CENTER FOR PUBLIC LEADERSHIP
FELLOWS
Profile Book 2018-2019
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Center for Public Leadership Fellowship Programs

Student fellowship programs are at the heart of the Center for Public Leadership’s mission to forge leaders capable of solving pressing problems across the sectors of business, government, and civil society. Offering tuition support and a robust leadership development curriculum, our ten fellowship programs are magnets for attracting the world’s most promising emerging leaders and change-agents.

- **Louis Bacon Environmental Leadership Fellowship**: For students from the government, business, and NGO communities dedicated to preserving and enhancing our shared environment.

- **Dubin Fellowship for Emerging Leaders**: For students who have demonstrated the ability to thrive in the face of adversity and who are committed to forging transformative change in their communities.

- **Emirates Leadership Initiative Fellowship**: For student leaders from the UAE and across the Arab world pursuing advanced training in public management and leadership development.

- **George Leadership Fellowship**: For students pursuing joint degrees at Harvard Kennedy School and Harvard Business School in their third year who are designing their final capstone experience.

- **Gleitsman Leadership Fellowship**: For students who are social activists and agents of social change.

- **Sheila C. Johnson Leadership Fellowship**: For students dedicated to improving the lives of African-American communities in the U.S.

- **David M. Rubenstein Fellowship**: For first year joint degree students at Harvard Kennedy School and Harvard Business School preparing for careers in cross-sector leadership.

- **U.S. Latino Leadership Fellowship**: For leaders addressing disparities in Latino and underserved communities in the U.S.

- **Wexner Israel Fellowship**: For outstanding mid-career leaders serving in the government and public sector in Israel.

- **Zuckerman Fellowship**: For students who hold or are working toward degrees in business, law, or medicine to obtain a master’s degree at Harvard Kennedy School, Harvard Graduate School of Education, or Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, to become leaders for the common good.
ABOUT THE LOUIS BACON ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

The Louis Bacon Environmental Leadership Program brings together emerging leaders from the government, business, and NGO communities dedicated to preserving and enhancing our shared environment. Fellowships are awarded to students who have a primary focus on developing leadership abilities to impact environmental public policy and practice. Bacon Fellows receive full tuition, health insurance, and a living stipend, and are eligible for summer internship funding. The Bacon Fellowship also includes a potential slot for an academic fellow or practitioner to support and enhance the fellowship experience.

Bacon Fellows participate in a yearlong co-curricular program designed by the Center for Public Leadership (CPL) which includes weekly leadership skill-building workshops and seminars, an annual retreat, a field experience trip focused on the environment, and opportunities to connect with fellows in their own cohort and across the other fellowship programs at CPL.

The Louis Bacon Environmental Leadership Program connects fellows with highly accomplished national and international leaders, providing them with the skills to: foster sustainable environmental impact; build cross-sector partnerships to accomplish key goals; and inspire new ideas and innovative change in the policies and programs that safeguard natural resources and promote a healthy global ecosystem.

Bacon Fellows also have access to an unparalleled array of resources and scholars focused on the environment, including the Environment and Natural Resources Program at HKS, led by former director of the Massachusetts State Energy Office Henry Lee, and the Harvard University Center for the Environment, led by Professor Dan Schrag, a former member of President Obama’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology.
ABOUT LOUIS BACON

Louis Bacon is a conservation philanthropist who has spent more than two decades supporting efforts to protect natural resources in the United States and abroad. Mr. Bacon is the Chairman of The Moore Charitable Foundation, Inc. (Moore Charitable), which he founded in 1992.

Moore Charitable supports conservation nonprofits that protect and preserve threatened landscapes, habitats, and water bodies. Mr. Bacon has protected more than 210,000 acres of land in perpetuity across the United States.

Mr. Bacon has received several honors including the 2010 Colorado Association of Conservation Districts' Ranch Conservationist of the Year award, the esteemed Audubon Medal in 2013, and the Chairman's Leadership Award from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. In addition, Mr. Bacon received the prestigious Land Trust Alliance President's Award, the Foreign Policy Association Medal, and the 2016 Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership Lifetime Conservation Achievement Award.

Mr. Bacon is the Founder, Chairman, and Chief Executive Officer of Moore Capital Management, LP, a private investment management firm.

A native of North Carolina, Mr. Bacon earned an MBA in Finance from Columbia Business School and holds a BA in American Literature from Middlebury College. He is a Founding Donor of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture. He serves on the Board of Overseers at Columbia Business School and the Leadership Council of the Center for Public Leadership at Harvard Kennedy School. Mr. Bacon is also a member of the Board of Directors of the Foreign Policy Association, a member of the No Labels Founders Council, and the Board of Trustees of the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Team Foundation.
NARRATIVE
Climate change is the most complex, pressing problem of my generation that affects billions of people around the world. Solving it requires concerted research efforts and large-scale collective action. As a Washingtonian, a Truman Scholar, and the daughter of a former civil servant and political appointee, I believe government is the only leader that can effectively evoke the change required. Subsequently, I have focused my career around bridging the gap between scientists, engineers, and policymakers. For example, in college, I helped to persuade the University of Virginia to institute the world’s first nitrogen footprint reduction goal based on my scientific research and contributed technical analysis that formed the basis of Israel’s climate commitments under the Paris Agreement.

Serving as the climate expert for the U.S. Secretary of Transportation—under Presidents Obama and Trump—and as an author on the National Climate Assessment Transportation Chapter inspired me to address the role of transportation in meeting U.S. mitigation goals. We need to electrify vehicles, deploy energy-efficient trains, implement market-based strategies in the aviation sector, and use big data to reduce congestion. But what’s captivated me most is the technological transformation that is about to rock the transportation world: autonomous vehicles. This revolution threatens to undo the progress we have made to cut emissions and to bring low-cost transportation to underserved communities, but deployed correctly, it could be a major climate solution. At the Center for American Progress, I wrote primarily about how governments can foster climate- and social-justice-conscious policy to promote shared, autonomous, and electric vehicles.

Pursuing an MPP at Harvard Kennedy School will allow me to continue developing the skills necessary to advance evidence-based climate solutions, and to lead a generation of bold, thoughtful people who share my vision for a sustainable future. I am honored to join the Center for Public Leadership as a Louis Bacon Environmental Leadership Fellow, and I look forward to learning from and with my exceptional colleagues.
My career as a public advocate began on New York's Hudson River. As a first-year law student I interned for the Hudson Riverkeeper, the flagship program of the now-global Waterkeeper Alliance. At Riverkeeper I saw how people working across the fields of law, policy, science, and communications were defending the public's right to clean water.

During my second year, I interned for a statewide land trust and served as a Cal Turner Fellow, looking at moral leadership in the professions. With faculty support I also traveled to India to visit public interest attorneys and co-founded a legal education nonprofit, partnering with journalists to reach people outside academia. These experiences demonstrated how cross-sector and cross-border collaboration enriches our lives and our work, a philosophy I packed up alongside my bags when I relocated to Chile in 2010.

Working for the last eight years in Latin America has shown me that environmental advocacy is a universal cause. It is also a matter of public health. Climate change and associated problems like water scarcity threaten communities in every part of the world. This is true regardless of how a particular country uses (or undermines) its environmental laws and policies.

As a Bacon Fellow I will learn to communicate more effectively, lead with conviction, and serve as a beacon for others dedicating their lives to the public sector. Institutions like Harvard Kennedy School (HKS) and the Center for Public Leadership were built to envision how future leaders should approach issues like public health and the environment. At HKS I will tap into the impressive talent pool, learning from faculty and peers. I will study community engagement and civic participation, and how research can shape public policy.

Following the Fellowship, I will take these new skills and knowledge with me as I continue my public service career. This includes mentoring younger advocates so they continue the work afterwards. Finally, I will keep on forging coalitions and advocating for strong and healthy communities. Despite the occasional rhetoric to the contrary, we can achieve much more on this planet by breaking down barriers than building walls.
NARRATIVE

Nature first sparked my enthusiasm when I joined the Girl Guides as a kid. My childhood was filled with weekends spent camping in the tropical rainforest and volunteering to protect and rehabilitate springs and urban parks – experiences which helped me develop a true passion for conservation from early on. For me, it was only logical to translate this personal interest into my profession, building a career in environmental policymaking.

The world is facing ever-increasing environmental challenges, in particular related to climate change and biodiversity loss. Apart from disastrous consequences to nature itself, the current scenario can lead to a sharp decline in human well-being, with less natural resources and more natural disasters, leading to heightened social problems and political instabilities. Action must be stepped up if such effects are to be avoided, and I am determined to be part of this transformation.

After finishing my legal degree in Brazil in 2013 and being admitted to the Brazilian Bar Association, I had the unique opportunity of contributing at the United Nations in New York to the negotiations of one of the landmark agreements in this field: the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Currently, the struggle lies in translating all the international goodwill into action at the national and local level. I have personally engaged in this challenge by working as Cabinet Advisor to the São Paulo State Environmental Secretary, where I coordinated international cooperation efforts, structured projects, and assisted in the planning of conservation strategies.

I am now pursuing a Master in Public Policy at Harvard Kennedy School to complement my legal background with specific economic, managerial, and analysis-related competencies to better plan and carry out environmental public policies. The Louis Bacon Environmental Leadership Fellowship at CPL is a crucial component in this path, connecting me with emerging leaders who are also dedicated to preserving the environment and helping me to strengthen essential leadership skills for my public service career.
I decided to commit my life to environmental protection at age twelve, when I realized the pollution so common in my native Los Angeles was preventable. I have since explored interests ranging from marine debris to tropical biodiversity, and have supported environmental nonprofit, private, and government organizations at all levels. For the past four years, I have had the opportunity to advise government agencies on a wide array of environmental policy issues through my role as an Analyst on the Regulatory, Economics, Environment, and Energy team at ICF (a consulting firm with a public policy focus). My team works with various agencies, including the U.S. EPA and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP), on topics ranging from economic analysis to vehicle electrification.

Whether assessing fossil fuel subsidy reform options for the Vietnamese government or analyzing contamination trends at EPA Superfund sites, each diverse perspective leads me to the same conclusion – we need more dynamic and collaborative leadership to achieve sustainable policy. We also need policy that is informed by science. At HKS, I will challenge myself to become an interdisciplinary leader working at the science-policy interface. I am eager to partner with Bacon Fellowship peers and mentors to lead environmental protection in 2018 that sustains communities in 2118.

As a Bacon Fellow, I am interested in exploring the potential for states to serve as climate innovation laboratories, something I first recognized when I supported MassDEP throughout the Global Warming Solutions Act regulatory development process. My ICF team and I helped MassDEP analyze hundreds of public comments, analyze data, and facilitate stakeholder hearings. Through this project, I became passionate about helping subnational leadership develop scalable policies reflective of the scientific urgency for action. With the support and feedback of my Bacon Fellow teammates, I will focus on honing skills in negotiation, communication, decision making, and team management. I will also seek opportunities to engage with peers working in other policy areas so that we can create collaborative, mutually beneficial solutions. As a Bacon Fellow, I hope to inspire change from the ground up.
VERNICE VICTORIO
HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL MID-CAREER MASTER IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION CANDIDATE, 2019

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS
Norwegian University of Science and Technology, MSc in Industrial Ecology, 2013
Ateneo de Manila University, BS in Management Engineering, cum laude, 2001

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS
Natural Resources Development Corporation, Republic of the Philippines: President & CEO
Climate Change Commission, Republic of the Philippines: Commissioner (Undersecretary) & Acting Vice Chairperson
The S.E.E.D. Institute: President
TagBalay Foundation: President

NARRATIVE
Early in life, I sought the meaning of human existence. Influenced by the Jesuits to be a “man for others,” I decided to commit my life to public service, refusing attractive offers from the corporate sector. After being faced with the grim realities of the Philippines’ socio-economic political situation relative to its abundant natural resources, I chose the environment, specifically sustainable development, as my advocacy.

This life direction led me to pursue graduate studies in Industrial Ecology (“science of sustainability”) in Norway, as I wanted to deepen my understanding of sustainability and how to create and redirect systems towards such. It inspired me to streamline and reduce corruption in the Environmental Impact Assessment system in the Philippines, being the main planning tool to integrate environmental concerns into economic endeavors. It brought me to Palawan (country’s last ecological frontier), as I wished to directly work with farmers, fisherfolk, and indigenous people being those most affected by climate change.

I earned most of my spurs after conducting pioneering greenhouse gas emission assessments in the country (Puerto Princesa, Metro Manila, the whole Philippines and the Office of the President). This caused me to be appointed as the youngest and only female Climate Change Commissioner under the Office of the President. And when President Duterte came into office, I was designated as interim Acting Vice Chairperson of the Commission. It was during my term as Vice Chair that the Philippines ratified the Paris Agreement, despite initial strong public objections of the President.

This year, I was given another challenge when I was appointed as President/CEO of the Natural Resources Development Corporation, the main government corporate body tasked to conserve and develop the country’s natural resources.

Yet, despite the huge opportunities before me, I have been advised by my elders to invest time in strengthening my public administration skills to prepare me for bigger tasks ahead. I believe the Bacon Fellowship will greatly complement my MC/MPA program, by enabling me to further develop my ideas on sustainable development and climate change mitigation/adaptation and to establish and cultivate the necessary bridges for the realization of such.
I grew up along Florida’s panhandle, where the Gulf of Mexico is simultaneously our greatest resource and greatest threat of devastation. My hometown’s economy depends in large part on pristine beaches and clear waters. Yet, these same waters generate the hurricanes that leave many without electricity, temporarily displaced, and burdened with repair costs. As I learned about the relationship between climate change, extreme weather, and other environmental risks, I became convinced that something must be done to protect and keep our environment from worsening.

For the past few years, I served New York State as Governor Cuomo’s lead on federal environmental and agricultural issues. I gained a broad view of the politics and policy behind the state of our environmental regulatory system, and I directed political strategy on federal issues regarding air emissions, water quality and infrastructure, Hurricane Sandy recovery, clean energy, and more. The experience of working on a range of policy problems with Congressional members, federal agencies, and advocacy groups taught me to balance diverse and competing interests. Moreover, I was continually fascinated by how climate and the environment are interconnected with other issues, including agriculture, transportation, health, economic development, and social justice. For example, I often noticed that opponents to climate policies expressed concern regarding potential negative impacts on low-income populations without acknowledging that many already suffer under the status quo. Lower-income communities—from my Florida hometown to New York and elsewhere—are disproportionately vulnerable to climate-related increasing temperatures, worsening air quality, sea level rise, and extreme weather events.

