

POLICY LEADER FELLOWS

2023-24





Shamira Ahmed

Fellowship period: 1 September 2023 – 30 June 2024

Shamira Ahmed is the executive director of the Data Economy Policy Hub (DepHUB), the first independent think-tank founded by an indigenous African woman in South Africa. She is also the founder of Artificial Intelligence for Circularity Exchange (AI4CE), a platform created to promote diverse perspectives for an AI-led just green-digital “twin transition” to support the circular economy model (CEM), in Africa. The DepHUB is a founding partner of the South African AI Association (SAAIA) and a member of the Digital for Development (D4D) Hub Civil Society & Academia Advisory Group (CSAAG).

Shamira is a policy entrepreneur, experienced quantitative economist, and interdisciplinary public policy and research specialist. She has a track record of leading multi-country research projects, managing the data value chain, and producing high-quality knowledge outputs, which includes co-authorship of public interest knowledge outputs such as the African Union Commission's Data Policy Framework. Shamira has worked in multicultural, multidisciplinary, and dynamic work environments in the transnational policy-knowledge ecosystem for more than a decade.

As a Policy Leader Fellow, her work will focus on the multidimensional aspects of multilateral data governance for sustainable digital development, with a focus on the digital trade protocols of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement.



Nicolas Azocar Rojel

Fellowship period: 1 September 2023 – 30 June 2024

Nicolas Azocar has a multidisciplinary background in international development and decentralised cooperation, advising cities on resource mobilisation, public-private partnerships and climate change. He has more than 12 years of working experience in the international sector with the UN system and multilateral banks, and in the public sector at national and local levels in different leading positions. In 2013, he was awarded as one of the 25 Social Innovators in Latin America by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

Nicolas is a Lawyer and holds two MsC in Sustainability from the University of Geneva, Switzerland and in Public Policy from Tsinghua University, China. In addition, he studied in India and Puerto Rico. He is fluent in Spanish and English, advanced Portuguese, conversational Greek, and is learning Italian.

Lately, Nicolas has been working with the Arsht-Rockefeller Foundation on implementing a fund to finance cities in increasing the capacity of adaptation to the impacts of climate change. As a Policy Leader Fellow, he will work to expand that support and develop policy recommendations and practical tools for tackling the challenge of cities climate finance, such as the establishment of a Green Cities Development Bank to help subnational governments unlock resources to finance climate action.



Fazila Beknazarova

Fellowship period: 1 February 2024 – 30 June 2024

Fazila Beknazarova is a policymaker and sustainable development goals practitioner. She has developed and implemented long-term climate adaptation capacity to strengthen the National Adaptation Plan and National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for Tajikistan.

She holds a Master's degree in International Relations and Public Policy and has more than ten years of experience across private sectors and international organisations, focusing on policy development for climate change adaptation and ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction.

As a Policy Leader Fellow, she aspires to develop a contextually relevant assessment tool for carbon pricing policy under the "Towards a Sustainable Recovery: Carbon Pricing Policy as a Mechanism to Control Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Tajikistan and its Gradual Expansion across Central Asia" project in collaboration with the European University Institute, University of Central Asia, Committee for Environmental Protection under the Government of Tajikistan and the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tajikistan.



Wojciech Białożył

Fellowship period: 1 September 2023 – 30 June 2024

Wojciech Białożył is a policy analyst and think-tank executive with extensive experience gained in Poland and on the European Union level. Most recently, he served as Policy Development Adviser on democracy and security at ALDE Party in Brussels advising political leadership of ALDE at the time of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Since 2019, he serves as Member of the Management Board of the Bronisław Geremek Foundation in Warsaw, a body named after Poland's democracy architect and visionary European. He represents the Foundation in the EP Network of Political Houses and Foundations of Great Europeans as well as in the Warsaw Committee of the Garden of the Righteous.

Prior to that, Wojciech worked as Managing Director of WiseEuropa, a Warsaw-based think-tank devoted to research in areas of European policies. His passion for history found its realisation while serving as Managing Director of Jan Karski Educational Foundation, a Polish American public diplomacy endeavour, devoted to safeguarding the legacy of the first eyewitness of the Holocaust who reached the Allies and spoke truth to power in times of global conflict.

