The Global Women's Institute
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Global Technical Advisory Group Member Biographies

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Sarah Cornish-Spencer, International Rescue Committee (IRC)

Sarah Cornish-Spencer works for the IRC as Women's Protection and Empowerment Senior Technical Advisor within the Violence Prevention and Response Technical Unit. Sarah is a social worker (MSW) with over two decades of experience directly implementing, and providing technical support to, programming reaching women and girls in humanitarian crises. Sarah's current focus is leading global work addressing GBV, including sexual exploitation and abuse of women and girls, through a women's movement building and feminist approach, and with her team of technical advisors she supports WPE programming across 17 African countries. Sarah also represents the IRC as co-chair of the GBV AOR Minimum Standards Task Team and on many other global initiatives, such as the Humanitarian Innovation Fund GBV Challenge. Prior to joining the IRC, Sarah worked as a social worker in Asia and Africa, led organizational change efforts addressing gender equality, and led GBV programming for the ARC in South Sudan.

Olga Ege, ActionAid Denmark

Olga Ege works for ActionAid Denmark (AADK) as Senior Program Manager and Gender Equity Specialist advising ActionAid Country Office and local partners on youth-led feminist initiatives on social justice, political participation, climate justice and women's rights. She is part of the humanitarian team in AADK and works to strengthen synergies between humanitarian crisis and longer-term development initiatives, as well support partners in implementing ActionAid's Humanitarian Signature which emphasize localization, sustainability, accountability to affected communities, as well as women and youth leadership. Before joining ActionAid, Olga was the GBV & Protection Manager for CARE International in Lebanon where she designed and coordinated a large number of projects and initiatives promoting protection, gender equality and rights for refugees and marginalized host communities affected by the Syrian crisis, including Empowered Aid. Olga has profound experience both as manager, trainer, and coordinator on an extensive range of development and humanitarian issues, including gender equality, Gender Based Violence (GBV), Prevention of Sexual Exploitation & Abuse (PSEA), protection, as well as human rights-based approaches. She is a certified trainer in Protection Mainstreaming. Olga holds a MA in International Development Studies from Roskilde University in Denmark. Since August 2023 she has been based in Nairobi, Kenya.

Alina Rosenfeld, Safeguarding Resource and Support Hub

Alina is a Principal Consultant providing technical safeguarding support to the Resource and Support Hub. She brings a decade of experience to the Safeguarding Portfolio and has extensive safeguarding experience in fragile and developing countries. She has expertise in developing and implementing contextualized safeguarding policies, capacity building with local CSOs, developing safeguarding communities of practice, and conducting safeguarding investigations in high risk contexts.

Alina has an MSc in International Development and Humanitarian Emergencies from the London School of Economics. Prior to joining Social Development Direct, Alina was the Head of Safeguarding at War Child UK. Alina has also worked at INGOs such as the American Red Cross and Oxfam Great Britain.

Alexandra Hileman, International Organization for Migration (IOM)

Ms. Alexandra Hileman is the Global PSEA Project Manager on Inter-Agency Capacity Building, managing a dedicated project to support in-country PSEA Networks and senior leadership on their inter-agency PSEA programs under the International Organization for Migration. In 2015, she joined the IASC's project to pilot inter-agency Community-Based Complaint Mechanisms (IA-CBCMs) in Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, working with the field teams operating those mechanisms to learn good practices on the design and implementation of joint PSEA initiatives. After drafting the resulting Best Practice Guide on inter-agency CBCMs, she has spent the last 8 years developing and delivering contextualized trainings globally on behalf of the IASC to share these lessons learned and good practices with country colleagues, and bringing new practices back to the UN-wide and IASC community to inform policy and decision-making. She now offers technical assistance to field teams both remotely and by deployment on establishing and strengthening in-country PSEA Programs under Resident or Humanitarian Coordinators. Recent guidance authored includes FAQs on implementing inter-agency PSEA, the Deployment Package for PSEA Coordinators, and targeted training packages for PSEA stakeholders. Ms Hileman came to the humanitarian field with a background in international prosecutions on crimes of sexual violence.

Yoko Iwasa, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Yoko Iwasa is a Senior Policy Officer in the Office of the Principal Advisor on the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment of UNHCR HQ. Her work includes supporting the development of UNHCR's policy and resources on PSEA and SH, inter-agency engagement on protection from sexual misconduct for UNHCR, providing guidance and support to UNHCR regional bureau and country operations, and supporting the development of UNHCR's policy and resources on PSEA and SH. She has served in diverse functions in protection of forcibly displaced and stateless people for over 20 years, including in Uganda, Thailand, Senegal, Pakistan, and Chad. She has an academic background in public international law and international human rights law.