I am pursuing an MPP at Harvard Kennedy School in order to gain more skills to help me advance policies that will protect the environment and transition our world to a clean energy economy that benefits everyone. I am excited and honored to join the Center for Public Leadership as a Louis Bacon Environmental Leadership Fellow, and I look forward to learning from the other CPL fellows and developing myself as a leader.
“Being a Bacon Fellow has proven to be one of the best aspects of my life at Harvard. Over weekly evening meetings, special lectures, and cohort trips, I not only explored environmental issues in depth but also bonded with the other fellows in a way that goes far beyond the Kennedy School. The Bacon Fellowship gave me the support and guidance I need to pursue an environmental leadership path!”

Martina Müller  
Harvard Kennedy School  
Bacon Fellow  
MPP Candidate
ABOUT THE DUBIN PROGRAM FOR EMERGING LEADERS

The Dubin Program for Emerging Leaders provides generous opportunities for Harvard Kennedy School (HKS) students with a demonstrated commitment to transformative leadership for the public good.

Dubin Fellows are master’s degree students at Harvard Kennedy School who have demonstrated strong character, academic excellence, the ability to thrive and lead in the face of adversity, and a commitment to making a transformative impact on the communities they serve. They are awarded a scholarship up to full tuition and health fees, and participate in an enriching co-curricular experience designed to enhance and engage their development as the next generation of public leaders.

In order to facilitate an outstanding fellowship experience and create the broadest possible impact of the program on the entire Harvard Kennedy School, the Dubin Program for Emerging Leaders also supports the following:

• **Summer Internships**—for both fellows and non-fellows, the program offers Summer Fellowship Grants for HKS students engaging in unpaid summer internships or research projects that relate to leadership and public service.

• **Dubin Emerging Leaders Speaker Series**—designed to engage both the Dubin Fellows and the broader HKS community in discussions on leadership from academics and practitioners in many disciplines, we invite speakers from around the globe to impart their leadership lessons.

• **Field Experience**—Dubin Leadership Field Experience trips offer HKS students the opportunity to lead a policy-focused field experience trip to examine innovative policy solutions to deep-rooted societal challenges.
ABOUT GLENN DUBIN

Glenn Dubin is the founder and principal of Dubin & Co., a private investment company based in New York. Mr. Dubin co-founded Highbridge Capital Management LLC, an alternative asset management company in 1992. During his tenure as CEO, Highbridge evolved from a multi-strategy hedge fund into a diversified alternative asset management institution with over $35 billion of capital under management. In 2009, Highbridge was acquired by JP Morgan Asset Management, and Mr. Dubin remained at the helm to oversee the transition—a transition considered by many to be an example of a model succession. In 2013, Mr. Dubin resigned as Chairman and CEO of Highbridge to focus on Dubin & Co. and the founding of Engineers Gate LP, a proprietary quantitative trading company. Engineers Gate, comprised of seventy-seven employees including twenty-six PhDs, has committed itself to building a next generation operating and technology platform for systematic trading strategies across global liquid markets.

In 2012, Mr. Dubin, along with a prominent group of investors, acquired Castleton Commodities International LLC (formerly Louis Dreyfus Highbridge Energy), a global merchant energy company active in the physical and financial commodity markets and infrastructure investing. In 2015, CCI acquired Morgan Stanley's Global Oil Merchanting business, and the combined company now ranks as one of the world’s leading independent energy merchants. Mr. Dubin is the lead shareholder and Non-Executive Chairman of the company.

Mr. Dubin is a Founder, Board Member, and former Board Chair of the Robin Hood Foundation, a philanthropic organization in New York that applies investment principles to charitable giving. Since its founding in 1988, Robin Hood has raised and invested over $2.5 billion in the most effective poverty-fighting programs in New York City. Mr. Dubin is also a Board member of Mount Sinai Medical Center and the Museum of Modern Art and is a member of the Dean’s Executive Committee of the Harvard Kennedy School. Mr. Dubin graduated from the State University of New York at Stony Brook with a BA in Economics.
NARRATIVE

I was never interested in politics, yet, amidst the inevitable surroundings within the White House, I found my niche in harnessing the power to lift the voices of those most affected by policies and to raise awareness around issues affecting everyday Americans. September 11, 2001 changed our world; it changed everything I wanted to be and needed to do. While it ignited my passion for social and political equality and inclusion stemming from the discrimination and injustice I faced, I never imagined it leading me to stand before the President of the United States.

For the last five and a half years, I served as an advisor for strategic communications and public engagement throughout various White House offices. Despite the challenges of being a young minority female as the only hijab-wearing woman working in the West Wing, I found an opportunity to build foundations and networks that promoted inclusion and better reflected our nation’s diversity on a range of issues. I directed initiatives across communities and sectors on a range of domestic issues including healthcare reform, STEM education for African Americans, gun violence prevention, and climate preparedness. After joining the National Security Council, I advised the Deputy National Security Advisor on a wide range of issues: the Iran Deal, some U.S.-Cuba policy changes, protection of persecuted populations and policies affecting Muslim American communities. I also worked on efforts to promote global entrepreneurship among women and youth in developing countries.

My appointment was set to expire in the summer of 2018 yet I chose to remain a voice and resource on issues related to Cuban and Muslim communities through the transition in administrations since January 2017. Eventually, reckless policy maneuvers with reverberating impacts pushed me to move on. As I continue to speak, write, and pursue my graduate studies as a CPL Dubin Fellow, I hope to extend my network, knowledge, and skills as a public leader, policy influencer, and advocate for empowering women, youth, and minority communities with my fellow faculty and students.
NARRATIVE

I grew up making choices based on circumstances that presented themselves, and which were contingent upon available resources. I am the son of a Nicaraguan civil war refugee, a former special education student, a high school dropout; I re-entered into vocational training as a Job Corps student, and most recently, have been overseeing Job Corps at the federal level for the U.S. Department of Labor for the past four years. While there were moments in my life where I felt disempowered, a unique transformation occurred when I began making conscious choices that kept me involved in the decision-making processes.

One conscious choice I made was decreasing the educational achievement gap for African Americans and Latinos when I served as Student Trustee at City College of San Francisco (CCSF). The task was a tall order so I built a coalition among students, faculty, and administrators. Initially, we requested an equity report from the Planning and Strategic Department that disaggregated students by race and ethnicity. The findings detailed wide disparities with only 7% of African Americans and 12% of Latinos transferring to four-year universities, who placed at the lowest basic skills courses.

Moving forward, I collaborated with two Trustees on the Board and facilitated CCSF’s first-ever Equity Hearings. Based on student input, we convinced the Chancellor to expand basic skills courses so students can realistically transfer within two years, centralized all student resources, and implemented cultural awareness trainings for faculty. As a result of our work from 2009-10, the achievement gap shrunk substantially. Today, 24% of African Americans and 32% of Latinos transferring to four-year universities, who place at the lowest basic skills courses can transfer to a four-year university.

As I relate this story of success, I wish to note the fact that the conversation should be centered on dismantling the systemic barriers that make me an exception rather than a norm. The Master in Public Policy program and the Dubin Fellowship will strengthen my vision by helping me develop methods and practices to affect change in our country’s workforce and educational system.
A few years ago, the world faced its greatest period of economic instability since the Great Depression. The effects of this global financial crisis are still being felt today, with high levels of job insecurity leading to a growing political backlash from the working class in many countries around the world.

This trend is a deeply personal one for me. I grew up in a working class household, and both my parents have faced long periods of unemployment. As a single parent, my mother worked several casual jobs at a time to pay the bills, and that feeling of being only a few missteps away from disaster is one that I carry with me from childhood. I was fortunate enough to receive a great education, and this allowed me to create a pathway out of poverty.

My background has given me an intensely personal understanding of the struggles faced by so many other low-income working families, and it was the major impetus for my decision to join the struggle for workers' rights after graduating from university. My involvement in the Australian Labor Party and the trade union movement dramatically opened my eyes to the problematic working conditions faced by millions of low paid workers on a daily basis. Australia has the second-highest rate of insecure work in the OECD, but I am acutely aware that work exploitation is a global phenomenon, and more must be done to protect low paid workers around the world.

My vision is for a world where the fruits of people's labor are fairly distributed, and where people have access to decent working conditions. The Harvard Kennedy School Master in Public Administration degree can help me achieve this vision by providing me with a bigger conceptual toolkit to address these problems. I am particularly excited to be involved in the Center for Public Leadership as a Dubin Fellow, and feel I can learn a lot from the excellent faculty and from fellow students. Upon graduating, I plan to join the global movement to improve conditions for low paid workers affected by globalization and technological change.
NARRATIVE

From ages three to eighteen, I commuted from my black Atlanta neighborhood to a predominantly white, wealthy, conservative school. My nagging, daily sense of otherness was offset by the school’s diversity club, where I built community with a handful of black, Muslim, working class, and LGBT students and developed deep solidarity with those who experienced any form of marginalization. I came to see my world through the lens of identity-based oppression and developed a commitment to understanding and disrupting such injustices.

During college, I was exposed to international contexts around how one's class, race, citizenship, gender, sexuality, and religion overwhelmingly determine life’s opportunities from birth. These issues went from being theoretical to tangible for me during my work at the Ford Foundation. For the first time, I engaged with human rights activists on the frontlines of the issues I cared about—from Kenyan HIV/AIDS rights activists at the United Nations to Dalit feminist leaders combating heightened violence against India's lower-caste women. Their stories solidified my determination to advance international human rights throughout my career.

In particular, I am focused on social justice in the Middle East and North Africa. In Jordan, I worked with the Gaza Refugee Camp’s Community Development Office. On the verge of shutting down, it had been crippled by a combination of Jordan’s exclusionary citizenship laws and poor United Nations Relief and Works Agency management. I learned how rights-based challenges on the ground are often caused by policy decisions made by national and international agencies that have little to no substantive interaction with the communities impacted by their decisions. My goal is to strengthen human rights and development in the MENA region by making U.S. foreign policy a facilitator of, rather than a barrier to, locally led movements for justice in the Arab world. Through the HKS-HLS joint degree program, I am learning legal and policy strategies for addressing international human rights violations. Furthermore, the Dubin Fellowship gives me a nurturing and inspiring community of change-makers, which challenge each other to think boldly and hold each other accountable over time to our original values and missions.
ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, MPH, 2013
University of Arizona, BS, 2009

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

UnitedHealth Group: Strategic Initiatives Graduate Intern
State of Arizona, Early Childhood Development & Health Board: Senior Director
Children's Action Alliance: Director of Health Policy
Annie E Casey Foundation, Packard Foundation, Atlantic Philanthropies: Children's Health Fellow
Georgetown University Health Policy Institute: Bulldog Award
IDEO, Gary Community Investments: Early Childhood Innovation Prize
Truman Scholar
Flinn Scholar

NARRATIVE

My story has taught me about the importance of preserving opportunity, freedom, and community in America from one generation to the next. To sustain these values, we need to make sure that children and families have access to economic and social mobility through high-quality, affordable, and efficient healthcare and education. I want every child in America to reach his or her fullest potential.

As a first-generation American, I have been able to contribute to this goal by working in my home state as a state agency administrator, policy expert, and fearless child health advocate. I am focused on bridging the divide between healthcare, social services, and education. It is important for leaders across private, public, and nonprofit sectors to remove silos and harness innovation to address the whole child and family.

The Dubin Fellowship is my family away from home. I know that this community will hold me accountable to the important work ahead and push me to become a better leader and person. I can pursue my goals in large part due to the generous support of many who believed in me. I am grateful to Mr. Glenn Dubin and the Center for Public Leadership for the opportunity to continue my journey as a lifelong student and leader.
Every summer of my childhood, I would excitedly await the arrival of my late grandfather who would visit us from Taiwan, full of affection and gentle encouragement. To this day, I draw inspiration from the stories of his humble childhood growing up orphaned in rural China. The kindness of his teacher who took him in and ensured that he received quality education enabled him to become a civil engineer. He paid it forward for the rest of his life, supporting my parents to immigrate to the United States and providing scholarships to disadvantaged youth. I want to dedicate my life to ensuring that the world’s most marginalized children and youth receive equitable opportunities to thrive in honor of my grandfather.

Since college, I have worked internationally, from the townships of South Africa to the Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan, to address systemic barriers and opportunity gaps facing young people. At the Royal Academy, I conducted community-based research across Bhutan and made policy recommendations on expanding selection criteria in the King’s government welfare initiatives, increasing educational access for thousands of low-income students in the national financial aid program and lab school. Meanwhile, managing youth empowerment programs at the Bhutan Youth Development Fund and strengthening child protection systems through UNICEF have taught me about the multitude of challenges and innovations in sustainable development, both at the grassroots and global levels.

My aspiration is to unleash the promise of children and youth for a more just and sustainable world. I aim to mobilize international nonprofits, funders, and governments to advance the rights of children in emerging, critical areas such as early learning with nurturing care, restorative juvenile justice, and child protection in migration and displacement. The Center for Public Leadership’s diverse community of passionate peer leaders, faculty, and practitioners enables me to leverage collective wisdom for social change. With the community and tools I gain from the Dubin Fellowship, I strive to pay it forward in my late grandfather’s spirit, empowering children and youth to shape the trajectory of our world’s future.
When I entered the public school system, I was denied a routine placement exam. Instead, I was placed in a “low performance classroom,” along with most of the other students of color in the first grade. Because of my mother’s advocacy, I eventually moved into a track where I received dedicated attention, was prepared for standardized tests, and eventually instructed on the application process for special admissions schools. My mother understood that as a low-income, first-generation immigrant, my life chances were intricately tied to the educational opportunities I had access to. Because of this experience, I strive to address inequities in public education because I know first-hand that the quality of a child’s education should not be predicated on their family’s race or ethnicity, zip code, or their income.

I founded Global Youth United (GYU), a nonprofit organization that supplements public high school education in Philadelphia with experience-based instruction on problem solving, leadership, social advocacy, and design thinking. Over its nine-year existence, GYU students have organized around budget cuts to Philadelphia’s public schools, homelessness, substance abuse, and hunger in their own communities. It has been a privilege to work through the city’s toughest problems with cadres of eager students intimately connected to the issues they are working to address.

