

Participant Biographies

Christian Courtis

Christian Courtis is a human rights officer with OHCHR, where he coordinates the team working on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. He was born in Argentina and has held academic and NGO positions in the past.

Kate Donald

Kate Donald is currently a Human Rights Officer at the OHCHR, working on the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights. Previously, she has been an independent adviser and researcher to the Special Rapporteur, and Research Fellow at the International Council on Human Rights Policy.

Isha Dyfan

Isha Lanla Dyfan is the Chief of the Women's Human Rights and Gender Section, located in the Rule of Law, Equality and Non -Discrimination Branch of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. She is Barrister-at-Law and educated in Sierra Leone and the UK where she studied History and Law. Since qualifying as a lawyer Ms. Dyfan has taken many certificate courses in human rights, gender and training. She practiced law in Sierra Leone for 13 years, and then worked for international women's NGOs in New York for seven years on women, peace and security issues before joining the United Nations in 2004. At the United Nations she served in three peacekeeping missions between 2004 and 2010. Ms. Dyfan has contributed to many major publications on Women, Peace and Security issues such as the Secretary General's 2002 report , UNIFEM report 2002, UNIFEM DDR report 2004 and the DCAF report "Women in an Insecure World" to name a few. In 2004 she was appointed one of 12 experts to draft the guidelines on gender issues for use during peace negotiations. This was adopted by the UN Commission on the Status of Women during its 2004 session.

Carole Excell

Carole Excell is a Senior Associate at the World Resources Institute working on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice issues around the world. Previously she was the Coordinator for the Freedom of Information Unit of the Cayman Islands Government in charge of ensuring the development and effective implementation of the Cayman Islands Freedom of Information Law. She also worked with The Carter Center as Field Representative in Jamaica working on their Access to Information Project.

Carole is an Attorney-at-law with a LLB from the University of the West Indies and Certificate of Legal Education from the Norman Manley Law School, Mona. She has a Masters Degree in Environmental Law from the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. She has seven years working experience working for the Government of Jamaica on environmental and planning issues both at the Natural Resources Conservation Authority and then at its successor the National Environment and Planning Agency.

John Gaventa

John Gaventa is the director of the Coady International Institute at St Francis Xavier University, Canada. He is a political sociologist, educator and civil society practitioner with extensive experience of research, training and organizational leadership across the globe. As an academic researcher, he has worked extensively on areas of international development, citizen participation and action, participatory methods of research and learning; power and empowerment; participatory governance; global citizenship and social movements, and grassroots organization.

He has also served as a leader of civil society organizations, including director of the Highlander Center in the United States, and chair of Oxfam Great Britain. He has a particular interest in linking research and education to development practice and social change. A former Rhodes Scholar and MacArthur Prize Fellow, he was most recently a Professor in the Participation, Power and Social Change team at the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex.

Helena Hofbauer

Helena Hofbauer joined the International Budget Partnership (IBP) in January 2007 and is IBP's Director for Partnership Development and Innovation. She is based in Mexico City and works with groups throughout Africa, Asia, MENA and Latin America. During the last five years, she managed the Partnership Initiative, a re-granting program that worked in 18 countries with over 45 organizations, developing the capacities for civil society budget work and promoting a South-South transfer and sharing of knowledge. Helena is co-chair in the Steering Committee of the Global Movement for Budget Transparency, Accountability and Participation.

Helena has worked since 1996 on governance, accountability and human rights, and was the founding Director of Fundar, Centro de Análisis e Investigación, in Mexico. In that position she pioneered civil society engagement in budget issues, access to information and participation in decision making processes. She also worked on health and budgets, gender sensitive budgeting and the budgets and economic, social and cultural rights. She earned a BA in International Relations at El Colegio de México and a MA in International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame.

