



Immigrant Civic Leadership Program

MEET THE 2022-23 COHORT

We are excited to introduce the Immigrant Civic Leadership Program 2022 cohort! These participants will be using New York City as their classroom to explore how they can influence meaningful change and address complex challenges in their work partnering with immigrant communities.



Aisatou Diallo [in](#)

LEGAL DIRECTOR, AFRICAN COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

Aisatou Diallo holds a JD and an MS in Environmental Law & Policy from Vermont Law School and BS in Law and Psychology from Sage College of Albany. Aisatou always had an interest in global migration issues and understood the realities immigrant communities face, being raised in the Bronx by two Guinean parents. After law school, Aisatou worked in the nonprofit sector representing people in detention facilities and people incarcerated with immigration detainers in courts throughout New York and New Jersey. Aisatou opened a solo practice in 2020 providing access to immigration information and legal assistance to the Fulani community in the Bronx. Aisatou leads the New York Legal program at African Communities Together working to connect immigrant communities across the five boroughs with no-cost legal services. Aisatou is fluent in Fulani.



Angela Callisaya [in](#)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ASSEMBLYMEMBER BRIAN BARNWELL

Angela was born in Bolivia and raised in Elmhurst, New York. Angela pursued her Bachelor's in Science with a focus in Accounting at the City University of New York - John Jay. She is currently pursuing her Master's in Public Administration with a focus on Accounting at John Jay. While working, Angela has gained experience in the nonprofit sector for over 10 years. In more recent years she has transitioned into the government sector. Angela started working in the district office of the New York State Assembly in 2018 and continues to work there to date.



Anh-Thu Nguyen

DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS, DEMOCRACY AT WORK INSTITUTE

Anh-Thu currently leads partnership development work with Democracy at Work Initiative's (DAWI) Rapid Response Cooperative Development Project and leads the NYC-based work through the NYC Council-funded Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative. She began her career with the UN Assistance to the Khmer Rouge Trials and the International Center for Transitional Justice, later pivoting to social enterprise as a founding team member of MAKE Beauty. She sits on the NYC Employment and Training Coalition's Workforce Policy Strategy Council, is a Rhize board member, facilitates the Greenbrook Tenants Coalition, and is a founding team member and lead with Team America Relief. She speaks English, Vietnamese and Spanish; has lived, studied, and worked in Spain and Cambodia, and has traveled to 35 countries. She was born and raised by Vietnamese refugees in Tampa Bay, Florida.



Damian Harris-Hernandez

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, REFUGEE TRANSLATION PROJECT

Damian Harris-Hernandez is the founder and director of the Refugee Translation Project (RTP), a nonprofit that provides free translation services to refugees. RTP's work spans across many immigrant communities including those from countries in Africa, Central and South America, and the Middle East. Damian was awarded the FLAS fellowship and Critical Language Scholarship while at Columbia University, where he learned Turkish and began his career as a freelance Turkish translator. He has traveled throughout Eurasia, and has lived in Turkey. He also teaches online English classes to refugees living in Europe. Before founding RTP, Damian worked as a youth educator.



Daniel Carrillo-Rodriguez

VICE PRESIDENT, ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, & GOVERNANCE, HANDSHAKE LLC

Daniel is a Vice President of Environmental, Social, & Governance at Handshake Partners, a Social Impact consulting agency and Co-Founder and CEO of Philanthrofi, a start-up connecting companies to nonprofit programs around the world. He works with immigrant communities in NYC by helping companies create programs aimed at hiring and training refugee populations. Daniel was born in Cartagena, Colombia and moved to New York at a young age. He attended Binghamton University graduating with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and an MBA focusing on Finance. After graduation, Daniel worked in financial services for a Management Consulting firm before transitioning to work in global development for international NGOs focusing on the Latin American region and Private Sector Engagement. Daniel speaks Spanish and lives in Astoria, Queens.