Wojciech's fellowship will expand on his most recent work concerning the place of democracy in the European security architecture. He will focus on designing a conceptual policy framework for a think-tank programme that will place democracy at the heart of European security strategy.

Wojciech graduated from Executive Master of Public Administration at Hertie School in Berlin and International School of Political Science at the University of Silesia in Katowice.



Alexander Borum

Fellowship period: 1 February 2024 – 30 June 2024

Alexander Borum is an expert in security affairs and works mainly in the thematic areas of security sector governance and reform, capacity building and security policy. As a deployable crisis management expert, he is attached to the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Deployment Facility for Peace and Democracy. He has served in Somalia since 2021, most recently as the EU Advisor on Political and Security Affairs.

Alexander holds an Advanced Master of Science in International Relations & Diplomacy from Leiden University/Clingendael Institute, a Master in International Leadership and Negotiations from Universitat Europea de València/UNITAR, and a Bachelor of Social Science from Tallinn University. His fundamental interests include climate security, emerging threats, conflict management, asymmetric conflicts, hybrid warfare, and fragile state diplomacy.

As a Policy Leader Fellow at the European University Institute, Alexander works on advancing state-of-the-art European Common Security and Defense engagements in light of the EU Strategic Compass and the desire to advance EU strategic security interests and EU strategic autonomy.



Malvina Condratiuc

Fellowship period: 1 September 2023 – 31 January 2024

Malvina Condratiuc specialises in conflict resolution, being engaged in the negotiation process for the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict. She is a member of the Bureau of Reintegration policies under the Deputy Prime Minister for Reintegration of the Republic of Moldova. Her work contributes to the implementation of national thematic policies aimed at facilitating the settlement process, ensuring respect for the rights of Moldovan citizens living in the conflict zone, and developing the legislative framework for reintegrating the region into the country's legal system.

As a Policy Leader Fellow, Malvina is interested in studying aspects of peace and security in Europe, examining the risks of the Transnistrian conflict escalating, as well as the opportunities for tackling common regional threats by enhancing Moldova-EU cooperation in the Transnistrian resolution process.



Harpreet Dhody

Fellowship period: 1 February 2024 – 30 June 2024

Harpreet Dhody is a strategic communication expert with diverse interests including politics, startups, education and non-profits. Harpreet is the former digital media and public policy communication advisor to the Government of Chhattisgarh (India) and has advised several Cabinet Ministers and Chief Ministers of an Indian state on social media, political communication and election campaign management. Harpreet is also the communication advisor at SOS Children's Villages of India, advising it on ways to improve its donor communication to raise more funds.

Harpreet is a frequent public speaker and has spoken at elite Indian institutions, including the Indian Institute of Management, Indian Institute of Technology, National Law School and Tedx, on entrepreneurship, career planning and political communication. Harpreet is also a serial entrepreneur and has scaled and failed half a dozen ventures over the last two decades in e-commerce, EdTech, social media, and K12. He also enjoys mentoring young entrepreneurs. Harpreet was the founding curator of Raipur Hub of Global Shapers under the aegis of the World Economic Forum. Harpreet is an avid reader and loves to read across genres. Academically, Harpreet is an electrical engineer and has an MBA from the University of Oxford.

As a Policy Leader Fellow at the EUI, Harpreet shall endeavour to create a blueprint and advocacy paper for setting up a digital media observatory in India learning from the experience of the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO).



Tarila Ebiede

Fellowship period: 1 February 2024 – 30 June 2024

Tarila Marclint Ebiede is a Political Scientist. He is Director of the Conflict Research Network West Africa, Abuja, Nigeria, a multi-disciplinary network for peace and conflict studies scholars based in West Africa. He conducts academic and policy research on political violence, intra-state armed conflict, peacebuilding, (in)security in Nigeria. He works on the long-term socio-political consequences of violent conflicts, especially the reintegration of ex-combatants into people and communities. He has conducted policy research and advisory for the European Union, United Nations Office on Drug and Crime, British Council, Saferworld, United States Institute for Peace (USIP) and European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM). He holds a Ph.D. in Social Sciences from KU Leuven, Belgium.