Ghazala Mansuri

Ghazala Mansuri is a lead economist in the Poverty Reduction and Equity and Development Research Groups at the World Bank, and is the co-author of the recent report 'Localizing Development: Does Participation Work?' Much of Dr. Mansuri's work focuses on the impact of inequality and social exclusion and spans four broad areas: rural land, labor and credit markets, the economics of household behavior, the political economy of participatory development and institutional and governance reforms for development. Her research on the political economy of local development includes a number of evaluations of participatory development programs. Dr. Mansuri has published extensively in leading journals in economics and development. She holds a Ph.D. in economics from Boston University.

Anna Minj

Ms Minj is the director of Community Empowerment Programme, and Integrated Development Programme, BRAC since April 2009. She started her career with Caritas Bangladesh as programme officer of Child Care and Orphanage Management programme from August 1987 to 1990, after which she served as the project coordinator of Integrated Women's Development Programme in the same organisation from January 1991-April 2002. Thereafter, she joined CARE Bangladesh and served in different senior level positions, finally as the head of Human Resource and Gender Equity and Diversity during April 2002 - March 2009. In between, she also served as a social worker with Camden Cross Roads, London and volunteer support to CAFOD, UK. Ms Minj is affiliated with a number of national and international level forums and networks in the field of development, gender and indigenous peoples' rights. She also serves as board member of several national and international development organisations and foundations.

Sikhulile Nkhoma

Sikhulile Nkhoma (Siku) is Executive Director of the Centre for Community Organisation and Development (CCODE) in Malawi. CCODE supports the activities of the Malawian Homeless People's

Federation, a movement of the poor with a membership of more than 50,000, affiliated with Shack/Slum Dwellers International. Siku is an Urban Planner, development practitioner and skilled facilitator with more than a decade's experience in mobilising poor communities to build on their collective assets. After graduating from College she has spent most of her time in the slums of Lilongwe. Being disillusioned with the prevailing 'entitlement' culture among the poor and populist politics, she constructed alternatives by organising women in collective savings groups with the view of building responsible communities and empowering slum dwellers to negotiate pro-poor development initiatives with local authorities.

Siku is an energetic activist, a pragmatic campaigner, a deep thinker, a loving mother, a strong leader and a creative dreamer. Nothing will stand in her pursuit for justice, equity, solidarity, and for urban futures that celebrate the poor's creative capacities. Siku also likes to read Irish novels, participate in women's discussion groups on Facebook, and cooking.

Alex O'Neil

For 17 years Alex was Principal Research Manager at Joseph Rowntree Foundation, managing programmes (at various times) on Independent Living for Disabled People, Older People's Programme, Choices & Voices for people with Cognitive and Communication Impairments, a user-defined programme Shaping Futures, Race Equality & Disability, Change In Action (Unheard Voices). This involved managing over 200 (mainly participatory) projects. Prior to that he worked for 10 years in local government Policy Units (managing a unit) and before that he was a Research Associate at Newcastle University (on European Issues). He is now a freelance Research Consultant (and has another career as a Contemporary Guitarist).

Marcos Orellana

Marcos A. Orellana is the Director of CIEL's Human Rights and Environment Program. Prior to joining CIEL, Dr. Orellana was a Fellow to the Lauterpacht Research Centre for International Law of the University of Cambridge, UK. He also was a visiting scholar with the Environmental Law Institute in Washington DC. Previously, Dr. Orellana was Instructor Professor of international law at the Universidad de Talca, Chile and a consultant to various international governmental and non-governmental organizations. He also has provided legal counsel to the Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs on international environmental issues, and in that capacity has joined official delegations to meetings of select MEAs. In 2009 Dr. Orellana obtained his S.J.D. doctoral degree from American University Washington College of Law (WCL), upon successful defense of a thesis entitled: Health, Safety and Environmental Measures in International Economic Law. Since 2002, Dr. Orellana has taught various courses at WCL, including: the International Law of the Sea; International Trade and the Environment; and Investment Arbitration & International Human Rights Law.

