

## Participants Biographies



**Mahesh Admankar** holds an M.A. degree in economics from the University of Hyderabad with a focus on development policy, human rights, social exclusion and sustainability. He has previously worked as a risk analyst focusing on operational and regulatory risks at HSBC and as a research assistant for a public national education project at the University of Hyderabad. He has also worked at the INEB Institute in Thailand, teaching students from disadvantaged and conflict zones in Asia. Currently, he is an Independent researcher studying the development-induced displacement of tribes in India, impoverished youth access to education, discrimination in labor markets, gender discrimination in job market and financial exclusion of marginalized communities. He is also affiliated to the social movement organizations Swaeroes, Nagaloka, BSF and BSPC.



**Elizabeth Asiimwe** holds a M.Phil. in comparative and International Education from the University of Oslo, Norway. She has experience in designing and implementing M&E systems for programs in national and international organizations. Elizabeth currently works with the Democratic Governance Facility as a results and communication unit manager where she has helped solidify the M&E system and development of and operationalization of the Facilities' Communication Strategy and Guidance. She is currently participating in the design of a five-year program aimed at enhancing good governance in Uganda and her interest is in Monitoring and Evaluation as well as ensuring integration of marginalized citizens (including indigenous people). Prior to this, she had worked at the Jinja District Health Department where she spearheaded the establishment of the M&E system. Elizabeth has guided a district health team to refine the mission, vision, goals and core values of the health department. She has worked with AMREF Health Africa, AVSI, Care International in Uganda and Save the Children.



**Brianna Boxwall** is indigenous Maori and whakapapa (descend) from two Iwi (tribes) known as Ngati Hine of the far North Island and Rongomaiwahine on the Far East coast of New Zealand. She holds dual degrees in Law and Arts. She works as a legal advisor at the Waitangi Tribunal in Wellington. The Tribunal was set up in New Zealand as a commission of inquiry that makes recommendations on claims brought by Maori people and Iwi, relating to any prejudice, policies, or actions of the Crown that allege to break the promises made in the Treaty of Waitangi of 1840. Brianna also works as a legal advisor to the High Judges and Waitangi Panel. She is looking forward to learning from the wide-ranging experiences available in ISSP and to taking this knowledge to share it with those from her tribes.



**Pearl Brower** holds a Ph.D. in Indigenous Studies, with an emphasis in Indigenous Leadership from the University of Alaska Fairbanks. She is currently the President of Iñisaḡvik College, Alaska's only Tribal College. She has been with the College since 2007 working in External Relations, Institutional Advancement, Student Services, and Marketing. Prior to working for the College, Pearl managed an education and culture grant for the North Slope Borough for three years and worked as the Museum Curator of the Iñupiat Heritage Center. She was named one of Alaska's Top 40 Under 40 in 2015. Pearl is active in her community in Barrow, on the North Slope and statewide. She is Board Member of the Friends of Tuzzy Library and is a co-founder of Leadership:Barrow. She serves on the Wells Fargo Community Advisory Board, serves as the Vocational/Tribal representative on the Alaska Postsecondary Access and Completion Network, serves on the Alaska Airlines Community Advisory Board and on the Foraker Group's Operations Board.



**Anurag Ekka** is a doctoral student at the Centre for the Study of Law and Governance at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi (India). His research focuses on tribal and indigenous studies, human rights, legal pluralism and social justice. He is currently working on the topic “Contesting Social Justice: Politics of Recognition and Redistribution among Adivasis in Jharkhand.” Anurag believes this study will provide perspective in the dynamics of participation, representation, recognition, redistribution and social justice claims in the context of adivasis in Jharkhand. He has also done research on marriage, property and inheritance in Jharkhand, which aimed to identify different sets of laws and multiple coexisting legal systems within the social circles of Oraon Adivasis in Jharkhand. Anurag aims to continue working on academic and social research.