Deguyo Tehe

PROGRAM DIRECTOR, SAUTI YETU

Mr. Deguyo Tehe is the Children and Family Services Program Director at Sauti Yetu Center for African Women and Families in Staten Island. Deguyo has extensive experience in family and social service support, 6 years of them with Sauti Yetu. As one of the CFS Directors, Deguyo oversees the Solutions-Based Casework program and ensures the program's compliance with Administration of Children Services (ACS) accountability mandates. Under his supervision, the Staten Island office has received excellent ratings on performance evaluations such as VENDEX, OCFS, and PAMS. Deguyo is fluent in various languages such as French, Bete, Gnaboa, Zow, Gouro, Attie and other African dialects. He received his Masters of Public Administration from Metropolitan College of New York and his Masters of Social Work from the Touro Graduate School of Social Work.



Erum Hanif

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, APNA BROOKLYN COMMUNITY CENTER

Erum Hanif has worked in HR, organizational development, legal, and compliance. She is the CEO and board member of APNA Brooklyn Community Center, and the Director of Strategy and Contracting at APNA Adult Day Care. She is a community advocate who believes in representing and giving back to the community, especially the historically underserved Muslim and black and brown communities. Erum brought needed services and programs to the South Brooklyn community and beyond in partnership with many agencies, representatives, and organizations. She was a Non-Profit 40 Under 40 Rising Star in 2021 among other awards. She has completed her Masters in Business Administration, Bachelors in Law and is currently enrolled in an Advanced Certificate program in Immigration Law from CUNY. She can speak English, Urdu, and Hindi.



Esmeralda Tolbert

ENTITLEMENT SPECIALIST, PROJECT HOSPITALITY

Esmeralda is the Entitlement Specialist for El Centro del Inmigrante in Staten Island, New York. In the past four years, she's served low-income immigrant families by helping them to navigate the NYC system to get access to benefits that help them get through difficult times. She has a passion for educating and empowering her community.



Gloria Chacon [in](#)

SUPERVISING ATTORNEY, IMMIGRANT JUSTICE CORPS

Gloria first joined IJC as a Justice Fellow as part of the 2014 inaugural class. She was placed at The Door, Legal Services Center, where she worked representing young people facing removal. She then worked as a staff attorney with the Bronx Defenders where she engaged in a model of holistic representation and advised non-citizen clients on the impact of criminal and family matters on their immigration status. She also represented non-citizens in removal proceedings and in affirmative matters and conducted Know Your Rights presentations for the Bronx community. Gloria received her J.D. from New York Law School. She received her B.A., cum laude, in Political Science and French from Rutgers University. Gloria was born and raised in Honduras and is fluent in Spanish and French. She is a recipient of the Robin Hood Heroes Award



Jin Hyun Bae [in](#)

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES DEPARTMENT SPECIAL ADVISOR, QUEENS PUBLIC LIBRARY

Jin Hyun Bae is a Queens resident from South Korea via the UK. As Special Advisor for the Programs and Services Department at Queens Public Library (QPL), Jin coordinates library-wide civic engagement projects as well as special initiatives, such as Queens Rising. Her prior work at QPL, the YMCA, and GMHC was dedicated to serving all New Americans and adult learners. She speaks Korean and French and serves on the NYC Civic Engagement Commission's Language Assistance Advisory Committee. Jin holds degrees from the University of Oxford, the London School of Economics and Political Science, and New York University.



Julie Ma [in](#)

INTERIM CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONALS NETWORK FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Julie is committed to serving the underserved immigrant communities, especially multilingual English language immigrants and refugee youths. She focuses on organizational strategy, core values, partnerships, policy and advocacy, and fundraising. She is a first-generation immigrant fluent in both speaking and writing Chinese. Julie came to New York from China when she was thirteen years old. She graduated from the Marxe School's Executive MPA in 2018 and completed the International Summer Program at Southwestern University of Finance and Economics, Chengdu, China, and the Executive MPA Leadership Symposium at Nanyang Technical University, Singapore.