As a Policy Leader Fellow, his work will focus on the European Union's (EU) policy and programmatic responses to maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. His project at the EUI will pay specific attention to the extent to which the EU seeks to address/or engage with the root causes of maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, especially the security governance of coastal communities in Nigeria's Niger Delta and piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. Through this project, he will present policy recommendations on EU's continuous response to maritime (in)security in the Gulf of Guinea and identify context-specific opportunities for intervention in security governance in the Niger Delta that are coherent with the EU's values, policies and interests.



Virginia Fiume

Fellowship period: 1 September 2023 – 30 June 2024

Virginia Fiume is a nonviolent activist and, since 2019, the co-founder of the citizens' movement EUMANS alongside the Italian former MEP Marco Cappato. In March 2022, she was elected co-president in Warsaw, Poland, where she coordinated "The Open Congress for Sustainable Peace, Democracy and Freedom" during the first weeks of the war in Ukraine.

Her project, "Syndicating Insurgent Europeans", she will work on during her time as a Policy Leader Fellow, focuses on the development of a European political-digital ecosystem based on nonviolent praxis and participatory democracy to politicise the European Public Sphere ahead of the European Elections 2024.

In the past four years, she coordinated the European Citizens Initiative "stopglobalwarming.eu - A price on carbon to fight climate change" and many popular and nonviolent initiatives to strengthen democracy stemming from the process of the Conference on the Future of Europe with the organisations Science for Democracy and EUMANS and the coalition Citizens Take Over Europe.

Over the summer of 2021, she was among 16.000 activists who collected 1,2 million signatures for the Referendum for the legalisation of Euthanasia in Italy. Her previous professional experience is in journalism and digital media in London, Canada and the Middle East.



Eliot Jori

Fellowship period: 1 February 2024 – 30 June 2024

Eliot Jori is a registered town planner in Zimbabwe. His experience covers environmental justice, land-use planning, regional integration, development cooperation, climate change and renewable energy. He is well exposed to policy formulation for sustainable development, integration of renewable energy in the built environment and regional development.

His aspiration is the advancement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in a well-coordinated peaceful global society. His research mainly focuses on renewable energy, urban or peri-urban agriculture and climate change. Eliot holds a Masters's Degree in Development Management and a Bachelor's Degree in Rural and Urban Planning. He is a member of the Zimbabwe Institute of Regional and Urban Planners.

His fellowship work topic is to assess the European Union (EU) and Southern Africa Development Community's (SADC) energy development pathways with special emphasis on renewable energy policies.



Carolyn Kandusi

Fellowship period: 1 September 2023 – 31 January 2024

Carolyn Kandusi is a social development enthusiast, entrepreneur, and government advisor based out of Tanzania with her work running across East and Southern Africa. Currently, she serves as a regional program officer for Segal Family Foundation, an impact investor based out of New Jersey.

Carolyn aspires to use the Policy Leader Fellowship to articulate a vision to improve partnerships for development within the government of Tanzania and Malawi by influencing expanding public-private partnerships to public private and social partnerships by promoting the utilisation of innovative programmes and social enterprises that respond to pressing needs for sustainable community social economic development. She will collaborate with Tanzania and Malawi's Public-Private Partnership Commissions to achieve the work plan.



Mine Kösem Çınay

Fellowship period: 1 February 2024 – 30 June 2024

Mine Kösem Çınay is a gender equality specialist with diverse experience, ranging from social protection to policy development. She worked in Beşiktaş Municipality for ten years. During this term, she played a leading role in the localisation of gender equality. By adopting a feminist social work approach, she developed social protection mechanisms and services against gender-based violence. She established first, the Women's Directorate, then the Women's Solidarity&Life Center which is a bipedal social support mechanism serving women, children, youth and LGBTQ+ individuals. Beyond this, she determined the local policy of gender equality. Within the scope of localisation advocacy, Mine developed communication materials and organised social media campaigns and public events to raise awareness for gender equality. She also drafted policy papers, speech notes and other documents for politicians in the municipality.