As a joint degree student with the Harvard Law School, I work to gain analytical and practical skills to address complex, systemic problems by identifying innovative ways to sever the link between poverty and deficient educational opportunities. I plan to build on my professional experience working at the intersection of finance and regulatory law as a Compliance Analyst at Goldman Sachs. To do so, I plan to enroll in coursework focused on public finance and government agencies. I hope to further hone skills in policy research and implementation—skills I began to develop during my time at the U.S. Mission to the U.N. Finally, I look forward to developing alongside a community of bold changemakers as a Dubin Fellow at the Center for Public Leadership.
In 2010, I was a rising junior at the U.S. Military Academy and poised to sign a contract to finalize my commitment to serve as an Army Officer. I could not, however, bring myself to sign on the dotted line. Instead, I came out as lesbian on The Rachel Maddow Show and announced that I would resign from West Point in protest of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” the law which forbade gays and lesbians from serving openly in the U.S. military. I became a pundit in the media, speaking to both personal experience and advocating for the end of the ban. However, I am most proud of my role in establishing a nonprofit called OutServe, which began as an underground network of actively-serving LGBT military members. I served as a spokesperson for these members, who could not come out or express a political opinion without fear of being discharged.

My experience as a liaison between service members and politicians at OutServe taught me that there is a growing divide between the military and civilian society which extends far beyond “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” Today, fewer Americans than ever have served or personally know someone who has served in uniform. The burden of war now falls on a small professional force, causing military families to shoulder frequent and longer deployments. It has also created a reliance on defense contractors, who operate with different rules, values and levels of accountability than U.S. Armed Forces. Perhaps most significantly, the gap allows politicians to take this country to war – and to indefinitely stay at war – free from public scrutiny.

At the Harvard Kennedy School, I hope to obtain the tools in quantitative analysis and policymaking that I will need to bridge the civilian-military divide. As a Dubin Fellow, I seek to develop my leadership skills in order to actually effect this change. I am excited and immensely grateful for the opportunity to learn from the network of people involved with the Center for Public Leadership who are diverse in thought, rich in passion, and connected by a commitment to public service.
ALBERTO I. RINCON

HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL MASTER IN PUBLIC POLICY CANDIDATE, 2019

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS
MIT Sloan School of Management, MBA Candidate, 2019
MIT Sloan Social Impact Fellow, 2018
University of Illinois at Chicago, BS in Mechanical Engineering, summa cum laude, 2012
Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE), Academics Chair; Leadership & Academic Excellence Awards; Chicago Scholarship
Glenn and Linda Neland Scholarship
Caterpillar Engineering Scholar

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS
The Obama Foundation: Finance & Operations Intern
City of Chicago Mayor’s Office: Mayoral Fellow
The Urban Canopy: Co-Founder, Chief of Innovation & Operations
Southeast Chicago Historical Museum: Board Member
Coalition to Ban Petcoke: Committee Coordinator, Community Organizer
General Motors: Advanced Thermal and Automated Systems Engineer
Illinois Institute of Technology: Alternative Energy Researcher

NARRATIVE
Like many of us, I have overcome my share of adversities: growing up in a Spanish-speaking immigrant home, being poor, and facing the aftermath of my father being deported the morning of my college-entrance exam. I believe these experiences molded me into the resolute individual that I am today. I graduated with the highest honors in a challenging technical field, developed a food, justice-centered social enterprise soon after, and have actively participated in environmental and social justice groups in my community. I could not have done any of these things without the strength and support of my small, industrious family.

I am committed to creating positive change through my leadership and public service and have demonstrated it through past work. As a student, I served on the board of an organization that supported underrepresented students in the sciences, and actively worked with underprivileged children to support them in these fields. As an engineer, I led and managed teams in projects involving renewable energy and sustainability.

As the co-founder of a social enterprise, I developed important skills related to strategy, finance, management, operations, and marketing. As a Latino, it is important to me that I serve as a role model in supporting people with similar circumstances. Ultimately, my vision is to improve socioeconomic conditions for underserved communities, a vision that fuels my determination, organization, and creativity.

I am enthralled by concepts and practices of sustainable development. I have come to think that our society lacks meaningful metrics that provide a comprehensive understanding of human well-being and innovative ways to address them. I have learned first-hand that entrepreneurship is insufficient; some level of intrapreneurship is needed in government. I hope to aid in the effort and believe HKS will help me attain the skills and network needed for enacting effective policy reform. I am honored to be a part of the CPL family and am grateful for the opportunity. I am determined to find my place in government upon graduation and look forward to the challenges ahead.
I have been a core member of active social movements in India, among them, the Peoples Action for Employment Guarantee (PAEG), Right to Food Campaign (RTFC), and Pension Parishad, which have successfully secured socioeconomic rights to work, food, and social security. My immersion in their advocacies for basic human development for the poor and marginalized helped me deeply understand one’s rights of transparency and accountability on the government. Through participating in village meetings, public hearings, and public action, I witnessed firsthand the potency of information for citizens, in an otherwise disempowered relationship with the State.

Keen on understanding the intricacies of administrative systems that deliver public services, I then worked with national and sub-national governments to implement programs related to these legal rights. At the Ministry of Rural Development, I led a $30 million project on the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). The project engaged teams from civil society organizations to build capacities of frontline functionaries in the 250 most backward administrative units of the country. Apart from insight into State capacity, I got a ring-side view of its responsiveness to factors such as political parties, national press, and citizen pressure groups. This convinced me of the need to leverage the political vision of citizens’ campaigns with the power of institutionalization within government. This resonates with Prof. Amartya Sen’s proposition that while public policy can enhance the capabilities of people to lead lives of value, it can still be influenced by public participation. I have since been working in Jharkhand and Bihar to help build and stabilize platforms for citizen participation. This involves both working directly with grassroots organizations to co-develop and use platforms fashioned from their articulation as well as providing support to governments on convening and regularizing such platforms.

The financial and co-curricular support of the Dubin Fellowship makes it possible to undertake my MPA degree, which will supplement my practical experiences with a theoretical framework and complementary leadership skills sets. It will sharpen by ability to shape the crucial emerging discipline and practice of social accountability in India.
JOCELYN STREID
HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL MASTER IN PUBLIC POLICY CANDIDATE, 2020

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS
Harvard Medical School, MD Candidate, 2020
Duke University, BA in English with Highest Distinction, summa cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa, Robertson Scholar, 2013

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS
Duke University: Hart Fellow
Duke Chapel PathWays: Fellow
Massachusetts Coalition on Serious Illness Care: Student Representative
Harvard Racial Justice Coalition: Member
Sarawak Children’s Cancer Center: Research Intern
Resource Center for Women & Ministry in the South: Intern
Cicely Saunders Institute of Palliative Care: Research Intern
Duke University William J. Griffith: Award for Global Service

NARRATIVE
When I was twenty, I watched a young boy die. I was working at a rural South African hospital. The six-year-old arrived with an unknown infection, and despite the under-resourced team’s best efforts, we were powerless against not only his disease, but also his pain. He died afraid and in agony. His death was a tragedy, but the way he died – without pain control, without comfort – was an injustice. I had gone to South Africa to learn how socioeconomic landscapes impact health systems. What I found was that poverty changes not just how people live, but also how people die.

What is a good death, and how can we offer it to the patients we cannot save regardless of socioeconomic circumstances? This question led me into medicine, and I plan to spend my career trying to answer it.

I travelled internationally and actually found teachers among public health innovators in Kentucky, community health workers in Rajasthan, migrant workers in Beijing, and palliative care researchers in London. I spent a year living with children dying from cancer in Borneo, learning how funding for rice, or burial services could help families survive unspeakable tragedy without facing economic ruin. They taught me that advocacy begins with an attentive ear.

It did not take me long to realize that global health begins in my backyard. Months after I returned from Borneo, Michael Brown was killed 8 miles from my childhood home, and the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement. While working as a hospital chaplain and witnessing the same systemic failures I encountered abroad: families bankrupted by terminal illness, fragmented doctor-patient communication, and inadequate pain control among minority populations. The social determinants of health are the social determinants of death.

I want to re-imagine the systems of care we offer our sickest patients. There are bad deaths and good deaths. I have seen both, and I know it’s possible to make the bad deaths better. I am honored to join the Dubin fellowship community as I learn to fight for a basic right: dignity for everyone at the end of life.
“I am the son of a Nicaraguan civil war refugee, a former special education student, a high-school dropout; I re-entered into vocational training as a Job Corps student, and most recently, have been overseeing Job Corps at the federal level for the U.S. Department of Labor for the past four years. While there were moments in my life where I felt disempowered, a unique transformation occurred when I began making conscious choices that kept me involved in the decision-making processes [...] 

As I relate this story of success, I wish to note the fact that the conversation should be centered on dismantling the systemic barriers that make me an exception rather than a norm. The Dubin Fellowship will strengthen my vision by helping me develop methods and practices to affect change in our country’s workforce and educational system.”

Joshua Baldotano
Harvard Kennedy School
Dubin Fellow
MPP Candidate
At a time when the world is more connected than ever and cultural engagement is increasingly crucial, the Emirates Leadership Initiative (ELI) Graduate Fellowship equips our next generation of leaders to tackle the most pressing public policy issues in the United Arab Emirates and countries throughout the Arab world.

The ELI Fellowship embodies core elements of CPL's programming — experiential learning and cocurricular participation — to not only provide progressive training for students from Arab countries, but to deepen understanding of the Middle East among peers in the U.S. and other parts of the world.

ELI Fellows are admitted degree program students hailing from the United Arab Emirates and Arab countries; in addition to demonstrated interest in developing their leadership and public management skills, selected fellows embody a deep commitment to public service and advancing policy decisions in the Middle East.

*The ELI Fellowship is a program of the Emirates Leadership Initiative, a research and curricular collaboration between the Center for Public Leadership (CPL) and the Middle East Initiative (MEI) at HKS and the government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).*
AMBASSADOR

YOUSEF AL OTAIBA

As UAE Ambassador to the United States since 2008, Yousef Al Otaiba has deepened bilateral understanding and cooperation across three U.S. Presidential Administrations. During this time, Ambassador Al Otaiba has led the expansion of the bilateral defense partnership, as UAE and U.S. security forces confront the multiple regional challenges of extremism, terrorism, and aggression. Bilateral trade grew by more than 400 percent, as each country became one of the other's largest sources of foreign direct investment.

Cultural, educational, and health care exchanges have also grown dramatically, marked by the launch of such initiatives as NYU Abu Dhabi, the Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi, the Sheikh Zayed campus at Children's National Medical Center, and the Sheikh Khalifa Cardiac Center at Johns Hopkins University. Ambassador Al Otaiba also oversees the UAE's significant commitment to philanthropic activities that benefit underserved communities across America, enhance education for children and improve healthcare research and treatment.

Before taking up his post, Ambassador Al Otaiba served for seven years as international affairs adviser to H.H. General Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces. Ambassador Al Otaiba obtained a degree in international relations at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. after graduating from the Cairo American College. He also attended the Industrial College of the U.S. Armed Forces at the National Defense University in Washington, D.C. as an international fellow.

In recognition of his loyal service to the UAE, and leadership to build closer ties with the U.S., Ambassador Al Otaiba was promoted to the rank of Minister in October 2017. He will remain in his current role as the UAE's Ambassador to the U.S.
IBRAHIM AL-ASSIL

HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL MID-CAREER MASTER IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION CANDIDATE, 2019

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS
University of Essex, MBA, 2011
University of Kalamoon, Bachelor of Business Administration, 2007

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS
Middle East Institute: Resident Fellow
Orient Research Center: Fellow and Program Director
Insight Advisory Group: Co-Founder and Managing Partner
Syrian Nonviolence Movement: Founding Member and President
Swedish Institute: Young Leaders Visitors Program Graduate

NARRATIVE
Over the last several years, I have been involved personally and professionally in developing Syria’s civil society, and have helped inform U.S. policy towards the Middle East and Syria, in particular.

In 2011, a group of activists and I came together to establish the Syrian Nonviolence Movement to promote peaceful change values. We knew we were embarking on a long journey, but we had no idea that it would require strategic thinking and a deep understanding of international dynamics and policy-making. This realization propelled my transition from the industry of business solutions to think tanks in 2012 to focus on the Syrian conflict. That was when I joined the Orient Research Center in Dubai, and began to recognize the interdependence of local governance and civil society. Building the structure for both is a laborious task, yet a critical one for Syria’s future. This became very clear to me when I managed the Middle East Institute’s Syrian Civil Society Speaks program in Washington.

Throughout my work as a policy analyst, I noticed that U.S. foreign policy was shaped by actors outside of the region, without input from indigenous players. Those policies were less effective and sometimes counterproductive. That motivated me to co-found a consulting firm to advise policymakers in both the Middle East and the U.S. about relevant political and economic decisions, and to build bridges between both sides.

My work is fueled by my dream is to see peace in Syria and my belief in the brighter future that the Middle East deserves. The more I work toward this goal, the more I realize that I need to increase my knowledge, develop my skills, and widen my network. This is what encouraged me to apply to HKS and the Emirates Leadership Initiative Fellowship. I am drawn to ELI not only because it will give me a stronger voice on campus to share my story with others, but also because its cocurricular program will enrich my experience and professional development. Through my interactions with other fellows and emerging leaders, I look forward to learning from their experiences and inspiring stories.
When people think of Saudi Arabia, they fixate on its vast petroleum resources. Having worked in the industry, I know that our resources have enriched the Kingdom. I also know that its most precious resource is its people. While Saudi leaders often focus on the need to diversify the economy, which is certainly needed, there is a more entrenched and widespread problem requiring the country’s attention. I am speaking of the need to include women in the economy, politics, and social life. My mother, a role model to myself and many others, helped break the glass ceiling by founding and managing a professional services firm in the 1990s.

As an undergraduate at McGill University, I minored in Women’s Studies and travelled to Nablus, West Bank, to volunteer as an English Teacher to women and children. After graduation, I worked as a management consultant with Monitor Group, focusing primarily on nation-building and economic development strategy in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Oman, UAE, Kuwait, and Bahrain. In this capacity I realized there is much value to be reaped from bringing a “female lens,” as the needs of women are overlooked when there are no women at the policymaking table. Later, my independent consultancy experience in Ethiopia allowed me to learn a valuable lesson: the private sector has a key role to play in encouraging increased agency for disadvantaged communities in developing countries. This realization influenced me to join Dow Chemical, a multinational petrochemicals company, in Saudi Arabia. I worked to promote partnerships between Dow and the Government of Saudi Arabia.