Joanna Pozen

Joanna currently works at The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria on issues of corruption and its effect on health programs. She is also an Associate Research Scholar at Columbia University's Medical Center and School of Public Health. At Columbia, she has launched and directed a study concerning transitional justice and mental health in Rwanda, and designed a study on corruption's effect on the delivery of maternal care with Professor Lynn Freedman. Prior to these positions, she worked at the UN Secretariat, Human Rights Watch and the Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS) in Argentina on issues of health and human rights. She holds a Juris Doctorate from New York University, a Masters in Public Health from Harvard and a Bachelor of Arts from Yale.

Zakir Hossain Sarker

Mohammad Zakir Hossain Sarker works with ActionAid Bangladesh (AAB) since 2003. He worked with a number of leading legal aid and human rights organisations in Bangladesh. Over the periods he has specialized in the field of Human Rights Education, Participatory Training, Community Development and *Reflect*, a UNESCO award winning participatory approach used for adult learning, empowerment and social change (Please log on to www.reflect-action.org for more details on *Reflect* Approach).

Currently he is holding the position of Manager of Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) Programming with 9 years working experience on *Reflect* Approach. He has designed and facilitated Training of Trainers (ToT), Workshop, Convention, Exchange visit etc. both nationally and internationally including in Afghanistan, Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal, South Africa, Senegal and Uganda. With an academic background in social science and law, Zakir writes column regularly in the National dailies and journals and he has a published book titled '*Nittwa Diner Ain* (Daily necessary laws)' to his credit.

Thea Shahrokh

Thea Shahrokh is Research Officer on the Participate initiative at the Institute of Development Studies, UK. Thea has over 5 years research and advocacy experience in the field of participation and democratic governance. Her commitment in this area is to those most marginalised, to ensuring that social change is transformative, and that social justice is embedded in the foundations of development. Within Participate she working to support those closest to the research on the ground to develop and innovate methodologically, and also to drive the content and outcomes of the work. Prior to her position at the Institute of Development Studies Thea worked with Involve, a UK charity that explores the role of public participation and social accountability in decision-making. She has also worked at the grassroots level with a range of movements and organisations in Guyana and at the INGO level with VSO international. In both contexts the work has been to understand and take action to address structural and systemic power imbalances that inhibit the participation and influence of those most marginalised in decision-making at every level of society.

Ellen Walker

Ellen Walker has been a human rights officer with the International Disability Alliance (IDA) since 2010. She works mainly in the Human Rights Council and on the UPR, and also with some other parts of the U.N. Working for IDA, she works to advance the rights of persons with disabilities and to promote the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in relevant mechanisms. She has an LL.M. from Geneva and a J.D. from the University of Michigan.

Samantha Waterhouse

Samantha Waterhouse is currently the Coordinator of the Community Law Centre's Parliamentary Programme, based at the University of the Western Cape. She is responsible for facilitating public and civil society engagement with Parliament in order to strengthen parliamentary oversight on the delivery of a range of human rights obligations and thereby to promote stronger participatory democracy. She was previously employed at Resources Aimed at the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (RAPCAN) and before that at Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust in senior advocacy positions. She has developed expertise in promoting social reform and advocating for development, reform and implementation of law and policy that promotes children's and women's rights, in particular as these intersect with the rights of people living in poverty and the rights of persons with disabilities. She is currently completing a Masters degree in Social Justice.

Alicia Ely Yamin

Alicia Yamin is a Lecturer on Global Health and Director of the Program on Health Rights of Women and Children at the François-Xavier Bagnoud Center for Health and Human Rights at Harvard University. Yamin has an additional appointment at the Christian Michelsen Institute (Bergen, Norway), where she is an Associated Senior Researcher. Yamin's 20-year career at the intersection of health, human rights and development has bridged academia and activism. From 2007 to 2011, Yamin held the prestigious Joseph H. Flom Fellow on Global Health and Human Rights at Harvard Law School. Prior to that, she served as Director of Research and Investigations at Physicians for Human Rights, where she oversaw all of the organization's field investigations, and on the faculty of the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University.