**Eva Fjellheim** is a south sami from the sami town Røros in central Norway. She lives in Oslo and works as an advisor for indigenous issues, primarily within the area of education, for the International Assistance Fund of the Norwegian Students and Academics (SAIH). Eva has studied, volunteered and worked in Mexico, Guatemala and Argentina on rights issues, mostly with NGOs or indigenous movements. Her work has mostly been focused on extractive industries in conflict with IPs rights, also as they relate to Norwegian investments. In Norway, Eva has worked with sami issues through research and political participation. She is currently a deputy representative at the sami parliament and involved with solidarity and activist work through the Norwegian Solidarity Committee for Latin-America (LAG).





**Rebecca Fullan** is a Ph.D. candidate in English at the Graduate Center, CUNY. Her dissertation, *Eating the Heart of Weetigo World: Decolonial Imaginaries in the Stories of Louise Erdrich and Tomson Highway*, explores the way Indigenous stories can reveal other worlds that change the terms and reframe the institutions of settler colonialism. Other academic interests include medievalisms, speculative fiction, especially Afrofuturism, and ecocriticism. She's taught literature and composition at La Guardia Community College and John Jay College, worked as a Writing Across the Curriculum Fellow with the Environmental Justice minor at John Jay, and currently serves as an Instructional Technology Fellow with the Macaulay Honors College.



**Tashi Tsering Ghale-Dolpo** is an independent researcher who belongs to Dolpo, one of the remotest Himalayan Indigenous communities of Nepal. He holds a Master's degree in political science from Tribhuvan University in Nepal. His MA thesis was 'Interactions between Customary Institutions and Local Election in Dolpo'. He has worked and assisted in building the ethnographic profile of Dolpo, funded by the National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN). Tashi has also published articles, book chapters and op-ed articles in Nepal's newspapers and also online. In addition, he has also presented his research at local and international conferences.



**Deanne Grant** is a member of the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma and is currently a PhD candidate in Ethnic Studies at the University of Colorado Boulder. Her research interests are: Indigenous Feminisms, Critical Indigenous Studies and Native American Women. Deanne holds one master's degree in International Studies from the University of Oregon and another in Indigenous Governance from the University of Victoria, Canada. She has served as a circle of scholars administrator with the American Indian College Fund, and as a community economic development manager with the Native American Youth & Family Center. Deanne has also interned with the Tibetan Women's Association in India, Free the Children in Kenya and the Pawnee Nation College in Pawnee, Oklahoma. Deanne grew up in Stillwater, Oklahoma. She currently calls Gold Hill, Colorado, home.



**Sarah Griffin** is an Australian lawyer living and working in London. She works in the areas of Corporate & Commercial and Banking & Finance law. Prior, she volunteered and worked in Indigenous legal affairs in three States and Territories in Australia in the areas of criminal law and Native Title. Throughout the last decade, she has been involved in community programs often catering to Indigenous Australian clients, particularly young people and adults involved in the Australian criminal justice system. Sarah's interest in weaving has also led her to spend time in a remote Indigenous Australian community as a student of the female weavers. As a non-Indigenous Australian, she considers it a privilege to be afforded the opportunity to be involved in Indigenous Australian affairs and is conscious of approaching her involvement with the requisite cultural sensitivity and respect. Whilst residing overseas, Sarah's focus is to increase her knowledge of global human rights and social justice affairs to eventually return to Australia with a broadened perspective. She is excited by the prospect of doing so, specifically in relation to Indigenous affairs, through participation in the Indigenous Studies Summer Program 2017.



**Anu Krishna** is a doctoral student at the School of Development Studies at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Mumbai. Her research focuses on the concept of 'Tribal Settlements'- its interconnectedness to the spice trade and settler migration in the Cardamom Hills of India. She earned her Master of Philosophy and Master of Arts in Development Studies degrees also from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences. Her research and publications centers on the history of land alienations and contemporaneity of relegation of the identity, self and existence of the indigenous people in the south Indian state of Kerala, which is recognized as the 'model state' of the country.