I learned that to truly bring about impact, we must work to unlock the potential, growth, and innovation of the private sector, which I view as the backbone of a sustainable economy. I believe that private equity is a strong mechanism to realize this impact. Thus, I wish to found a gender-lens impact fund that targets businesses that share my mission. The ELI Fellowship will strengthen my interpersonal and leadership skills, while presenting me with an ecosystem of changemakers, business people, and academics to test the concept of my fund. Their advice will prove invaluable in engaging stakeholders on female empowerment topics in the Arab World.
Since its formation in 1971, the UAE has been one of the fastest developing countries in the world. With the discovery of oil and natural gas, the country moved from its earlier dependence on pearl diving, trading, and fishing to an economy dominated by fossil fuels. Recently, the country has transitioned again into a diversified knowledge-based economy that prioritizes issues of energy, sustainability, and the environment. As someone who has dedicated his entire professional life to public service, I have been at the forefront of the UAE’s effort to protect the environment.

My ultimate career goal is to serve as a national figure who can enact policies that productively regulate the energy sector not only in the UAE but also in the Arab world. Ultimately, I aspire to become a regional leader that champions environmental protection and sustainability as a strategic priority. The skills that I have as an experienced lawyer, as well as my exposure to the global network of environmental leaders through the COP conferences, will only strengthen my role as a public leader and policy maker. I look forward to helping implement innovative and replicable practices that lead to my country and the world to a brighter and more sustainable future.

As an emerging leader in the UAE’s environmental policy landscape, I will benefit from the Emirates Leadership Initiative’s comprehensive co-curricular program. The initiative, a collaboration between the Center for Public Leadership and the Middle East Initiative, will provide me with tools to hone my strategic and financial policy analysis skills. By strengthening my ability to lead, I hope to continue advancing effective public policies in the UAE and Middle East.

One of the most appealing aspects of the fellowship is how it brings together the most talented and ambitious leaders from the region. I am eager to supplement my academic experience by interacting with other future leaders from across HKS and learning from their own work and initiatives, while sharing what I have done to improve environmental policy.
The idea that children can be fated to unfulfilling lives because of factors beyond their control—be they poverty, limited access to education, or suppressive societal value systems—has always struck me personally. Spurred partly by my own experiences grappling with these issues, I have become committed to helping disadvantaged and vulnerable youth overcome barriers to their development.

To this end, I have worked both on the ground and through higher-level organizational avenues. At Penn, I worked with Community School Student Partnerships to mentor underserved children in Philadelphia's public schools, and founded and led the campus group Students Against Human Trafficking to help combat the trafficking of youth. In pursuit of a higher-level, organizational approach, I also founded and led the educational company EduMax to improve attainment for disadvantaged young people in Jordan.

Over time, I developed a deeper appreciation for the role of policy-making in improving outcomes for at-risk youth. During my time with PwC, I worked on several projects that wield policy-making toward this end. On one such project, I led the design of a government strategy and policy to improve learning for children with social, emotional, and behavioral difficulties in the Middle East. In collaboration with the Institute of Education at University College London, I coauthored the publication “A Guide for Policy Makers: Improving Learning for Children with Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Difficulties” to disseminate some of the project’s findings. Most recently, I contributed to the development of an innovative project in England, the Campus Educational Trust, whose goal is to provide alternative provision to youth offenders to help them reenter society with better prospects for success and lower chances of reoffending.
As a kid, growing up in a refugee camp under an apartheid system of Israeli military occupation seemed standard to me. It was all I had seen and all that I knew. Moving around over the past 10 years, however, has allowed me to see and experience a lot more than I could have imagined.

After graduating from UNC, I decided to become a math teacher in inner city Detroit. It was my belief that education could grant students the power to open doors for themselves and their communities. My experience in Detroit was a turning point; I began to connect the dots between race, housing, health, poverty, etc., and quickly realized that alleviating educational inequity on its own would not suffice.

As a Fulbright scholar in Turkey at the height of the refugee crisis, I witnessed once again how crucial (yet inadequate) education was to refugees and those struggling to start a new life. Refugee struggles were further compounded by a language barrier and failed efforts to integrate them in Turkey, despite the efforts of countless NGOs. Similarly, when I first began working in Palestine within education, there was no shortage of NGOs or foreign funding. Yet, it was not effective in mitigating the glaring disparity between the elite and those living in poverty in rural areas and refugee camps. In fact, in some cases, it further widened this gap. As the coordinator of a successful educational summer camp, I made it my goal to integrate students from more diverse socio-economic backgrounds in an effort to narrow the education gap in Palestine.

Ultimately, a better education for all—coupled with a holistic approach to urbanization and development—could alleviate the societal chasms that have frustrated Palestinian unity and, more importantly, support a Palestine independent of foreign aid and intervention. As someone who is dedicated to public service and assuaging dependency on foreign aid, I see my years at HKS as an Emirates Initiative Fellow as an opportunity to expand my own personal knowledge on the issues of international development, urban policy, and education.
NARRATIVE

Providing charitable giving during the month of Ramadan has been a long-standing tradition in my family. While the practice instilled in me the feeling of responsibly towards underprivileged communities, it also pushed me to think about how to sustainably help others. It was not until I started my professional career that I was able to find my path to do so.

After graduating with an accounting degree from Butler University in 2009, at the height of the financial crises, I felt the duty to change the sector to one that improves the lives of people. During my time at The Abraaj Group, I helped Palestinian entrepreneurs grow their companies. I was also inspired by the same entrepreneurs to start my own company, GreenCity, the first waste management company in Palestine that aims to help local municipalities address the pressing issue of solid municipal waste. My time at GreenCity and partnership with the Ramallah Municipality helped me realize the importance of working at the intersection of the public, private, and social sector to truly affect change. As such, my transition to The Portland Trust, a UK based action-tank, provided a platform do just that. My work grew from leading projects that propelled the high-tech and agriculture sectors to partnering with local companies and ministries to lead the development of the Palestinian impact investment ecosystem.

I believe the emerging field of impact investment will not only help address many of our social problems, but also create a paradigm shift in how we conduct business. While my goal is to launch an impact investment fund to help profit-with-purpose ventures grow through providing capital and managerial support, I plan to take a leading role in promoting impact investment across sectors and governments. ELI’s periodical guest speaking seminars, workshops, and annual trips will refine my understanding of the public and social sector while expanding my network beyond Palestine. This will pave the way for my efforts post-graduation to mobilize the support of private, public, and social sector leaders to take the Arab World to a new era.
My name is Nourhan Shaaban, and I hail from Alexandria, Egypt. If you ask many Egyptians about a defining moment, many mention the 2011 Egyptian revolution. I am no exception!

2011 marked an important year in my life for two reasons. First, I left Egypt to begin my undergraduate studies in the United States. Second, the Egyptian revolution took place. Almost every Egyptian I knew was in the streets protesting social injustice, political stagnation and income inequality. I left Egypt determined to study harder and to take advantage of every opportunity, particularly those which I felt many others did not have. I was committed to make the most out of my education and to do what I can to make the world a bit kinder and more hopeful.

When I graduated from Harvard College, I was fortunate to spend a year in Indonesia. I volunteered a lot and gradually fell in love with Indonesia. By the end of my year, I worked at BTPN, an Indonesian bank that offers microcredit along with health and business training to more than two million Indonesian women. I listened as mothers, who were working hard for their families, described their economic and social struggles. None of this was new—these were the same stories I heard and witnessed in Egypt—along with the same laughter and sense of generosity. Every conversation fueled my interest in the subject of rural poverty and inequality even further.

Now, I still feel the same moral obligation I felt back in 2011, only with a bit more clarity. I aspire to work on projects that improve access to financial services for low-income communities. I also want to work on projects that improve access to quality education, a resource critical for developing an inclusive and democratic society and achieving tangible economic growth. With the support of the Emirates Leadership Initiative Graduate Fellowship, my experience at the Kennedy School will provide me with the broad and multidisciplinary training I need to pursue a career in international development.
When women are at the negotiating table, peace lasts longer.

My first exposure to diplomacy was at age twelve when I was chosen to be part of Jordan's delegation to “Seeds of Peace”, a co-existence camp aimed at youth from the region. Three weeks later, with the term soft skills conceptualized and etched, I saw my way ahead and was determined to change the world, one young person at a time. Ten years on, I was the youngest diplomat to enter Jordan's Foreign Service, and my passion and drive never receded.

With women making up less than 20% of the diplomatic corps and facing increased barriers at the top, the so-called glass ceiling is apparent. Modern statecraft requires more women in senior positions. Coming from an Arab majority-Muslim society, with enlightened leadership and a traditional outlook, there are difficult negotiations between modernization and tradition, development and conservatism. As we take these discussions forward, it is imperative to ensure that women are well represented around the table and that gender barriers are challenged in my part of the world.

Capitalizing on my understanding of power relations within society and the criticisms at hand, I intend to garner support and persuade internally to bring the community along on these sensitive issues.

Over the past decade, I have worked on issues relating to foreign policy, but most recently my portfolio expanded to focus on human rights, social and developmental issues. With that came the realization of the nexus between political and social development. A case in point is Jordan’s current economic challenges and the effect of the ongoing regional crises on the development trajectory and reform process.

With the shifting landscape of global politics and its direct impact on the Middle East, it is ever more important to gain the leadership skills and know-how to help mitigate these changes. At HKS I intend to harness the necessary skill set to influence public policy at home and to create the change I want to see in society. Being an ELI fellow will provide a unique opportunity to interact with visionary leaders and future Arab changemakers.
As an Algerian woman born and raised under challenging conditions and had to leave my home for a hope of a better life abroad, I aspire to change this reality and create a better future for young Algerians. Observing my people’s struggle with lack of economic opportunity, high unemployment, failing education, and corrupted and bureaucratic systems has ignited my sense of patriotism. I am determined to return home to Algeria and create education and entrepreneurial opportunities for my people.

Through my work in a Sovereign Wealth Fund, I have contributed to the economic development of the UAE, a country close to my heart. I have attained a deep understanding of how Arab nations with structural similarities can leverage their resources and human capital to create economic prosperity through diversified economies, solid financial institutions, strong education systems, sound infrastructure and proper governance.

By engaging with Algeria’s first think tank, I have learnt that it is possible to collaboratively and constructively utilize the country’s immense talent to effect change. On a note of personal impact, I have come closer to my people and reinforced my determination to join the public sector, design sound policies and legislation, lead a life of use, and create a better future for my fellow Algerians.

I am extremely grateful for my years abroad, as I have built a successful finance career, discovered new cultures and ways of thinking, and become a more tolerant leader. Yet, I find nothing more rewarding than when I help my people. My passion and commitment to my homeland are my source of energy to eliminate barriers and effect positive change.

While at Harvard Kennedy School, and through the Emirates Leadership Initiative, I will make common cause with fellows of diverse perspectives both to inform the policies I will later formulate and to expand the peer network that will support my life’s work. As my region faces daunting challenges ranging from wars to refugee crises, I am determined to lift up the Arab world and make it a place where its youth can thrive, realize its full potential, and contribute to peace and prosperity.
“As an Algerian woman born and raised under challenging conditions who had to leave my home for a hope of a better life abroad, I aspire to change this reality and create a better future for young Algerians. Observing my people’s struggle with lack of economic opportunity, high unemployment, failing education, and corrupted and bureaucratic systems has ignited my sense of patriotism. I am determined to lift up the Arab world and make it a place where its youth can thrive, realize their full potential, and contribute to peace and prosperity.”

Lucila Takjerad
Harvard Kennedy School
Emirates Leadership Initiative Fellow
MC-MPA Candidate
ABOUT THE GEORGE LEADERSHIP FELLOWSHIP

“Our communities are faced with more and greater challenges than ever before. We envision this program as one that will help future leaders learn the skills that will enable them to confront these challenges in innovative ways.”

Bill George  
Senior Fellow, Harvard Business School  
Co-Founder, George Family Foundation

Made possible through a generous gift from the George Family Foundation, the George Leadership Fellowship supports selected students in the joint degree program offered through Harvard Business School (HBS) and Harvard Kennedy School (HKS) with a $10,000 stipend. The fellowship reflects the foundation’s commitment to enhancing public service by investing in character formation and leadership development.

Fellows are selected based on their demonstrated interest in community and organizational transformation through public service, activism, and social entrepreneurship, as well as a commitment to working in two of three designated areas—the public sector, private sector, and nonprofit sector—over the course of their careers. Special emphasis in the program is placed upon character development and ethical leadership.
ABOUT BILL AND PENNY GEORGE

Bill George is a Senior Fellow at Harvard Business School, and is the former Chair and Chief Executive Officer of Medtronic. He is the author of Discover Your True North and The Discover Your True North Fieldbook, Authentic Leadership, True North, Finding Your True North, 7 Lessons for Leading in Crisis and True North Groups. Bill currently serves as a director of Goldman Sachs, The Mayo Clinic, and the YMCA of the Greater Twin Cities. Bill has previously served on the boards of ExxonMobil, Target, Novartis and The World Economic Forum USA. In 2018, Bill was presented with the Larry Foster Award for Integrity in Public Communication by the Arthur W. Page Center. The Franklin Institute presented Bill with the Bower Award for Business Leadership in 2014. He was elected to the National Academy of Engineering in 2012 and was named one of “Top 25 Business Leaders of the Past 25 Years” by PBS. Mr. George received his BSIE with high honors from Georgia Tech, his MBA with high distinction from Harvard University, where he was a Baker Scholar. He has received honorary PhDs from Georgia Tech, Mayo Medical School, University of St. Thomas, Augsburg College, and Bryant University.

Penny Pilgram George is board chair of the George Family Foundation in Minneapolis. Established in 1994 by Penny and Bill George, the foundation fosters wholeness in mind, body, spirit, and community by furthering the work of authentic leaders and transformative programs serving the common good. Dr. George is a pioneer and leader in the integrative health and medicine movement, working to transform society's consciousness around health and wellbeing on both the institutional and community level. She is co-founder of the Bravewell Collaborative, a national collaboration of philanthropists dedicated to advancing the principles and practices of integrative medicine. She is co-founder of the Penny George Institute for Health and Healing at Allina Health, which is the clinical service line responsible for prevention, wellness and integrative medicine across the entire system. Dr. George currently sits the board of the Penny George Institute Foundation. As a consulting psychologist, she specialized for more than twenty years helping diverse organizations select and develop senior executives and build high-performing teams—expertise she draws upon in her philanthropic work and leadership roles. She holds a bachelor's degree from Duke University, a master's degree from the University of Minnesota and a doctorate in psychology from the University of St. Thomas.
NARRATIVE
Growing up in Atlanta, I have fond memories of playing soccer with a skyline backdrop, going to vibrant local theaters, and attending the 1996 Olympics. I saw the city grow immensely. I have also seen the challenges Atlanta faces. While attending Georgia Tech, I saw the blight in many neighborhoods. Walking distance from the campus and in thriving midtown Atlanta is English Avenue, a food desert plagued by abandoned properties, criminal activity, and poverty. Volunteering in this community instilled in me a passion to help Atlanta to grow in a way that improves the lives of its people.