Mine holds a Master's Degree in Social Policy from the Boğaziçi University. She graduated by defending her thesis titled 'Working Beyond Pension Age In Turkey: A Qualitative Analysis From A Life Course Perspective'. Besides her expertise, she has diverse political interests in social movements, labor, and aging.

As a Policy Leader Fellow, she will explore best practices of gender governance in the world and European Union (EU) policies that ensure women's participation in politics and decision-making processes, and the role of transnational actors in the implementation of these policies. Through this project, she aims to present policy recommendations with a comparative perspective on gender inequality in Turkey by examining examples of good gender governance around the world.



Umberto Marengo

Fellowship period: 1 February 2024 – 30 June 2024

Umberto Marengo is a Strategy Manager at British International Investments, having previously worked for The Economist Group and Boston Consulting Group. He holds a Ph.D. in Politics and International Studies from the University of Cambridge. He is a development finance professional with wide academic interests including sustainable finance, impact investing and EU trade policy.

At the Florence STG, he wants to explore how development finance institutions and private impact investors conceptualise “development impact” and “market creation”, and the ways in which those underpinnings translate into operational objectives and assessments. His goal is to support harmonisation between approaches used by public and private impact investors.



Yen Mooi

Fellowship period: 1 September 2023 – 31 January 2024

Yen Mooi is currently a Senior Economist at the International Monetary Fund. She has worked on a range of issues including macro-fiscal linkages, financial sector vulnerabilities, financial inclusion, debt management and debt market development. Her prior work experience includes multilateral institutions (such as the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation) as well as the Central Bank of Malaysia. She obtained her undergraduate degree at the London School of Economics and Political Science, and graduate degrees at Oxford University and the Harvard Kennedy School.

As a Policy Leader Fellow, she is interested in exploring the topics of migration, financial inclusion, and digital finance through a multidisciplinary lens. In her free time, she is an avid artist and enjoys hiking.



Sona Muzikarova

Fellowship period: 1 February 2024 – 30 June 2024

Sona Muzikarova is a political economist, policy advisor, and consultant, focused on the region of Central and Eastern Europe. She is an Eisenhower 2023 Fellow and a Nonresident Fellow at the Atlantic Council. She previously served as senior advisor to the Foreign Affairs Secretary of State (2020-2023) and the National Bank of Slovakia's governor (2020-2021). As chief economist at Globsec, she founded a policy research programme and made strides in economic policy advocacy (2020-2022). Prior to that, Sona led the Slovak Presidency to the OECD in 2019 as chief advisor. She was also a macroeconomist focused on EU's non-Euro countries at the European Central Bank (2012-2016). Sona covers CEE for The Economist Intelligence Unit and Oxford Analytica and her commentary has been featured by the Financial Times, Politico, and Project Syndicate, and aired by BBC, Bloomberg, and Sky News, among others.

As a Policy Leader Fellow, she will explore the European Economic Community (CEE) industrial transformation against present geo-economic challenges.



Jeremiah Nyambinya

Fellowship period: 1 September 2023 – 30 June 2024

Jeremiah Nyambinya is an entrepreneurial programme and project management professional from Kenya, East Africa, with over 20 years of experience in agribusiness, real estate development and construction, energy, hospitality management and management consulting. Jeremiah is a Project Management Professional, PMP, and certification holder from the Project Management Institute, Inc. United States of America; a Certified Public Accountant, CPA, graduate from Strathmore University and Bachelor of Science in Mathematics and Chemistry graduate from University of Nairobi. He has worked, as a private sector partner, on agricultural public-private policy dialogues in East Africa supported by Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, AGRA, that led to the transformation of Uganda's National Fertilizer Policy.

As a Policy Leader Fellow, he will work on global engagements with food systems policy experts and practitioners involved in digitisation initiatives as drivers of sustainable food systems policies.



Elizabeth O'Brien

Fellowship period: 1 September 2023 – 30 June 2024

Elizabeth O'Brien is an Irish-Australian disarmament expert. As a Policy Leader Fellow, she will explore novel ways to regulate Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, with a focus on design thinking and the problem-solving approaches used in technology firms.

She has previously held roles within the Australian Department of Defence, the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance, the Permanent Mission of Ireland in Geneva (where she worked to develop the Political Declaration on the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas), and most recently the Arms Trade Treaty Secretariat.



