's foreign secretary.





8

6 TASYA KAMILA MPA '18

A well-known Indonesian singer, actress, and presenter, Kamila is empowering Indonesian youth through her platform as a public figure and founder of the Green Movement Indonesia Foundation.

7 TOMOAKI KATO MPA '14

Kato, surgical director of adult and pediatric liver and intestinal transplantation at NewYork-Presbyterian/Columbia, is a noted pioneer in multiple-organ transplantation and pediatric and adult liver transplantation.



9



10

8 RACHEL MARTIN MIA '04

Martin is host of NPR's news program *Morning Edition*, as well as its morning news podcast *Up First*.

9 GENERAL MARK MILLEY MIA '92

On September 30, 2019, Milley was sworn in as the 20th chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the nation's highest-ranking military official.

10 RICHARD SAMANS MIA '82

Managing director and head of policy and institutional impact at the World Economic Forum, Samans previously served as director-general of the Global Green Growth Institute and special assistant to the president for international economic policy in the Clinton Administration.

11 HUIYU TIAN MPA-EPM '02

Tian has been CEO and president of China Merchants Bank since May 2013.



11



12

12 LAN YANG MIA '96

Referred to as the "Oprah of China," Yang is a journalist, talk-show host, and cofounder and chairperson of the Sun Media Group.

INMEMORIAM

Rodolfo de la Garza (1942–2018)

The late scholar of political behavior, Latino electoral involvement, and immigration policy was a faculty member from 2001 through 2018.

Colleagues, family, and friends gathered on November 19, 2018, to remember Rodolfo “Rudy” de la Garza, who was Columbia’s Eaton Professor of Administrative Law and Municipal Science and a professor of international and public affairs at SIPA.

The late scholar, who died on August 5, 2018, at the age of 75, had been a member of Columbia’s faculty since 2001. He was known for his work in the fields of political behavior, Latino electoral involvement, and immigration policy.

At the commemoration, held in the International Affairs Building, academic colleagues spoke of de la Garza’s impact as a scholar and a friend. Some participated via video link from locations including Florida, Texas, and California, with more than a dozen, all told, taking part.

Professor Robert Shapiro, who recruited de la Garza to Columbia when the former was chair of the political science department, quoted from the report he prepared at the time:

“De la Garza ... is one of, if not the single most, important and productive scholars in the field of Latino politics. He has been the path-breaker in bringing the study of Latino political behavior and politics into the mainstream of American political science.”

On a personal note, Shapiro recalled:

“Rudy’s arrival [at Columbia] lifted my spirits. And even more when he stopped by my office as he often did, and said, ‘You know, I really love Columbia.’ What he loved, he said, was the deep intellectual environment here that he did not have elsewhere.

“Rudy also taught me everything I know about Latino politics.”

Associate Professor Paul F. Lagunes of SIPA sent a note:

“Rudy was instrumental to my feeling at home at Columbia. His fellowship and advice meant a lot to me, as did his example. I found Rudy’s commitment to political science and Latino politics inspiring. His stories and sense of humor lightened my day-to-day.”

Professor Robert Jervis, a faculty member at Columbia and SIPA for almost 40 years, said, in part:

“Rudy reveled in both the substance of political issues and the processes of politics. This was not only at the national level. He knew the politics of individual congressional districts. He could explain how they changed over time and how they compared with one another. This was more than abstract and aggregate behavior; it was how people sought to improve their lives and further their values.



“Rudy’s love for politics was married to a deep integrity. This manifested itself in two primary ways. First, he was able to separate his political presences from his analyses of what was happening.... He did not let what he wanted sway what he thought would happen.

“Rudy’s integrity [also] made him the conscience of the political science department and SIPA. He would always make us face difficult issues that we would prefer not to talk about, including whether we were living up to our commitment to diversity, were really being honest in difficult personnel discussions, or were treating students with the appropriate care and attention. We often tried to take the easy way out; Rudy would not let us. He was never self-righteous in these moments, but neither would he let us or himself off the hook.

“We were a better institution and better as individuals with Rudy around. Our memories of him will have to sustain us.”

**Dean Merit E. Janow shared her reminiscence with
SIPA Magazine:**

“Rudy was a remarkable scholar, a beloved teacher, and a wonderful colleague. Many of us shall remember him for not only his pathbreaking academic work but his tremendous wit and humanity.”

De la Garza wrote or edited 10 books over his career, and his academic publications often found homes in leading journals such as the *American Journal of Political Science*, *Latin American Research Review*, *Social Science Quarterly*, and *International Migration Review*.