Following graduation, I interned in the White House Office of Public Engagement and Council on Women and Girls. This experience exposed me to the public sector and solidified the economic importance of social policies that support American families like paid family leave and equal pay for equal work. Motivated by the opportunity to gain an analytical skillset and exposure to best in class private sector approaches, I then joined Bain & Company where I worked across industries on a range of projects requiring corporate transformation.

Throughout the joint program, I have been exploring how to leverage market forces to solve some of our world’s toughest problems. I have worked with two impact investing firms, Accion Venture Lab and Omidyar Network, who work to expand access to affordable financial services through investments in early stage, innovative companies. This summer, I am exploring the same question, but through the private sector lense, working in a product role at PayPal.

I hope every child growing up in Atlanta experiences the vibrant, diverse city of my childhood. As I prepare for a career that will have a positive impact on Atlanta and beyond, I am thankful for this time at Harvard to deepen my understanding of economic development, digital city service delivery, and financial inclusion. In my final year, I am excited to have the mentorship and community provided by the George Fellowship to support my transition back in the workforce and help prepare me to apply all that I have learned.
I am driven by the belief that healthcare is a universal right that allows people to live happier, more productive lives. With two physician parents, I was exposed to both the tragedy of poor health and the human capacity to heal from a young age. My fascination with innovation in health led me to start conducting laboratory research beginning at age thirteen. At sixteen, I volunteered with a mobile medical van servicing rural communities in India. Realizing that I could help to expand services despite my young age and relative inexperience, I became obsessed with improving health in developing countries. Since then, I have had many professional opportunities to work in healthcare strategy, operations, and investing roles alongside donors, manufacturers, and governments around the world. Reflecting on these experiences, I am most thankful for the chance to live in Rwanda. After transferring there with the Clinton Health Access Initiative for the first time in 2014, I returned a year later to help Zipline launch the world’s first commercial drone system to deliver lifesaving medicine on-demand. I loved in an environment full of unproven potential. I enjoyed forging relationships and aligning disparate parties. Visiting doctors, laboratory technicians, and patients gave me regular fulfillment that our work was improving lives. But once Zipline’s system was built and self-sustaining with local staff in Rwanda, I wanted to think bigger. I craved the chance to support many such companies that leverage innovation to improve healthcare, so I returned to graduate school.

Looking forward, I plan to devote my career to finding ways to increase access to healthcare in emerging markets countries. I love working in this environment because the people are warm, every day is mission-driven, and the rules are still being written. The right combination of public and private sector collaboration can make an impactful difference in saving lives and I am excited to figure out how to make this happen. I am grateful for the opportunity to be a George Fellow in pursuit of this goal.
Growing up I was a heavy user of public services. I attended public schools, received healthcare from public providers, and played sports in publicly funded facilities. Public institutions gave me the opportunity to be the person I am today and I want to ensure that future generations of Canadians have the same opportunities I did. Over time, the increased complexity of providing these services has driven up their costs.

In my early career, I worked as an advisor and as an investor to allocate capital and optimize operations across a range of organizations. This work focused on helping private organizations maximize returns for shareholders, but I have seen how the same principles and tools can be used to create value in the public sector.

While at McKinsey, I worked with a large global foundation to develop a program bringing life-saving health commodities to women in the world’s poorest countries. The program utilized sophisticated procurement tools to reduce the cost of key health commodities and established an innovative funding program for semi-private organizations to bring these commodities to remote areas traditional providers could not reach. These tools, common in the private sector, allowed our client to reach a larger population with a higher level of service at the same or lower cost than they could before. Witnessing this success motivated me to explore how similar results can be achieved at public institutions closer to home.

My time at Harvard has given me the opportunity to explore this problem in depth. At the Kennedy School I have focused on digitizing government, helping develop the school’s first course on government digital services. That experience helped me find opportunities to test my learnings in practice, first as an intern for an upstart innovation team within the Canadian government and then at a dynamic early stage startup in Silicon Valley. I am excited about the opportunity that being a George Fellow will provide in my third and final year on campus to reflect on these experiences and determine the most impactful path I can take to ensuring these important government services are available for future generations.
My grandfather is a Holocaust survivor. When I was eighteen, he brought our family on a visit to Poland. As we stood in the stadium where his family was funneled to the trains, he described the ghetto roundup in agonizing detail. The closing memory, lucid above all others, was his father’s final request: never abandon your values. My grandfather begged us to build a better world by fighting for the dignity of not just our own people, but of all.

His words stayed with me, and I began studying international development soon after the trip. Since then, I’ve sought to understand how to create economic opportunity and increase the social impact of public policies.

After college, I worked for IDinsight to support evidence-based policymaking in developing countries. I designed research programs to help policymakers improve HIV programming in Uganda, agricultural initiatives in Rwanda and Tanzania, and biometric identification applications in India. I then worked for Bain & Company in South Africa, where I helped launch a transformation plan for an industrial goods company and create a five-year development strategy for a government agency in West Africa. This summer, I worked at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security developing strategies for the federal government to prevent and prepare for global pandemics.

I aim to spend my career improving policies addressing public health, international development, and emerging technologies. I am excited for the opportunity to deepen my understanding of these issues at Harvard.
NARRATIVE

Coming into graduate school, my theoretical knowledge of economic development was very limited. On the contrary, the challenges of development had been so intricately interwoven into my personal story. Over the course of a decade, I had watched as my country was ravaged by the blight of HIV/AIDS followed by economic turmoil with hyperinflation soaring. Zimbabwe came to a grinding halt as public systems collapsed, essential commodities became unavailable, the nation became food insecure, and widespread joblessness prevailed.

Our story, as a country, unfortunately, is not unique. Many developing countries struggle to sustain economic growth, often having prolonged periods of collapse that result in stagnation. As I have explored potential solutions to these growth challenges over the past two years, it has become increasingly clear that there is a need for a sector-wide approach with actors from the private, public, and social sectors playing distinct and mutually supporting roles. Consequently, my ability to be an authentic leader across these sectors will be instrumental to gaining credibility, influence, and enabling collaboration.

It is my hope that my experience as a George Fellow will complement the rigorous policy-orientated training from Harvard Kennedy School and the case-method learning from Harvard Business School with the leadership skills required for success. As I embark on this final year with a cohort of other fellows, I look forward to both learning from and being challenged by their perspectives. At the end of this journey, I hope to leverage the sum of all these experiences to serve governments, businesses, and nonprofits addressing constraining challenges in Africa and other developing countries.
In 2007, I watched my mother take oath as a Member of the National Assembly of Pakistan. She had achieved her lifelong dream of having a seat in the Pakistani Parliament. My mother's commitment to leadership and service motivated me to directly contribute to the sustainability of democracy in the country. In the summer that followed, I worked with a United Nations project in Islamabad focused on strengthening democracy through parliamentary development. I trained new Parliamentarians and their committee staff on legislative drafting, the budget process, and parliamentary oversight. I did this while witnessing first hand, the very real effect of parliamentary legislation on my father's business, a citrus farm, two hours west of the capital.

I took my interest in business and politics to college where I studied both Economics and Government. I subsequently worked in management consulting in both Boston and Dubai. This gave me the opportunity to work on a range of issues in the private sector—advising business leaders on expansions into new markets, organizational changes and transformations, as well as understanding the implications of these decisions on employees, customers, and broader society. The job allowed me to learn a framework to think about a wide array of problems. It also challenged me to push beyond frameworks to drive from imperfect information toward practical solutions. Throughout my case work, I continued to learn that business decisions are inextricably linked to the policies that affect them. I found that understanding and effectively promoting these links can lead to better outcomes.

The joint degree has allowed me to further my understanding of cross-sector links. Following graduate school, I hope to continue to move between the public and private sectors, finding the spaces where I can contribute to economic growth and empowerment, in particular, in Pakistan. I am grateful to Bill and Penny George for the opportunity to work on my ability to be a more effective and authentic leader at the nexus of the private and the public sector even when the road is tough, because ultimately, it is the challenges that will make the journey worthwhile.
NARRATIVE

In college and during my early professional career, I focused on working with emerging economies undertaking social policy reform. From an Ethiopian agriculture agency to the Vietnamese education ministry, I enjoyed working with foreign governments on population services projects. The need for change in these countries was high and the professional experience of working in them was exciting.

But distance gave me a level of objectivity in viewing my home country and community that I lacked when I resided there. Living overseas, working with foreign citizens, and seeing international news coverage of the U.S. made me realize just how atypical my upbringing was. Growing up the child of a journalist and academic in liberal Philadelphia, I was shielded from so much of what afflicts those who are not as lucky in the birth lottery. And as hard as I sometimes felt things were—from early struggles in school to coming out as gay to my family—I had a solid support system ready to catch me when I stumbled.

The 2016 election cycle put things in stark perspective. The country I thought was on track to solve many of its historical injustices and problems of inequality was, in fact, falling off the rails. We elected someone who undermines trust in our public institutions and whose deputies reject policies that level the playing field for people of color, members of the LGBTQ community, women, and other historically repressed groups.

In the short to medium term, I plan to help repair the damage being done to government and the communities targeted by harmful public policy and populist rhetoric. While there are many ways to do this, I find working in local government the most personally and professionally compelling given the tangible, operational nature of its challenges and its proximity to economic and social problems.

I am excited to use my final year of the joint degree program and my time as a George Fellow to further develop the skills needed to be successful in my immediate endeavor and the many that come after it in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.
From a young age, I have been gripped by the health, education, and economic disparities shackling our world. Although I grew up in a comfortable Boston suburb, my worldview was forged volunteering in hidden corners of the globe. In HIV hospital wards of rural Kenya, remote Honduran jungle clinics, and dilapidated South African schoolrooms, I witnessed how overwhelming the odds are against so many. I resolved to invest my life in serving society’s most marginalized.

In pursuit of this mission, my methods have evolved. As a Harvard undergraduate, I sought nonprofit solutions to these challenges, founding an education collaborative to serve at-risk South African youth. Through a World Health Organization internship, I learned how seemingly small changes in public policy can mean the difference between saving or overlooking millions of lives. After college, I built skills in the private sector as a strategy consultant at Oliver Wyman. While there, I gained an instinct for breaking down problems, a passion for data analytics, and an appreciation for the way profitability can unlock scale.

Eager to harness my consulting skillset to solve social problems, I transitioned to FSG, a social impact consulting firm, for three exhilarating years. I advised a nationwide charity on improving educational outcomes through community-wide collaboration, enabled a technology company to address workforce development through nonprofit partnerships, and helped an international aid agency coordinate a multi-stakeholder HIV prevention rollout. Most recently, at the Massachusetts Governor’s Office, I surfaced innovative public-private partnerships that could transform public service delivery. In these and other projects, I came alive working at the intersection of the nonprofit, public, and corporate spheres. Although humbled by the complexity of social inequities facing our world, I am convinced cross-sector collaboration can bring truly systemic change. My goal is to lead that kind of change.

The joint degree program and George Fellowship experience will hone my leadership skills, challenge my thinking, and broaden my cross-sector toolkit. Through the Center for Public Leadership and George Fellowship communities, I look forward to gaining perspectives, partners, and practical skills that will equip me to help solve our world’s most entrenched social challenges.
For as long as I can remember, I have been interested in the problems we face as a society and how to collectively and equitably resolve them. In particular, I find it pertinent to focus on problems that adversely affect our most vulnerable populations and harm their potential for social mobility and achievement. After feeling unfulfilled by working on a Wall Street trading desk, I left to spend four years addressing a problem I feel very passionate about fixing: America's unequal public school system.

As a teacher, I taught the first 7th grade class for the Success Academy Charter School Network, which now operates forty one public schools serving 13,000 mostly low-income students in New York City. As a part of this organization, I worked to help create high-performing public schools in neighborhoods that otherwise lacked such educational opportunity. As a teacher, assistant principal, and ultimately acting school leader, it was thrilling to contribute to the mission of using public funds to create world-class public schools, no matter the neighborhood or student population. Nearly all of our schools have had phenomenal success thus far, receiving national recognition and visits from those around the world seeking to replicate our results. Most importantly, as these schools succeed they become antidotes to our unequal school system—proving that with the right management, mindset, and pedagogy any school can prosper.

It has been thrilling to be a part of the joint degree program at Harvard for the past two years, and I have cherished learning from the diverse backgrounds of my classmates and Center for Public Leadership Fellows. In my third year, I hope to continue to take advantage of my co-curricular experience by being exposed to a variety of innovative approaches and sharpening my analytical abilities, developing as a leader, and expanding my understanding of how to solve problems at the intersection of business and government.
NARRATIVE

I have grown up professionally as a marketer, starting at an advertising agency in New York where my job was to help clients better understand people. I studied why empty-nester parents tend to remodel their kitchens; I learned why the choice of haircare products for a black daughter can be fraught; and I investigated why so many people avoid retirement planning.

While there I founded a nonprofit marketing group. We aimed to help organizations increase their impact by better understanding the communities with which they worked. In Kenya, we worked to increase the use of a clean toilet franchise. In India, we inquired into the food habits of anemic moms. More recently in the Middle East, time spent with UN frontline workers and Palestinians leaving Syria helped to improve refugee registration programs. Both the private and social impact work has instilled in me the conviction that inquiring into human behavior—appreciating fallibilities and quirks, history and context—is a necessary pursuit.

My past two years at Harvard have been a welcome break to think more expansively about the big issues confronting us. I have been drawn to negotiations and mediation work since I arrived. The discipline relies on a similar curiosity: why do people behave the way they do, and what can we do about it?

I have reflected on how most seemingly intractable problems in the world are in part a result of different groups struggling to step into each other’s worlds. On issues local and global, from climate change to refugee resettlement, that imaginative failure makes it harder to spot shared interests and discover common ground. Negotiations and mediation start from the premise that agreements might not be feasible or even desirable, but it is worth trying – and that we are often surprised.