Kelly Martinez Torres

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER, NEIGHBORS LINK

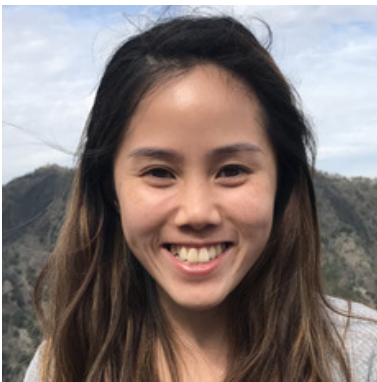
Kelly received her Bachelor's Degree in Social Work from Universidad Central de Venezuela and her Master's degree in Public Management from Instituto de Estudios Superiores de Administración. Kelly worked in Social Work for three years. After receiving her Master's Degree, she moved to the private sector as a project and marketing manager. Kelly joined Neighbors Link in 2018 as a Client Services Coordinator then transitioned to the Neighbors Link ONA Hudson Valley Immigrant Community Navigator and Community Engagement Manager. Kelly joined the Board of Directors of the Emergency Shelter Partnership, which provides short-term, emergency shelter during the winter. As an immigrant herself, from Venezuela, she understands the importance of the work of different organizations in New York State for the immigrant community and also the importance of advocacy for immigrants rights.



Kira O'Brien

NEW YORK DIRECTOR, EMMA'S TORCH

Dr. Kira O'Brien is the New York Director of Emma's Torch, a non-profit social enterprise that focuses on refugee empowerment through culinary education. Before joining Emma's Torch, Kira's career as a Social Worker spanned from welcoming newly arrived refugees at the International Rescue Committee to supporting undergraduates in social justice work at Princeton University. Kira's doctoral research focused on the role of experiential education in empowerment: how learning through doing can shape who we are and how we see ourselves in the world. A Brooklyn native and Queens transplant, Kira spends most of her free time trying new foods, debating the characteristics of the perfect slice of pizza, reading science fiction and being bossed around by her cat, Yoda.



Kristina Chan

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF ANALYTICS, NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Kristina Chan works for the New York City Department of Education in the Office of District Planning (ODP), where she works with communities to increase access to quality placements and programs, improve learning conditions, and increase diversity and integration. ODP helps school communities address their unique needs and priorities through rezoning, merging and re-siting schools and programs, expanding programs and grades, among other avenues. Kristina supports ODP and school communities in making data-informed decisions and developing better understanding of their communities. She serves as co-chair of the NYC DOE's Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders Employee Resource Group, which strives to enhance awareness and understanding of AAPI identities while celebrating the complexities within this diaspora. Kristina enjoys spending time outdoors and trying new vegan food.



Maria Mejia [in](#)

COMMUNITY OUTREACH MANAGER, THE FRESH AIR FUND

Maria is Mexican and a long-time resident of the Bronx. Arriving in NYC at the age of 13, Maria grew up understanding many of the issues that the immigrant community faces. She has a history of serving underprivileged communities and a deep knowledge and understanding of challenges relating to immigration status. In 2013 Maria joined The Fresh Air Fund. They provide free, life-changing summer experiences in the outdoors to children from New York City's underserved communities. Maria cultivates and manages strategic relationships with community-based organizations and neighborhood leaders that connect underserved populations to free youth programming and services. Maria is the mother of two amazing children, Nayelly and Omar, and continues to reside in the Highbridge area in the Bronx



Mateo Guerrero-Tabares [in](#)

TRANS JUSTICE AND LEADERSHIP PROGRAM MANAGER, MAKE THE ROAD NY

Mateo Guerrero-Tabares is the Trans Justice and Leadership Program Manager at Make the Road NY, where he runs the Leadership School program, develops movement curriculum for liberation, and supports organizing spaces for the TGNCIQ community in Jackson Heights and Bushwick. Since migrating to the United States, Mateo has come out and embraced his identities as a transgender man of color and a queer immigrant. Mateo organizes at the intersection of ending criminalization and detention for immigrants communities, people who are in the sex trades, and TGNCIQ communities of color.