Vahid Jahangiri, International Lifeline Fund

Since joining Lifeline in 2006, Vahid has successfully launched multiple operations to include Lifeline programs in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Burundi, Sudan, Congo and Haiti. Vahid is a key contributor to the SAFE initiative and served on the Strategic Advisory Committee for UNHCR's Global SAFE Strategy. Vahid has extensive knowledge in program implementation, fuel technologies design, testing and M&E in both refugee and post conflict settings. Additionally, Vahid has performed consultancy work for several UN agencies such as WFP and UNDP, working to evaluate fuel technology programs, designing implementation strategies and formulating country energy strategies throughout Eastern Africa and in Haiti.

Vahid received his B.A. in International Management from the University of Baltimore and holds a Masters Degree in International Public Policy from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). In his spare time, Vahid enjoys traveling to exotic locations around the world in search of new spices and culinary delicacies.

Rima Karim, BRAC

Rima Karim is working as the Head of Safeguarding and Organisational Culture for BRAC International, supporting BRAC International's programmes and entities across its operations in Africa and Asia. Her role involves ensuring effective prevention, reporting, response and learning mechanisms are in place, mainstreaming safeguarding and PSEAH across programme design, implementation and monitoring for safe programming as well as in organisational policies and systems such as Internal Audit and Risk Management; effective safeguarding case management following a survivor-centered approach; and accountability to the executive leadership team and the Board.
Prior, Rima worked as Gender Learning and Development Coordinator at CARE International in Bangladesh. Her role focused on organization-wide awareness building on gender equity and diversity and prevention of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, effective safeguarding case management including advising senior management on safeguarding protocols as per prevailing laws; conducting sensitive investigations related to sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse using a survivor-centered approach; and conducting Rapid Gender Analysis as part of CARE's emergency response team. She is a development professional with 13+ years' experience in the areas of safeguarding and PSHEA, gender and diversity, strategic HR and project management.

Rima holds an MSc in International Human Resource Management and Employment Relations from Queen Mary, University of London and a Masters in Development Management and Practice from BRAC University.

Georgina Lund, CARE International

Georgie is currently the Safeguarding Coordinator, based in CARE International Secretariat. Prior to joining CARE, Georgie was the Child safety and Safeguarding Advisor War Child UK where she co-wrote and led on the roll-out of the safeguarding policy, procedures and mechanisms. As part of the roll-out, socialisation and embedding of the policy, Georgie created tools and guidance based on sector wide best practice. This included inputting into risk registers, leading on mainstreaming safeguarding into safer programming – including creation of Child Safety Checklists, integrating safeguarding standards into media & communications, establishing reporting mechanisms and focal point networks, child friend feedback mechanism, leading investigations, creating and delivering safeguarding training, and embedding a safety and safeguarding culture in numerous humanitarian contexts (particularly the Middle East and central Africa).

She continues to be engaged in numerous safeguarding forums and forms of external representation relevant to the humanitarian sector. She is an independent advisor to the FCDO, sitting on the reference group for PSEA. She is also part of the Advisory Group for the IASC Independent PSEA review and represents CARE as part of the ISCS Thematic Experts Group and the IVCA PSEA Focal Points group. Georgie was also asked to act as a 'subject matter expert' for the Humanitarian Leadership Academy to design an online sector-wide training for safeguarding and PSEA – 'Safeguarding Essentials. Most recently, Georgie led on the creation of guidance of communicating safeguarding and PSEA messages, and ensuring communities had access to safe reporting mechanisms during COVID-19, particularly when people movement is limited, as part of a global network of safeguarding leads.

Prior to working at War Child, Georgie worked with Save the Children UK and Save the Children International in a variety of roles, including Child Safeguarding in Emergencies, working in across East Africa and the Middle East.

Natalia Macdonald, World Food Programme (WFP)

Natalia Macdonald is the Senior Advisor on Protection from Sexual Exploitation (PSEA) at the World Food Programme (WFP). Her work includes the development of PSEA policy and strategy at the global level as well as providing guidance and capacity building support to regional bureaus and country offices. She also leads interagency PSEA engagement for WFP including active participation in the development of global interagency tools and resources for SEA prevention, response and reporting. Natalia has spent the majority of the last 16 years working with the United Nations, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs and consulting firms at the global headquarters level as well as in Afghanistan, DR Congo, Djibouti, Ghana, Kenya, Somalia and Yemen. Natalia is a dual national of Canada and Mexico.