I am writing this from Bangkok, working with an organization that mediates armed conflicts. When I return and begin the George Fellowship this fall, I’m looking forward to finding support and enrichment from a diverse cohort of Fellows that I know will offer a lifetime of seeing the world through different eyes.
As I sat in my finance class that September morning in 2008, I could tell something consequential was unfolding before me. My professor paced across the classroom, agitatedly telling us about the $85 billion loan that the Federal Reserve had approved the night before for American International Group, a company that sounded only vaguely familiar to me. Just the day before, another company—something Brothers—had filed for bankruptcy. Only a month into the semester and my first foray into the world of finance, I was just beginning to understand the significance of these events.

Three years later, I was sitting at my desk at J.P. Morgan, in the company’s Financial Institutions Investment Banking Group, advising CEOs and CFOs of U.S. banks on strategic acquisitions and capital raising decisions. Since September 2008, my curiosity and understanding of these institutions had mushroomed, and I was determined to learn more about the role of these companies in our society and what the relationship between regulators and banks should be to ensure a competitive and sustainable financial system that could avoid the errors that contributed to the 2008 crisis.

After three years advising financial institutions as an investment banker and two years of investing in financial services companies as a private equity associate, I enrolled in the joint degree program between the Harvard Kennedy School and the Harvard Business School to better understand the multifaceted relationship between public and private actors in the financial industry. In my third year of the joint degree program, I will continue to explore how financial institutions and government can work to incentivize a more sustainable approach to personal financial planning and retirement saving among middle class Americans.

In the long term, passionate about giving back to a country that has given me and my immigrant family so many opportunities, I aim to pursue public office to help create similar opportunities for others. Through the generous support of the George Fellowship, I aim to further develop the leadership skills that will make me a more effective and resilient change agent.
My getting to Harvard was an accident. During my first year as a Center for Public Leadership (CPL) Fellow, I had a chance to give a talk on how a high school scheduling conflict, a doomed relationship, and my mother’s willingness to put me ahead of her own career ambitions got me to where I am today. There was no grand plan, only an accumulation of impact from the actions of others, which shaped me in profound and unintended ways.

In our increasingly interconnected world, our footprint for impacting others has never been larger. From where we shop to what we put on our social media accounts, we make small decisions every day that can have dramatic consequences for others. Because I was one of the lucky ones, those impacts conspired to send me here. For many others, even everyday business choices—like where a product is sourced from—made by leaders they never elected are sources of uncertainty that can have a cascading impact on their lives to detrimental effect. Where bold decisions and big sums of money grab the headlines, the truly powerful is too small to be newsworthy.

What this means is that opportunities for leadership are everywhere. A common story told by many private sector leaders is that impact is something you do after your career: after you make enough money and have enough power at your disposal. The reality, however, is that leadership is possible from many angles and in all places around the world. There’s no ideal job title, no minimum account balance, and no prerequisite academic degree—relying on them may just hold you back.

Learning this lesson is one of the greatest gifts that Harvard Kennedy School and CPL have given me.

My experience over the last two years has been nothing short of transformational, and I have the CPL community in part to thank for that. Returning to CPL this year as a George Fellow, I hope to take this journey down a new path—to start turning the tools, insights, and inspiration I have found through this program into action.
NARRATIVE

I was born in a country that no longer exists: East Germany. While this has served as a handy “fun fact” throughout my time at Harvard Kennedy School and Harvard Business School, it also largely influenced the values that my mom, who raised me on her own, and my grandparents, both survivors of World War II, instilled in me: freedom, equality, and peace. The times of freedom and peace that I enjoyed while growing up and the opportunities I have had—unlike my mom or my grandparents—were a direct result of reunification of Germany and European integration in support of these values.

I have therefore always had a deep appreciation for the European project. This has also informed my research interests during my undergraduate education, which happened to coincide with the European financial crisis—a serious threat to European integration. I was fascinated by how closely economics and politics are intertwined, and ended up double-majoring in those two subjects. After having spent some years in consulting, focusing primarily on work in the public and social sectors, I consequently decided to pursue the joint degree program to better prepare for work at the intersection of the private and the public sectors of business and policy.

Today, I worry more than ever about the risk of disintegration and deglobalization, as the influence and popularity of nationalistic ideas are rising on both sides of the Atlantic, threatening the very core of the values I grew up treasuring so much. I have recently been interested in the role that the arts play in creating a sense of inclusion and bringing people together, within and beyond the borders of a country. The joint degree program has been a wonderful experience; I have been inspired and encouraged to explore such new areas. I look forward to another year of both exploration and introspection, and am thrilled to be part of the George Fellowship to share ideas and continue defining my personal leadership vision.
I want to reimagine what is possible. I want to ask these questions, “What if we could redesign society? What if people could live their best lives—with unconstrained by lack of money, information, opportunity?”

I want to find new ways of realizing the answers to these questions. I hope to create new possibilities through technology, and in doing so, unleash greater opportunities for all.

I have been lucky in my life to be the beneficiary of reimagined constraints. My parents pushed boundaries so that I could have more opportunities—refusing to let humble beginnings in rural Taiwan dictate their fate.

Inspired by my parents’ life stories, I have explored careers focused on financial empowerment and information asymmetries. After college in Nairobi, Kenya, I found an early answer through technology. I saw M-Pesa’s impact in Kenya, and decided to continue exploring how technology could advance entrepreneurship and information access.

So, before entering my final year of the joint degree program at Harvard Business School (HBS) and Harvard Kennedy School (HKS), I explored careers at Goldman Sachs, NerdWallet, an internet startup focused on financial empowerment, and X, Google’s moonshots lab.

These experiences strengthened my belief that we can empower people through technology and business. At NerdWallet, I created a team to connect small business owners with the best sources of capital. My most vivid memories are of the people: gratitude in the eyes of entrepreneurs who dreamt bigger because of new funding; renewed hope from entrepreneurs whom I taught at the Small Business Administration and local Chambers of Commerce. Similarly, at X, I helped launch new free-space-optics technology to provide internet connectivity to rural India and hurricane-struck Puerto Rico. It fueled renewed hope, resilience and determination.

Through the George Fellowship at HKS and HBS, I will be able to continue redefining what is possible—for myself and for the communities I care about. Going forward, I hope to match new learnings and experiences with a perpetual curiosity. I want to always be wondering, “what if?”
Growing up as the last child in a family of four was exciting. My parents encouraged my enthusiasm for discovery, even when sometimes, this ended in me destroying household appliances! Hence my childhood nickname bàsèjé, meaning 'the one who breaks things.' I just had to know what made things work!

All through my career, I have sought to explore ideas and opportunities to sharpen my thinking and understanding of evidence acquisition methodologies and effective communication to a diverse audience. I have found that communication and partnerships are critical elements in guaranteeing a high success rate for public policy. During my recent service with government in Nigeria, I developed and led the implementation of Nigeria's program on agricultural resilience, which is focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, increasing productivity along the value chain and ensuring that 70 million farm families are able to cope with the shocks and stresses of climate change. This role required me to create synergies among multiple actors; the farmers, the public sector, other agribusinesses and processors, as well as institutional partners. My healthy balance of enthusiasm and skepticism ensured that I championed policies and programs that were firmly rooted on sound evidence and focused on national priorities.

My next goal is to focus on the nexus between empirical evidence and communication in fostering resilient economies, beginning with the agricultural sector, especially how it responds to the challenge of growing nutritious food for the world's 9 billion people by 2050 while under pressure from climate change. Beyond that, I intend to take up leadership positions in developing and championing climate smart and resilient policies across Africa, and promoting global partnerships in the exchange of ideas and practices that promote sustainable development. Combining my Mid-Career M.P.A. program with the Louis Bacon Environmental Fellowship will integrate me into a network of like minded colleagues, with whom I would like to share and debate ideas to sharpen my own efforts and make me a better informed, focused, and active leader in my field.
“For as long as I can remember, I have been interested in the problems we face as a society and how to collectively and equitably resolve them. In particular, I find it pertinent to focus on problems that adversely affect our most vulnerable populations and harm their potential for social mobility and achievement. After feeling unfulfilled by working on a Wall Street trading desk, I left to spend four years addressing a problem I feel very passionate about fixing: America’s unequal public school system. It has been thrilling to be a part of the joint degree program at Harvard for the past two years, and I have cherished learning from the diverse backgrounds of my classmates and Center for Public Leadership Fellows.”

Nick Simmons
Harvard Kennedy School
George Leadership Fellow
MPP/MBA Candidate
ABOUT THE GLEITSMAN PROGRAM IN LEADERSHIP FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

With the income generated by a $23 million endowed gift from the estate of Alan L. Gleitsman, CPL launched the Gleitsman Program in Leadership for Social Change (GPLSC) in 2007. It was Mr. Gleitsman’s hope that if the world knew of the accomplishments of social activists, others would be inspired by their stories and would fight to correct some of the other problems facing us, thereby improving the quality of life for all of us.

The GPLSC’s three principal components are:

• The Gleitsman Leadership Fellowship Program, which provides significant financial support and a robust co-curricular experience to promising students interested in social change;

• The Gleitsman Citizen Activist and International Activist Awards, each of which carries a $125,000 cash prize and enables students and the greater Harvard community to learn from the presence of an extraordinary change agent when she or he visits campus; and

• The Alan L. Gleitsman Professorship in Social Innovation, an endowed professorship that will link pivotal social innovation programs at Harvard Kennedy School, including the longstanding Gleitsman Program in Leadership for Social Change and the New World Social Enterprise Fellows Program, which launched in the fall of 2015. Both programs are housed at Harvard Kennedy School’s Center for Public Leadership.

This year, the endowment will support four new activists with full tuition fellowships and welcome back three returning fellow to carry on Alan’s vision as often expressed through his favorite Robert F. Kennedy quote: “Few will have the greatness to bend history itself, but each of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation.”
ABOUT ALAN GLEITSMAN

Alan L. Gleitsman was born in Brooklyn, N.Y. in 1930. At the age of just nine, his father died and left Alan to be raised by his mother who worked full-time to support him and his younger sister. He received an AB in Economics from Cornell in 1951 before subsequently serving two years in the U.S. Air Force. Mr. Gleitsman went on to become a successful entrepreneur in the television industry for more than three decades and the founder of The Gleitsman Foundation, which he established in 1989 to honor individuals who have initiated social change. Mr. Gleitsman “wanted to recognize people who make a difference, tell their story, and make other people aware of what one person can do.”

In addition to the foundation, Mr. Gleitsman initiated a scholarship program at UCLA designed to help attract outstanding medical students to the field of geriatrics in memory of his late mother; he was honored by the University of Southern California for his contributions to cancer research; he participated in the International Peace Walk in the Soviet Union; and he established a scholarship program at the high school he attended in Great Neck, New York that is awarded annually to the school’s most outstanding graduate.

Mr. Gleitsman began his business career in sales for Sterling Television, a television program distribution company that later became The Walter Reade Organization. In 1970, he started Alan Enterprises, Inc. in Los Angeles, specializing in the syndication of television programs in the United States. By the time he sold the company in 1986 to focus his time fully on philanthropy and issues related to social justice, he had acquired the rights to a substantial library of motion pictures, cartoons, and series, and was actively involved in distribution to television and video throughout the world.

A father of four and a grandfather of six, Mr. Gleitsman passed away in May 2006.
PAHUA CHA
HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL MASTER IN PUBLIC POLICY CANDIDATE, 2019

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS
Stanford University, BA in Human Biology, 2010

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS
Molina Healthcare: Director of Regulatory Affairs
Obama for America 2012: Field Organizer
Families USA: Health Policy Analyst
Baltimore Department of Health: Special Assistant
Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellow
Stanford Hmong Student Union: Co-Founder and Chair, 2007–10

NARRATIVE
I am passionate about protecting low-income people from being marginalized or discriminated against, especially when they do not fit the “model poor” narrative. Growing up, I saw how people were often willing to help when my family needed it. Always the appreciative and industrious immigrants, we were seen as the deserving poor. I was delivered into this world on the kitchen floor after my mom, heavily pregnant, had spent the previous day picking blueberries as a farm laborer. A case worker assigned to my family helped ensure my mom and I had regular doctor appointments after my birth and that my family received WIC and food stamp benefits.

But the narrative of the “deserving poor” requires the “undeserving poor” as its foil, and my family has lived that side, too. In 2007, my older brother was arrested and sentenced to a detention center because of a political decision to more rigorously enforce a retroactive 1996 federal immigration law. This law warranted my brother’s deportation because of a felony he had committed more than a decade ago as a teenager. A rise in anti-immigrant sentiment, especially against those who had criminal records, meant that there was no legal aid for my brother, and the legal options to overturn his notice of deportation were limited.

Living both sides of this narrative about the poor showed me how public rhetoric can have arbitrary and harmful effects on policy, including access to public assistance programs and law enforcement priorities. Today, even pro-immigration reform voices, such as President Obama, routinely highlight their support for deporting “criminal” immigrants, using people like my brother to establish themselves as reasonable voices on immigration. My family’s experiences have compelled me to advocate for public policies and laws that benefit all low-income people. In particular, I see health as the nexus of many low-income issues, and for that reason I am passionate about creating a more equitable and just healthcare system. Through my work and time in the Gleitsman Fellowship, I want to continue pursuing my commitment to seeking justice and dignity for all low-income people, regardless of what their story may be.
NARRATIVE

In between my two years at Harvard, I worked for the UK Labour Party’s Shadow Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, advising on a range of issues related to the difficult process of disentangling the UK from the EU. Before coming to HKS, I spent a year advocating for journalists imprisoned without trial in Turkey, a country in which judicial independence has been dramatically eroded. I was involved in coordinating interventions with governments, non-governmental organizations and supranational institutions like the Council of Europe and the UN.

I had moved to Turkey after four years of working as a litigator in a large international law firm in London and Tokyo because, horrified by the unfolding refugee crisis, I wanted to help those whose lives had been upended by the Syrian war. After arriving in Istanbul, I designed and helped implement a UNICEF-funded program that encouraged refugee families to take their children out of work and send them to school. The program was rolled out across eleven cities in Turkey, which currently hosts the world’s largest refugee population.