Several of his works are considered essential within the world of political science and international and public affairs, often receiving high praise for their contribution to topics such as Latino voting in the U.S., immigration policy, and the political economy of migrant-worker remittances. Reviews like the one from the American Library Association given to *Muted Voices: Latinos and the 2000 Election*, a collection edited by de la Garza, were common: “Should be required reading for public officials, political candidates, and policy advisers.”

His insight and passion were also evident in his work to improve the world around him. He designed programs to increase immigrants’ access to health services in California and evaluated Texas’s state-sponsored naturalization campaign. He served as vice president of the American Political Science Association and in 1993 received the lifetime achievement award from APSA’s Committee on the Status of Latinos in the Profession.

Recognized by his colleagues as one of the founders of the field of Latino political studies, de la Garza was influenced by the diverse and adventurous life he led before becoming an academic. His mother, a Mexican immigrant, was an accomplished pianist who was Plácido Domingo’s first music teacher. His father was a cook at the University of Arizona. De la Garza would frequently accompany his father to work at the university, which he later attended as a student—ultimately receiving four degrees.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, during the height of the Cold War, de la Garza served with the U.S. Information Agency in Bolivia as a student affairs officer. An American political interlocutor and advocate for fair elections, equality, and good governance during a tumultuous time for Central and South America, de la Garza also conducted work in Cuba, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic.

De la Garza is survived by his wife, Ileana, their daughter, Sophia, and two sons, David and Daniel. [👤](#)
—Dominick Tao MPA '19

INMEMORIAM

Maren Castro Villagrana Jakobsmeier (1988–2018)

The SIPA community mourns the passing of a recent graduate.

The SIPA community mourns the passing of alumna Maren Castro Villagrana Jakobsmeier MPA '18.

Maren graduated from SIPA in May 2018 with a degree concentration in Economic and Political Development and a specialization in Gender and Public Policy. She was active in several student organizations, including serving on the boards of the Education Collaborative and Women in Leadership.



Maren had moved during the summer of 2018 to Malawi, where she was working as a research associate on a World Bank–funded education sector improvement project. She was involved in a serious road accident and did not survive.

“I know many current and former SIPA students knew Maren well,” wrote Dean Merit E. Janow in a message to the community. “Today we join with her family, friends, and colleagues in expressing our condolences for this heartbreaking loss. As many at SIPA can attest, Maren was a motivated, caring, and engaged member of our community as a student and was poised to make many valuable contributions to the international development field and to the promotion of gender equality.”

When Maren interned at UNCDF Tanzania in summer 2017, she worked with Ivana Damjanov MIA '93, who shared this reminiscence: “I loved working with Maren. Every day was filled with new stories, discoveries, and insights. She was a constant source of ideas and acquaintances, and her passion infected and motivated us all. She was never satisfied to sit and wait for inspiration to come to her, but instead pushed the barriers of convention and opened herself up to what life had to offer.

“Although she left a mark on all of our projects, she was most passionate about our work in the refugee camps, and it suited her strong spirit perfectly. She didn’t have to spend entire days in the refugee camps and could have worked out of an office, but she chose to go with our partners and meet as many refugees as she could, even the children and youth who were not involved in our program.”

Maren’s family is honoring her memory by raising funds for an NGO working with children, refugees, and education in Malawi and Tanzania. [👉](#)


Herbert Spirer (1925–2018)

SIPA remembers Herbert F. Spirer, who passed away on October 25, 2018, in Greenwich, Connecticut. Spirer was an adjunct professor at SIPA from 1997 to 2002, teaching the popular course Human Rights, Field Research, and Data Analysis, for which he is fondly remembered by many alumni. In addition to a long career in academia, Spirer served as a statistical consultant on data analysis to the United Nations International Tribunal in the former Yugoslavia, Human Rights Watch, and the Institute for the Study of Genocide, as well as other organizations. [👉](#)



Photo by Lenny Pridatko MIA '11, from his book
Columbia University in Pictures, second edition (Luminance, 2019).
Follow him on Instagram @lenny_pridatko.



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While working in Colombia and El Salvador, I saw how the remnants of conflict can stifle future growth, security, and stability. I came to SIPA to learn about international security policy and conflict resolution, and I'm excited to put my education into practice as a foreign service officer at the State Department. I wouldn't be where I am today without the financial aid I received from SIPA.

Caitlin Strawder MPA '19

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Visit our giving site to contribute to student financial aid through the SIPA Annual Fund:
sipa.givenow.columbia.edu