Robyn Mildon, Centre for Evidence and Implementation

Robyn Mildon PhD is the founding executive director of the Centre for Evidence and Implementation (CEI). Robyn is an internationally recognised leader with a long standing career focused on the implementation, mainstreaming, and scaling-up of evidence to achieve social impact for children, families and communities in a range of health and human service areas. She has lead several national, ongoing initiatives aimed at improving the selection, and use of, evidence to in real-world service and policy settings. In addition to her Australian-based work, Robyn has built a portfolio of projects collaborating with both government and non-government agencies in countries such as Singapore, Norway, Sweden, the USA, the UK and New Zealand, and has been a keynote speaker at multiple events around the globe. Robyn was the co-chair of the Global Evidence and Implementation Summit 2018, was the founding chair of the Scientific Program Committee for the first and second Australian Implementation Conference (AIC), and co-chair for the third Biennial Australasian Implementation Conference. She is also the founding co-chair of the Knowledge Translation and Implementation Group with the Campbell Collaboration. Robyn holds an honorary Associate Professorship with the University of Melbourne.

Anny Modi, Afia Mama

Anny Tengandide Modi is a Congolese activist whose areas of intervention are in the promotion of the rights of women and girls who are survivors of gender-based violence as well as those living with HIV/AIDS in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Southern Africa.

She is the Executive Director and Co-Founder of Afia Mama (Women's Health), an organization committed to the reproductive health and access to justice for women, as well leadership development, economic empowerment, legal assistance and social development for young women. Afia Mama's primary objective is around eradicating stigma and discrimination living with HIV/AIDs or who are survivors, and promoting their well-being. She also currently coordinates the Congolese Young Women's Movement, this is a network of almost 400 organizations across the country, that supports young women's integration in decision making positions, peacebuilding processes, and development and humanitarian interventions at all levels.

She was the capacity building manager for the DFID Project in Kinshasa, where she supported the establishment of a girl lead research unit, which used innovative girl led research methods to generate evidence on the needs and barriers faced by adolescent girls in the DRC.

Sophia Pierre-Antoine, International Organization for Migration (IOM)

Sophia PIERRE-ANTOINE is the International Organization for Migration (IOM) as a Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Abuse, and Sexual Harassment Officer (PSEAH Officer) based in Geneva (Headquarters), a position she has held since 2019. Sophia is the global lead responsible for promoting PSEAH Capacity Building and Behaviour Change efforts throughout IOM. Prior to joining IOM, Sophia worked for the YWCA in Haiti and for the World YWCA in Geneva (Headquarters). In these positions, she managed a Women and Girls' Safe Space in Port-Au-Prince, supported on-site and remote project implementation in Cameroon, DRC, Ethiopia, Haiti, and India, and advocated for women's rights at the UN (Commission on Population and Development (CPD), Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and Human Rights Council (HRC)). Her work focused on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), gender-based violence (GBV) including child, early, and forced marriage (CEFM), and young women's and girls' leadership and empowerment. Her efforts were recognized by UN Women, who named her one of the "Six Young Women Leaders to Know" on International Youth Day 2017.She is also the former Co-Chair of the Board of Directors of FRIDA Young Feminist Fund.

Linking youth, gender, and conflict, she contributed to the Progress Study on Youth, Peace, and Security mandated by UN Security Council Resolution 2250. In 2018, Sophia was one of four briefers for the first Open Debate on Youth, Peace, and Security at the UN Security Council.

She holds a Master's degree in Development Studies from the Graduate Institute (IHEID) in Geneva with a focus on Conflict, and a double Bachelors in Women and Gender Studies and in Sociology from Stony Brook University, New York. Her Master's thesis analyzed young feminist activism(s) in relation to intersectional identities, unequal power structures, and peacebuilding.

Sophia is Haitian. She is fluent in English, French and Haitian Creole, and is intermediate in Spanish.

Gry Tina Tinde, International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Tina Tinde is IFRC's Advisor on Prevention and Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. She chairs a Task Force that developed IFRC's PSEA policy adopted in June 2018. She supports Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies globally in developing their own PSEA policies and ensuring a survivor-centred approach. In 2016-18 she was Gender and Diversity Coordinator at the IFRC. She served in two UN peacekeeping operations (Cambodia and Ex-Yugoslavia) and her background covers protection from sexual and gender-based violence in emergencies, development of anti-harassment policies, Code of Conduct training, communications and other international cooperation fields. She was the first Diversity Advisor in human resources at the Inter-American Development Bank, Washington D.C., 2009-12, and Special Advisor on Gender Issues to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Geneva, 2004-09. At UNHCR she co-drafted the UN Secretary General's Comprehensive Strategy on Assistance and Support to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (2007) and chaired an IASC working group on awareness raising and training on PSEA.