I’m looking forward to the opportunities that HKS and the Gleitsman community will continue to provide in my second year to think through policy approaches to these issues, not only because of their drastic effect on the futures of child refugees or imprisoned journalists but also because of the central role that migration and institutional degradation are playing in populist politics around the world.
When I came out as gay at age fourteen in Omaha, Nebraska, the last thing I imagined for myself was a career fighting for LGBTQ rights. After four years of being the first openly gay student in my high school's history, however, I was more than ready to dive into the vibrant LGBTQ community at college. My eager participation at Brown University culminated in my roles as the Head Chair of the Queer Alliance and the Conference Chair for IvyQ 2012, which brought over 400 LGBTQ college students from across the country to our campus. My experiences at Brown opened my eyes to the reality that the LGBTQ community is just as diverse as the larger population, and that a real commitment to LGBTQ justice requires a concurrent commitment to broader social justice as well.

I took this newfound conviction home with me after graduation to continue my work with the Queer Nebraska Youth Network, an organization I started at nineteen to try to recreate at home the aspects of community I found to be so beneficial to me in Providence. My efforts on the ground led me to the Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest LGBTQ organization. They hired me as their first Nebraska Field Organizer, expanding my geographical scope, target population, and playbook for change making. Organizing press conferences, working with business and religious communities, and having heartfelt conversations directly with policymakers made me aware of my own ability to alter, however slightly, the course of history in the Cornhusker State. It also made me aware of how much I still had to learn.

After two years back in Nebraska, I took time to travel and landed in Spain, where I endeavored to learn how issues of difference and inequality had, or had not, been resolved in another context through work with the LGBTI Program of the Autonomous Community of Madrid and the National LGBT Federation (Federación Estatal de Lesbianas, Gais, Transexuales, y Bisexuales).

Moving forward, I am excited to leverage my experience as a Gleitsman Fellow and combined law / policy education to continue the fight against discrimination and injustice facing my multifaceted community.
My purpose is to build better services for people in need through user centered design and technology. The thread that unites all my work is the desire to deliver products that maximize resources and serve our most vulnerable populations.

I recently worked at Google X’s Project Loon, extending internet connectivity to people in rural and remote areas worldwide. I have worked on projects for the White House streamlining student loan repayment, clarifying the immigrant visa process, and lessening the paperwork burden for clinicians caring for Medicare patients. Before the White House, I co-founded a startup that developed a more intuitive navigation service using visually intuitive wayfinding partnering with the DC Department of Transportation. Through my work with the tech community, I co-led and created DCFemTech, a women in tech coalition, focused on lowering barriers to entry for minorities and women in technology.

I’m a first generation Vietnamese-American and the daughter of two refugees. If I stay true to my principles and learn from the breadth of human experience, I can lead policy, design, and technology to a future that is just and inclusive.
**IVAN RAHMAN**

**HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL** Master in Public Administration Candidate, 2019

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**ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS**

- Stanford University, MBA Candidate, 2019
- Relay Graduate School of Education, MA in Teaching, Middle School Generalist, 2015
- New York University, BA in Individualized Study, *summa cum laude*, 2011

**PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS**

- Education Pioneers: Education Pioneers Fellow
- Revive The Dream Institute: RTD Fellow
- StartingBloc: Social Innovation Fellow
- Teach For America: Corps Member
- Coro New York Leadership Center: Coro Fellow in Public Affairs
- People For the American Way: Front Line Leaders Academy Fellow
- Public Allies New York: Public Ally
- Knoll Farm: Better Selves Fellow

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**NARRATIVE**

“*Do you need help?*” These were the first words of English my parents learned in 1986 as they walked from store to store in Times Square seeking a job after their 8,000-mile journey from Bangladesh. My mother found work folding clothes at a tourist shop, and my father secured employment as a cashier at GNC. Their incomes enabled them to settle in the South Bronx, a neighborhood with affordable rent and a small Bangladeshi enclave.

Growing up in the Bronx, I hung out with people who looked, dressed, and spoke like me. Whenever I wasn’t at school or at the mosque, I played outside with my neighbors. We formed a community, brought together by our parents and strengthened by our friendship. As part of that community, I never thought twice about race or class. My parents were busy trying to make ends meet, but so were the other families I knew.

Then, I attended a private high school in Manhattan on full scholarship. I suddenly felt like an outsider. My classmates looked, dressed, and spoke differently than me. We were in the same classroom, but, once school ended, many of them received private tutoring in chess, playing an instrument, or cracking the SATs. I could not follow suit, as my parents could not afford the tutoring fees. Instead, I retreated to my local library. I still remember photocopying each page of the library’s yellow SAT-prep book for five cents, in a naïve attempt to “catch up” with my classmates.

As I think back to the days when my parents would walk from store to store asking if anyone needed their help, I realize that so much of my fortune is due to their hard work and sacrifice. The hardships they faced, coupled with my community’s care for me, drive me in everything I do.

Ultimately, creating greater opportunities for people like my parents and like those in my community—creating a society that treats its poorest members better—has become my purpose. By making it possible for me to attend Harvard, to learn essential leadership skills, and to build relationships with the change agents of today and tomorrow, the Gleitsman Fellowship has only accelerated my pursuit of my mission.
I developed a keen interest in the social determinants of health in medical school, and a desire to address the upstream causes of illness in my individual interactions with patients. As I began my residency, the federal government introduced a draconian policy to cut healthcare for refugees. I saw the effects of the cuts first hand and struggled to try to help my patients who could no longer access testing, specialist care, or treatment. This was further compounded by the fact that refugees and refugee claimants were terrified to speak publicly about the harms of the cuts, fearing backlash from a government that controlled their fate. These experiences taught me that advocating for my patients would require stepping out of the hospital walls. I decided to come together with other physicians across Canada to speak publicly about the harms of the cuts. Through protests, lectures, interviews, panel discussions, and op-eds, we made refugee health an election issue, pushing a newly-elected federal government to fulfill a campaign promise to reverse the cuts in 2016.

I have continued to build on that experience, and my advocacy work has consistently focused on identifying and addressing the upstream contributors to illness in vulnerable populations, including improving the care of people suffering with addictions, struggling with precarious workers, or having difficulty accessing affordable dental care. As an emergency physician, I see the failures of our public policies every day, and this continues to inform my understanding of the advocacy work I do.

I hope to use my time at HKS and as a Gleitsman Fellow to learn the tools needed to build on my current clinical expertise and develop an ability to identify the social determinants of health, in order to improve my effectiveness at pushing for broad systemic change to improve the health of marginalized communities.
NARRATIVE

Child victims of sexual exploitation do not speak out due to the trauma they have suffered, coupled with feelings of shame, stigma and the fear of reprisals. Of those that do find courage to do so, only a few of the cases that are reported are prosecuted.

I have spent my career passionately raising my voice and advocating for children’s rights to protection. My focus has been on mobilizing grass-roots organizations and national coalitions working directly with the most disadvantaged and marginalized groups of children and adolescents such as those who have been victims of exploitative labor, trafficking and sexual exploitation for their collective action against violence against children. I have worked directly with hundreds of children and adolescents within schools and institutions in promoting their agency and empowerment through global programs such as the Youth Partnership Program against CSEC in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America.

While there has been progress, the misuse of internet and technology has made it easier than ever for those who prey on children to access, groom and exploit children within their homes, schools and communities. Experience demonstrates that the complex and evolving nature of sexual exploitation calls for a multi-sector response, from private and public sectors alike. Interventions must be based on scientific evidence taking into consideration the social, cultural, political and economic context and dynamics in which the child lives and in which the crime is facilitated. To prioritize child protection agenda, it needs to be viewed as a political and social issue rather than merely a technical one.

The Gleitsman Fellowship is not only an incredible opportunity for me, but more importantly an acknowledgement and recognition of the issue that I have ardently advocated for: the right of every child to live free from abuse and exploitation. I am honored to join the exceptional cohort of HKS faculty, peers, and CPL fellows for the collective learning environment which will help push the limits of our thinking and capabilities in affecting social change in ending impunity and a culture of silence.
NARRATIVE

To bring humanity in war; to restore some dignity amongst its victims—these are some of the reasons why I spent most of the last decade in the war zones of Afghanistan, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Palestinian territories, South Sudan, and Uganda. As ambitious and naive as it may sound, I have seen how we can contribute a bit more humanity in the adversity of war.

I have been a humanitarian professional for most of my career, working to convince parties to a conflict to respect the very basic rules of war and helping those affected by the conflict. Prior to joining the Harvard Kennedy School, I was managing the humanitarian response of the International Committee of the Red Cross in southern Afghanistan.

Having worked in the day-to-day reality of armed conflict, I have grown ever more aware of the very human and micro-level impact it has. Such a perspective is often missing in policy debates and sometimes unknown to decision makers. In joining the Gleitsman Fellowship at the Center for Public Leadership, I want to contribute my part in seeking to bring these debates closer to the realities of those that are supposed to benefit from them—bridging policy and practice. I look forward to benefitting from my experience at the Center for Public leadership and how it can guide and transform my leadership goals to better the plight of those affected by conflict.
“As I think back to the days when my parents would walk from store to store asking if anyone needed their help, I realize that so much of my fortune is due to their hard work and sacrifice. The hardships they faced, coupled with my community’s care for me, drive me in everything I do... By making it possible for me to attend Harvard, to learn essential leadership skills, and to build relationships with the change agents of today and tomorrow, the Gleitsman Fellowship has only accelerated my pursuit of my mission.”

Ivan Rahman
Harvard Kennedy School
Gleitsman Fellow
MPP/MBA Candidate
ABOUT THE SHEILA C. JOHNSON LEADERSHIP FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

“An ability to work across sectors—public, private, nonprofit—and to inspire innovative policies will help bring the sustainable improvement that these underserved communities desperately need.”

Sheila C. Johnson, Founder and CEO of Salamander Hotels & Resorts

The Sheila C. Johnson Leadership Fellowship supports up to ten students each year. This fellowship—created through the vision and generosity of Sheila C. Johnson—brings to campus emerging leaders who are dedicated to addressing disparities in African-American and other underserved communities in the United States through health care, education, economic development, criminal justice reform, and a range of other efforts in public policy and social entrepreneurship.

Sheila C. Johnson Fellows receive full tuition, health coverage, and a generous stipend toward any HKS graduate degree, including one obtained through HKS’s joint or concurrent degree programs with other schools. In addition to their courses, the Sheila C. Johnson Fellows participate in a comprehensive, yearlong co-curricular program that will both augment their leadership development and forge bonds within this exceptional group. Fellows participate in an annual retreat, weekly dinner seminars, and leadership development workshops. The program connects fellows with accomplished local, national, and international leaders who share their insights on how best to develop and inspire new ideas; support and foster sustainable change; and build cross-sector partnerships to serve historically underserved communities.
Sheila C. Johnson is an entrepreneur and philanthropist whose accomplishments span the arenas of hospitality, sports, TV/film, the arts, education, women’s empowerment, and community development.

As Founder and CEO of Salamander Hotels & Resorts, Ms. Johnson oversees a growing portfolio of luxury properties in Virginia, Florida, and Louisiana. The equestrian-inspired Salamander Resort & Spa in Middleburg, Virginia, opened in 2013 and has since been recognized as one of the country’s finest properties. The collection features three of the top golf resorts in Florida: Hammock Beach in Palm Coast, Reunion in Orlando, and Innisbrook in Tampa Bay, and also includes the new Henderson Beach Resort in Destin, Florida, and NOPSI Hotel in New Orleans, which opened in 2017.

As Vice Chairman of Monumental Sports & Entertainment, Ms. Johnson is the only African-American woman to have ownership in three professional sports teams: the NBA’s Washington Wizards, the NHL’s Washington Capitals, and the WNBA’s Washington Mystics, for which she serves as President and Managing Partner. She also serves on the Executive Committee of the United States Golf Association.

Ms. Johnson is also a partner in Mistral, the makers of fine bath, body, and home products; and in November 2012 launched her own collection of luxury scarves, inspired by her travels around the world and manufactured in Italy. In 2013, in recognition of her entrepreneurial success, she was invited to serve as a judge for Ernst & Young’s World Entrepreneur of the Year Award—the only judge on the international panel to represent the U.S. In 2015, Ms. Johnson was named on Forbes Magazine’s Top 50 America’s Richest Self Made Women. And in 2016, she co-founded WE Capital, a venture capital consortium to support and empower female-led enterprises that can advance transformational social change. She also serves on the board of the Greater Washington Partnership, which seeks to strengthen the region’s global position as a center for commerce and innovation.

Ms. Johnson has long been a powerful influence in the entertainment industry, starting with her work as founding partner of Black Entertainment Television. She has served as executive producer of four documentary films, including Kicking It, which premiered at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival; A Powerful Noise, which premiered at the 2008 Tribeca Film Festival; She Is the Matador; and The Other City, a critically acclaimed portrayal of the HIV/AIDS crisis in Washington D.C., which premiered at the 2010 Tribeca Film Festival. She also helped finance the Screen Actors Guild nominated feature film The Butler, directed by Lee Daniels, and is founder and chair of the Middleburg Film Festival, an annual celebration of independent film that opened to sell-out crowds in October 2013.

A fervent supporter of education and the arts, Ms. Johnson serves on the Board of Governors of Parsons The New School for Design in New York, and is a member of the Leadership Council at Harvard Kennedy School’s Center for Public Leadership (CPL). She is also a board member of the Jackie Robinson Foundation, as well as the International African American Museum in Charleston, South Carolina.

From 2006 to 2009, Ms. Johnson served as global ambassador for CARE, a leading humanitarian organization that combats global poverty by empowering women. She also served as a member of Accordia Global Health Foundation’s International Council, rallying support for the foundation’s efforts to overcome the burden of infectious diseases in Africa. In recognition of her humanitarian efforts, she was honored with the Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill Medal in 2012.