**Tonii Lerat** is a Cree woman from Cowessess First Nation, a small Indigenous community located in Southern Saskatchewan, Canada (signatory to Treaty #4). She currently lives and works in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Tonii is a professional community planner specializing in First Nation community development. She has experience working with Indigenous communities and organizations in Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Ontario, Manitoba, and Nova Scotia. In addition to First Nations community planning, her range of knowledge and experience includes community consultation, economic development, land use planning, First Nation traditional knowledge, and policy development. In taking a collaborative approach and supporting community outreach methodologies, Tonii has assisted several communities in developing long range sustainable strategies that resonate strongly with members.





**Ja Aung Lu** is a human rights advocate from Burma/Myanmar. She is a Program Manager and member of the faculty at the Humanity Institute at the Kachinland School of Arts and Sciences, and lecturer in International Advocacy and Networking at the Naushawng Community School. Aung received her bachelor's degree in law from Myitkyina University and was awarded the Humphrey Fellowship which she made use of while attend the University of Minnesota Law School. Last year, she was a visiting scholar at the Institute for the Study of Human Rights (ISHR) at Columbia University. Aung received the Kachin Hero of the Year award in 2007 for her involvement in the "Stop Building Myitsone Dam" signature campaign. She has developed training curricula and more than 100 training programs with various groups of participants at both the community and governmental levels. Aung has collaborated with hundreds of human rights activists and educators both locally and internationally.



**Jennifer Millet-Barrett** is the president of Dream On International, a nonprofit organization that combats gender-based violence and human trafficking in West Africa. Previously, Jennifer established and was the president of Orphans' Heroes, a nonprofit organization that facilitated projects in several African nations. Jennifer's work in West Africa over the last 10 years has involved prevention programs, protection of survivors, and prosecution of perpetrators. At Orphans' Heroes, Jennifer collaborated with officials in government institutions and agencies, tribal elders, and private NGOs to advance the well-being of women and children. In 2010, Jennifer was recognized by queens and chiefs of the Volta Region in a ceremony and was named a Development Queen of Hohoe. In 2013, Jennifer received a humanitarian award from the National Council of Ghanaian Associations and the Ghana Consulate of New York. Jennifer holds a BA from the University of New Hampshire and a BA of Fine Arts from the University of New Mexico. Jennifer is also a licensed practitioner of Traditional Chinese Medicine. She is currently attending Columbia University to earn an MA in Human Rights Studies. Jennifer and her husband, Bill, adopted their sons — Mensah, Koku, and Godsway — from Ghana.



**Sharon Nakanwagi** holds an MA in organizational leadership and management from Uganda Christian University in Mukono, Uganda. She has worked as regional coordinator of a USAID project overseeing the mainstreaming of HIV and AIDS activities for public servants and has served as program coordinator for a World Vision project aimed at development interventions in health, education, water and sanitation and child sponsorship. Sharon has also worked as a coordinator at Orphans and Vulnerable Children's (OVC), providing capacity development to community care teams, local government and agencies to ensure effective response and intervention for OVC and families affected by HIV and AIDS. While working for World Vision, Sharon served the Batwa tribe, addressing their land and socio-economic issues. Sharon is also an HIV researcher and her work has helped shape policy aimed at improving access to health services for marginalized groups. Sharon is currently managing a Gender Based Violence project at Bidi budi, the world's largest refugee camp.



**Piia Nuorgam** is a Saami lawyer from Utsjoki, located on the Finnish side of the Saami area, near the Norwegian border. She is a PhD candidate and is currently working as a researcher at the Law School in the University of Lapland. Her thesis focuses on the Saami peoples' fundamental right to one's own culture and language. She is a member of the Saami Council and a board member of the Sami Artist Council and the local Saami association Mii in Rovaniemi. More recently, she has been working on issues related to Saami education and Saami language in urban areas as well as the trademark renewal of laws protecting traditional Saami crafts.