Fridah Wawira, Coalition on Violence Against Women

Ms. Fridah works at the Coalition on Violence Against Women (COVAW) as the Programmes and Communications Manager. She is also currently serving as the Acting Executive Director. She is a committed and highly motivated Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Specialist with extensive experience in prevention and response to Sexual and Gender Based Violence, economic empowerment of marginalized groups, Sexual Reproductive Health Rights, safeguarding and child protection and access to justice for vulnerable groups.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work from the University of Nairobi and is currently pursuing a Master of Arts in Human Rights from the same university.

Empowered Aid & The Global Women's Institute Team

Mary Ellsberg, Global Women's Institute

Dr. Mary Ellsberg is the Executive Director and Founding Director of the Global Women's Institute at the George Washington University. Dr. Ellsberg has more than 30 years of experience in international research and programs on gender and development. Before joining the university in August 2012, Dr. Ellsberg served as Vice President for Research and Programs at the International Center for Research on Women. Dr. Ellsberg's deep connection to global gender issues stems not only from her academic work, but also from living in Nicaragua for nearly 20 years, leading public health and women's rights advocacy. She was a member of the core research team of the World Health Organization's Multi-Country Study on Domestic Violence and Women's Heath, and she has authored more than 40 books and articles on violence against women and girls. Dr. Ellsberg earned a doctorate in epidemiology and public health from Umea University in Sweden and a bachelor's degree in Latin American studies from Yale University.

Alina Potts, Global Women's Institute

Alina Potts is a Research Scientist with the Global Women's Institute at the George Washington University, where she aims to center women and girls in asking and answering questions around how to better address gender-based violence (GBV) in humanitarian settings. Previously, Alina coordinated violence prevention research at UNICEF and explored intersections between GBV and child protection in emergencies. As a practitioner, Alina led GBV programming for the International Rescue Committee in a number of humanitarian responses over the last 10+ years—including Bangladesh (Cox's Bazar), Lebanon, Syria, DR Congo, Kenya (Dadaab) and Sudan (Darfur). Her experience in forced migration extends to refugee resettlement in the US; asylum advocacy in Europe; and addressing grave violations in conflict settings.

Alina holds a BA in Anthropology and International Development from Boston University and a Master's of Public Health in Forced Migration and Health from Columbia University. She welcomes opportunities for shared learning, and teaches graduate classes on GBV in complex emergencies.

Andrea Koris, Global Women's Institute

Andrea Koris is a Senior Research Associate with the Global Women's Institute at George Washington University. As a practitioner, she brings over a decade of experience supporting community-based and transnational initiatives responding to gender-based violence and supporting the health and bodily integrity of women and girls across the U.S. border-Mexico border, Central America and East Africa. As a mixed methods researcher she is specialized in trauma-informed, participatory qualitative methods and facilitating participatory data analysis. She is a published author on various topics including novel methods of gender-based violence prevention; adolescent sexual and reproductive health; and decolonizing aid and donor governance.

Andrea holds a MSc in Global Health from Duke University. In addition to focusing on GBV research she works as a full spectrum doula, and is interested in the impacts of climate change on preventing sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian aid, on GBV risk mitigation and response, and on maternal, sexual, and reproductive health access writ large.

Jessie Weber, Global Women's Institute

Jessie Weber is a Research Associate with the Global Women's Institute at the George Washington University. She has been working with various grassroots efforts to support displaced populations across Europe since 2020, and previously worked as a coordinator for child safeguarding in northern France with Project Play and partner organizations prior to joining GWI. Within the US, she has seven years of experience volunteering with grassroots organizations supporting immigrant populations across the northeast and has a professional background in legal and psychosocial support for veteran populations, including two years working with the Center for Integrated Healthcare to support behavioral health treatments for post-traumatic stress and substance use disorders.

She holds a BA in Government concentrating in International Relations from Cornell University, and a Master in Public Health concentrating in Humanitarian Health from the George Washington University. Her professional interests center on bridging gaps of accountability to and collaboration with affected populations in research and programming, and on the inherent right of all people to accessible, individually-adapted health services, including mental health and psychosocial support.

Amal Hassan, Global Women's Institute

Amal works as a Research Assistant at The Global Women's Institute (GWI) at the George Washington University. She supports the institute's Research Scientists through various projects focusing on sexual exploitation and abuse, violence against women and girls, and the prevention of gender-based violence in humanitarian and emergency contexts.
Amal's unique experiences as a first-generation Somali American has guided her interests in the intersection between maternal & child health and safeguarding women and girls in humanitarian contexts. Amal's research interests include the impact of climate change on gender-based violence and the use of culturally sensitive and trauma informed approaches to reduce the maternal & child health gap in African-immigrant communities.

Amal holds a Bachelor of Science in Public Health from the George Washington University. She is currently pursuing a Master in Public Health (MPH) concentrating in Maternal & Child Health at the Milken Institute of Public Health at the George Washington University.