Anna Sigurveig Ragnarsdóttir

Fellowship period: 1 September 2023 – 30 June 2024

Anna Sigurveig Ragnarsdóttir is a climate policy specialist with diverse experience, reaching from domestic policymaking to international cooperation through the European Union, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and other cooperative entities. She holds a master's in Environment and natural resources from the University of Iceland and works at the Ministry for Environment, Energy and Climate.

Anna has taken on various climate issues, mostly regarding the mitigation of climate change, as the leading expert of Iceland's climate action plan. Other issues include legislation on climate neutrality, climate evaluation of legislation and engaging business sectors in mitigation of climate change. Anna played a leading role in the establishment of the Icelandic Climate Council.

As a Policy Leader Fellow, she will examine the outputs of the Global Stocktake and Mitigation Work programme of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, taking experience from the Icelandic context.



Julia Savchenko

Fellowship period: 1 September 2023 – 30 June 2024

Julia Savchenko is a journalist, TV anchor and media manager with two decades of experience internationally. Her roles included producing TV and radio shows for the BBC World Service in London, Moscow and Washington and Voice of America and Radio Free Europe in Washington and Prague, serving as Moscow Bureau Chief for VOANews, as well as carrying out research on media and democracy at the National Endowment for Democracy in Washington, the Center for Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law of the Stanford University and the Austrian Academy of Peace. Her current role at the Voice of America is as Senior Editor.

For the last eight years, she has been responsible for the full-cycle production of the signature TV show ITOGI – the flagship show of the Voice of America and Current Time TV Chanel. It serves the purpose of providing quality balanced journalism, thus countering disinformation in countries where access to balanced reporting is limited. ITOGI regularly gathers multi-million audiences and is well-recognized in the Eastern and Central European TV markets. Julia holds five Journalism Excellence awards from the US Agency for International Media.

As a Policy Leader Fellow, she will examine the challenges for journalism and mass media in times of information disorder and will address the question of how to effectively tackle disinformation on the level of national states without sacrificing democratic values and audiences' trust in mass-media in the context of geopolitical confrontations.



Abbas Sibai

Fellowship period: 1 September 2023 – 30 June 2024

Abbas Sibai is a public policy advocate, implementation entrepreneur, and community development practitioner with over 15 years of experience using participatory action and inclusive policy design in the EURO Mediterranean region, the UK, the USA, and Russia. His expertise lies in youth empowerment, community development, and advocacy for social change, addressing political polarisation to championing tobacco control and sustainable tourism. Abbas was selected as a Leader for Democracy Fellow by the US State Department's MEPI Program and served as a research fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, DC, focusing on youth leadership post-Arab Spring. After the 2006 war in Lebanon, he co-founded "Aie Serve," a youth-led initiative combating political and sectarian divides among Lebanese youth. Abbas's advocacy work contributed to the National Youth Policy. In addition, his grassroots efforts within the Rotaract Club were pivotal in passing landmark anti-smoking/ tobacco control legislation (Law 174). Later, in 2012, he was recruited by the Ministry of Public Health in Lebanon and appointed the technical focal point for the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC).

Parallel to his work, Abbas co-founded "Live Love Lebanon" in 2012, fostering positive communities through innovative projects in waste management, youth engagement, and sustainable tourism, notably after the 2020 Beirut Blast, the organisation represented civil society at Lebanon's Reform, Recovery, and Reconstruction Framework (3RF) which is structured around four strategic pillars, i) improving governance and accountability, ii) jobs and opportunities, iii) social protection, inclusion and culture, iv) improving services and infrastructure.

He currently holds positions as Lebanon Chairperson, Global Board member of Fast Forward 2030, and Associate Member of Catalyst 2030 to enable young entrepreneurs to use the power of businesses to accelerate change and create prosperity for all through peer-to-peer learning, capacity building and collective partnership advancing the sustainable development goals.

As a Policy Leader Fellow, he delves into the examination of the Strategic Plan 2020-2024 of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), set forth by the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations - DG NEAR, with a dedicated focus on the dynamic southern neighbourhood amidst evolving geopolitical shifts.



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