Olabisi Ayo-Ademokun [in](#)

CASE MANAGER, DSI INTERNATIONAL INC

Olabisi Ayo-Ademokun is the case manager with DSI International Inc, a not-for-profit that works with African communities on immigrant integration, advocacy, and community engagement while facilitating access to community resources and low-cost immigration legal services. She is fluent in English and Yoruba. She has a Bachelor's in Computer Science and Master's in Information Technology, with a focus in artificial intelligence and expert systems. She has several outstanding customer service awards and recently won the most outstanding Parent Volunteer in her children's school district. Olabisi likes to bring a bit of sparkle everywhere she goes.



Rita Kurniawan [in](#)

DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND REAL ESTATE, CHINESE-AMERICAN PLANNING COUNCIL

Rita Kurniawan is an experienced Real Estate professional with over 14 years of experience in property operations, real estate financial management, and capital projects. She is currently the Director of Housing and Real Estate, responsible for overseeing Chinese-American Planning Council's affordable housing and real estate portfolio. The Chinese-American Planning Council is an organization that empowers Asian American, immigrant, and low-income communities in New York City by ensuring they have equitable resources and opportunities needed to thrive. Prior to joining the organization, she served as a managing agent to a portfolio of buildings in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens.



Shilpy Chatterjee [in](#)

SENIOR PREVENTION COORDINATOR, NEW YORK CITY ALLIANCE AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT

Shilpy is currently working as Senior Prevention Coordinator at the New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault. She has ten years of experience of working with survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. She started her journey as Farmers Rights Advocate and Activist in India. It was the most enriching experience of her life to work with the tribal belt during that time. Her work with survivors of gender based violence has been very fulfilling. Shilpy has received the New York State Assembly Citizenry and Service Award from the State Legislation in 2018 and the Advocate of New York City award from the Mayor's Office in 2019.



Wennie Chin [in](#)

DIRECTOR OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT, NEW YORK IMMIGRATION COALITION

Wennie Chin is the Director of Civic Engagement at the New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC). She oversees the organization's work in civic participation, electoral reform, and good government practices. Prior to joining NYIC, Wennie was a Community Organizer at the MinKwon Center for Community Action working with Asian American youths and supporting the launch of APA VOICE. Wennie previously managed two State Senate races in Queens and was formerly on the board for OCA-NY Advocates, chairing their Civil Rights Committee. Wennie received her B.A. cum laude with high honors in Politics and Asian American Studies from NYU. In her spare time, Wennie enjoys playing Catan, climbing in Long Island City, and teaching Cantonese.



Ya-Yun Teng

PROGRAM OFFICER, IMMIGRANT ARTIST RESOURCE CENTER, NEW YORK FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS

Ya-Yun Teng is the Program Officer, Immigrant Artist Resource Center at New York Foundation for the Arts where she creates a hub for artists in New York City to connect, share resources, and amplify their voices in the American cultural landscape. As a cultural worker with a passion for uplifting underrepresented narratives and devoted to equitable access to the arts, Teng has extensive experience managing community engagement initiatives in immigrant neighborhoods for arts organizations. She served as the Community Outreach - Chinese Project Director at Flushing Town Hall and was responsible for presenting public programs related to Chinese heritage by artists from these traditions. Teng was born and raised in Taiwan. She immigrated to the United States in 2005 to complete her graduate study in educational communication and technology at New York University. Her love of human stories brought her to work with organizations such as the Lower East Side Tenement Museum, Museum of Chinese in America, Women Make Movies, Queens Council of the Arts, and WITNESS.



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