## Tukummingguaq Nykjær Olsen

**(Tuku)** comes from Qaanaaq, a northernmost settlement in Greenland. Tuku is a graduate student in Social Science at the University of Greenland and is currently participating in an exchange program at Alaska University of Fairbanks, where she is taking courses on Rural Development. She is also an apprentice at the Inuit Circumpolar Council of Greenland (ICC) which advocates for Inuit indigenous rights. She is looking forward to meet and learn from all ISSP participants.



**Rachael Grace Patten** is a filmmaker, entrepreneur and current student at Columbia University's School of General Studies. She is majoring in Political Science with a focus on International Politics and Political Theory. Her short film, "Sumi," played at the Cannes Film Festival Short Corner, the Cinequest Film Festival, the Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival and the Lower East Side Film Festival. It can be viewed on TV in Europe, Seed&Spark.com and PlayFestFilms app. She was also the founder and COO of Nibblers, NYC, a gourmet chocolate company. She was born in Taipei, grew up in California, and has lived in NYC for over ten years.



**Renata Ryan Burchfield** is a first year PhD in the English department at the University of Colorado Boulder. I focus on Native American Literature, Film, and New Media. Specifically, I look at how process and performative sovereignties are expressed in creative cultural production and how that then lends to greater tribal self-determination. I also look at how new media platforms allow for greater Indigenous political efficacy on the world stage by making transnational Indigenous alliances while also allowing greater Indigenous control of their own narratives.



**Elvera Sargent** Konwanahktotani (Elvera), is of the Snipe Clan of the Mohawk Nation of Akwesasne. Elvera is enjoying her life as she resides near her children and grandchildren. Elvera is passionate of her Mohawk language and culture and has a strong belief that all Indigenous languages are the key to the survival of Onkwehonwe (First Peoples) and their identities. Elvera is honored to be the administrator of the Akwesasne Freedom School, an independent school that immerses its children in the Mohawk language and culture that also includes agricultural practices into the teachings. She also manages the Friends of the Akwesasne Freedom School, a nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring a prosperous future to the students of the school. Elvera is an active participant of the Mohawk Nation community.



**Kimberly Terrance** is an Indigenous community development advocate. After immersing herself in an all-embracing cultural education for nearly a decade, she feels she understands the winding path to individual and collective healing. The daughter of a Deaf mother, Kimberly strongly advocates for the Native American and international Deaf communities. She owns a marketing company is co-founder of Project Good Mind, a not-for-profit that provides access to cultural teachings that foster peace, pride and unity. Kimberly holds a BS in Business Administration from SUNY Potsdam and a professional business certificate from Columbia University. She is an enrolled member of the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe and a member of the Mohawks of Akwesasne.



**Rlthu Tapa** is an indigenous advocate, human right defender and activist. She has been working with indigenous peoples to raise awareness about their rights and responsibilities. She provides free legal aid to indigenous peoples and aware of indigenous peoples rights and duties that are fulfilled through legal procedure if violated.





**Samantha Wauls** (Kul Wicasa Lakota/African American) is a California native, currently living in Washington DC. She graduated from California State University, Northridge (CSUN) with a degree in Africana Studies, and a minor in American Indian Studies. Her professional career starts in Phoenix, Arizona, where she worked on disparities in behavioral health and healthcare adversely impacting people of color communities with the nonprofit People of Color Network. Samantha then joined Teach For America's South Dakota Region, where she taught high school English and 3rd grade on the Lower Brule Sioux Reservation, her maternal grandmother's tribal community. In the summer of 2014, she was selected as a Leadership for Educational Equity Policy and Advocacy Fellow. As a Fellow, she worked on various education policy issues while placed with American Youth Policy Forum in Washington, DC. It was at this time she realized her next path, which was tackling issues impacting Indian Country at the national level. She relocated to Washington, DC in September 2015 and joined The Education Trust as a Research Intern. Samantha now works with the National Center for Victims of Crime as a Project Coordinator, where she leads the Vision 21: Tribal Victim Services Resource Mapping Project.