An accomplished violinist, Ms. Johnson received a Bachelor of Arts in music from the University of Illinois, as well as honorary degrees from numerous other institutions. She lives in Middleburg, VA, is married to the Honorable William T. Newman, Jr., and has two children.
CALEB BRADFORD
HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL MASTER IN PUBLIC POLICY CANDIDATE, 2021

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS
Harvard Business School, MBA Candidate, 2021
Princeton University, BSE in Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, Certificate in Robotics and Intelligent Systems, 2015
Gates Millennium Scholar
Questbridge Scholar
Alexander Hamilton Scholar

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS
AppNexus: Solutions Consultant
AppNexus Values in Action Award Recipient
BlackRock: Aladdin Client Services and Client Analytics Analyst
BlackRock Founder’s Award Recipient
NASA Marshall Space & Flight Center: Intern
NASA Ambassador
NASA Engineering Research Competition First Place Award Recipient
America Needs You (ANY) Fellow
America Needs You (ANY) Young Leadership Board Member
The Children’s Initiative: Board Member

NARRATIVE
Success is too often a lottery at birth. What I learned from a tumultuous childhood that involved moving every year, attending twelve schools and spanning much of the Southeast, is that the U.S. is a beautiful mosaic yet there exist many flaws in the design. One such flaw that I observed was this lottery, namely, the opportunity gap. Students from my neighborhoods, who were predominantly people of color from low-income households in which no parent held a college degree, were plagued by apathy and academic frustration. Taking advanced classes with privileged white children, while living in an impoverished minority community, I could see that my neighbors had the same potential as my peers in the classroom. However, my fellow minorities lacked the financial resources, parental guidance, and proper cultural birthright to succeed in life.

Growing up in poverty as a minority is akin to walking a tightrope while carrying weights and having no safety net to catch you. For the majority of my teenage years, the most terrifying part of everyday was coming home after school. I remember the anguish I felt each day as I paused in front of our apartment door, fumbling with the keys, all the while wondering, “Will my keys work? Is today the day we are evicted for being behind on rent? Will we have to sleep in the car another night?”

Our country has failed many underrepresented populations from the top-down, either by denying, or downplaying the adverse consequences of the opportunity gap. I am attending Harvard Kennedy School to combat this issue. At HKS, I can discover forward-looking ways to propose solutions to inequitable education funding, and poise myself to be a leader in this discussion on the national stage. Through work in education policy, I can be a voice for those who may not have one or may need stronger advocacy. As a Sheila C. Johnson Leadership Fellow, I feel as though I won the lottery. I am excited to learn, grow, and most importantly, build personal relationships within this network of conscientious doers determined to usher in positive change.
My first job out of college was as a consultant for a nonprofit initiative in Zacatecas, Mexico designing and systematizing curriculum for female entrepreneurs. As a large, African-American male with rudimentary Spanish speaking skills and a slightly better understanding of economic behavior, I stuck out like a sore thumb. I made numerous cultural missteps and found myself overwhelmed by the complexities associated with improving the lives of those most desperately in need. But it was in this role that I began to realize that my life’s purpose would be embedded in identifying opportunities for vulnerable families. However, at twenty one, I had little indication that I would end up identifying those opportunities through philanthropy.

Volunteering as a football coach for 1st and 2nd graders reinforced my desire to refocus my interest domestically. Working with these young boys encouraged me to refine my work in the social sector, identifying systematic reforms to better improve their potential. Consequently, as a program officer at the George Kaiser Family Foundation, I managed the design and implementation of systematic, community-wide early childhood interventions.

The critical nature of this work revealed that organizations on the front line of delivering needed services to vulnerable families usually view philanthropy simply as a financial resource. However, philanthropy stands to enhance the capacity of organizations to improve the livelihood of vulnerable families and children, but only if led by individuals who know how to define, manage, and measure success. Through the MPP/MBA joint program, I will explore methods critical to designing, managing, and measuring positive social change. As a result, I will apply analytical skills used in business to the social sector and understand more deeply the policy implications of improving the livelihood of the poor. Further, I am excited that I will couple this academic experience through the leadership development opportunities at the Center for Public Leadership as a Sheila C. Johnson Leadership Fellow.
SHAWON JACKSON

HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL MASTER IN PUBLIC POLICY CANDIDATE, 2021

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS
Stanford Graduate School of Business, MBA Candidate, 2021
Princeton University, AB in Public and International Affairs with Certificates in African American Studies, Latino Studies, and Spanish, 2015

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS
Horton’s Kids: Summer Education Pioneers Fellow
Deloitte Consulting: Federal Business Analyst
The DREAM Project: Princeton in Latin America Fellow
The White House: Cabinet Affairs Intern
U.S. Department of State: Virtual Intern
Children’s Defense Fund: Education Policy Intern

NARRATIVE
As a low-income Black male who made it to and through college, I was the exception to an unwritten and unjust rule that says low-income students of color will not succeed academically. Some say it is because I worked hard. I say it is because I was lucky. Unlike many students, I was able to attend a publicly funded boarding school, which connected me to people and resources I did not have access to growing up in a small southern suburb of Chicago. While I am grateful for my boarding school experience, it pains me to know that many students who look like me are not so lucky. My life mission is to change this—making a high-quality education the norm for low-income African-American and Latinx students.

After graduating from Princeton, my passion for education led me to the Dominican Republic, where I worked with The DREAM Project for a year. While there, I led personal and professional development workshops for young adults and managed monitoring and evaluation efforts. Working with youth reinforced my belief that everyone has the potential to succeed, but not always the right opportunities to do so.

After The DREAM Project, I joined Deloitte to see how the private sector could advance social justice. I realized that while high-performing corporations have the talent and economic capital to make a difference, profit is often prioritized over purpose, stifling the impact companies can make in communities that need help the most.

I am pursuing an MPP/MBA because I want to bring the best of the business world to the public and social sectors. My dream is to lead an education nonprofit that provides leadership development to low-income students of color and advocates for policies that improve the social and emotional development of students across the United States. The Sheila C. Johnson Fellowship will help me achieve this goal by connecting me with talented individuals who are committed to service, people who will challenge and inspire me. Working together, we will come one step closer to improving outcomes for our most disadvantaged communities—one step closer to justice.
My story always begins with my mother’s story. I was born in Togo in 1992, when Togolese people were protesting and striking at unprecedented levels to demand the ousting of our dictator. People who publicly opposed him began disappearing, and my mother was one of the most public and vocal. I was born into this turmoil, so shortly after my birth we fled to neighboring Benin, and eventually found our way to the U.S.

I grew up in Las Vegas, NV, peripherally aware yet generally disconnected from this history. However, as a young poor Black refugee in the U.S., I couldn’t help but eventually be politicized through my own experiences. By the time I finished high school and witnessed the impact of failing public schools, over-policing, the war on drugs, and stagnant wages on the people around me, I began to understand that there were fundamental problems in this country’s values, priorities, and political system that required deep engagement with grassroots organizing, policy, and culture to shift.

After college, I co-founded the NYC chapter of BYP100, a national network of young Black people that has become one of the central organized forces in the Black political upsurge changing this country since Trayvon Martin’s death. I also joined the Center for Popular Democracy where I collaborated with winning policy campaigns and local elected officials from all over the country. Then I joined Blackbird and the Movement for Black Lives Policy Table, where I helped coordinate and write the Vision for Black Lives—a landmark document that has aligned over 300 of the most powerful civil society organizations in the U.S. around an explicit vision for justice for Black people.

The people I’m accountable to are affected by multiple intersecting issues, so my work spans across them. I’m interested in building grassroots democratic social movements to radically transform our society. I intend to use my time at HKS and my community of Sheila C. Johnson Fellows to become a better political strategist, social movement architect, and to exercise my political imagination so that I can contribute to building those movements in my lifetime.
AMANDA R. MATOS
HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL MASTER IN PUBLIC POLICY CANDIDATE, 2019

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS
Columbia University, BA in Race & Ethnicity Studies and Human Rights, 2013
John Kluge Scholar, Columbia University Scholars Program

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS
The WomanHOOD Project: Co-Founder
Planned Parenthood of New York City: Manager of Community Organizing
Girls for Gender Equity: Government Relations Specialist
New York City Council: Young Women's Advisory Council, Co-Chair
Young People For (YP4): Fellow
CoreAlign: Speaking Race to Power Fellow & Innovation Lab Participant
New Leaders: Council Fellow
Peace First Prize Winner
New York Women's Foundation: Vision Award Recipient
Committee to Honor Puerto Rican Women: Adelfa Vera Award Recipient
Young People For: Iara D. Peng Alumni Award Recipient

NARRATIVE
I am proud to come from a matriarchy of strong women leaders. My first exposure to public service was through my abuela, who was a dedicated volunteer at her local church and worked on political campaigns in the South Bronx, and my mother, who is an elementary school teacher and longtime advocate for children's health and wellbeing. Growing up in the Bronx as a Puerto Rican woman shaped who I am today. I did not realize the significant gap in resources around me while growing up because I had no point of comparison until attending college. I developed a deep self-awareness as my experiences at school felt separate from my uptown community and I constantly held onto the feminist values I was raised with to always be my best self.

While at Columbia, I co-founded the WomanHOOD Project, which is a youth-led after-school mentorship program for girls of color in the Bronx. I learned how to use institutional resources to create a program that centers young women as experts of their lives and equips them with skills to combat racism, sexism, and classism. As a co-leader of the organization, I learned how to practice authentic horizontal leadership in order to not perpetuate the very hierarchies that harm young people.

After graduation, I joined the community organizing team at Planned Parenthood of NYC and applied an intersectional race equity lens to reproductive health and rights. In my capacity as Manager of Community Organizing, I co-developed advocacy campaigns, trained patient activists on lobbying and canvassing in Albany and D.C., and mobilized young people of color in their communities to advocate for reproductive freedom. Most recently, I worked with New York City Council and Girls for Gender Equity in creating a participatory governance model for young women of color to innovate policy solutions for their communities.

I am committed to serving communities of color because I believe personal experience is the most valuable experience a person can have as a policymaker. While pursuing an MPP will help me hone quantitative analysis skills, I am thrilled to practice authentic leadership and learn how to be a capacity builder through my time as a Sheila C. Johnson Fellow.
My interest in public service stems from the sense of fulfillment I get from learning about disadvantaged communities — both the people and the places — and contributing to efforts to solve their needs. I noticed this interest on a trip to my parents’ home country of Ghana in 2009, where the poor condition of roads in Accra inspired me to start my undergraduate career as a civil engineer. My major later changed, but the underlying desire to serve did not; in fact, it became especially clear when I moved to Detroit. As a high school teacher, I saw how multiple aspects of students’ lives, from available transportation options to housing, made their educational experiences much tougher than mine had been.

Now, I create mobile applications in the city’s rapidly redeveloping downtown, and I volunteer with a community development organization on the east side. As a result, I am able to see the different worlds that Detroiters inhabit up close. My goal at Harvard Kennedy School is to learn the skills required to close the gap between these worlds. I believe that it can be done through economic development policy that focuses on providing strong educational and employment opportunities to the underserved.

Eventually, I would like to lead an organization that catalyzes economic development in communities that are often overlooked, but in a way that directly benefits the existing members of those communities. I hope to do so by creating partnership among citizens, local governments, schools, and businesses, all of whom would stand to gain from such a unified investment.

I believe that groups can accomplish great things where individuals might fail, so I look forward to supporting and being supported by other students in the Center for Public Leadership and the Sheila C. Johnson Leadership Fellowship. I am excited to see where the connections with students, faculty, staff, and other members of the surrounding community might lead.
MELISSA PARNAGIAN

HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL MASTER IN PUBLIC POLICY CANDIDATE, 2019

NARRATIVE

I am drawn to public policy because I see it as an act of definition: With every policy, and every election, America decides what it is and what it wants to be. I work at the intersection of policy, media, and politics to help America author a future that lives up to its ideals.

As the daughter of an African-American mother and an Italian-Armenian American father, I have always recognized the need to uplift voices that usually aren't heard. This need is not limited to a specific policy issue—and neither am I. Rather than specializing in a particular issue area, I think broadly about catalyzing change through strategic policymaking and targeted outreach. The offices of political candidates and elected officials have been my classrooms for this work. From President Obama’s New Jersey reelection team, to Senator Cory Booker's inaugural internship program, to Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign headquarters, I have developed a keen sense of how to engage and serve voters—and I have deepened my commitment to addressing the disparities that marginalized communities face.

Guided by the belief that everyday people are the strength of the political system, I champion communication strategies that reach people where they are. This includes making policy-related information easily accessible on social media, which was a critical part of my work at the digital consulting firm Precision Strategies. It also includes recognizing the power of sports and entertainment to shape public discourse. As an intern for The Players’ Tribune, I helped professional athletes leverage their personal stories to address racial injustice, gender inequality, and the need for action across myriad issue areas.

My first year at Harvard Kennedy School empowered me to become a better policymaker and campaigner for public good. Concurrently, the Sheila C. Johnson Leadership Fellowship empowered me to think boldly and act decisively for a better future. I look forward to exercising leadership in new ways as part of the Center for Public Leadership family.
My passion for improving the lives of workers was inspired at a young age. I spent my childhood watching my mom juggle the responsibilities of a single parent: working long, unpredictable hours while trying to raise three kids. Witnessing her struggle, coupled with the devastating layoffs experienced by other family members, led me to study Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University in an effort to identify the best vehicle for protecting workers’ rights.

After college I accepted a fellowship with the California State Senate, working on labor policy. As a policy consultant I had a front row seat to the passage of landmark progressive labor legislation including the state’s first post-recession minimum wage increase, expansions on paid family leave, and the strongest equal pay law in the nation. After three years, I wanted to better understand the implementation and enforcement side of public policy. I accepted a position with the Department of Finance, where I worked on the Labor and Workforce Development portion of the Governor’s Budget.

My experience in government showed me that a living wage and workplace protections are only part of the solution towards social mobility. For low-income workers, a decent wage barely covers necessities like housing or childcare, and rising tuition costs make higher education unfeasible. I also learned that for effective policy, government and business must work together. This inspired me to pursue an MBA/MPA, to develop public-private partnerships that tackle society’s most complex social problems, like income inequality and job displacement due to increasing automation.

I am incredibly grateful for the Sheila C. Johnson Leadership Fellowship because it, in conjunction with the Harvard Kennedy School, will equip me with the skillset I need to forge a new path for social impact: helping business and government collaboratively develop innovative solutions for today’s societal challenges. Through the program, I will expand my policy expertise, strengthen my program evaluation and leadership skills, and fully immerse myself in the globally minded and purpose-driven community.
TIFFANY THOMPSON
HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL MID-CAREER MASTER IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION CANDIDATE, 2019

NARRATIVE
The vitality and future of a nation is reflected in how it treats its young people. My altruism manifested in 4th grade when my teacher wrote “Tiffany has to stop taking care and worrying about other students in the class.” Decades later, that characteristic I displayed blossomed into a career path dedicated to uplifting youth of color. While spearheading a teen pregnancy prevention Youth Leadership Team, I met a brilliant fifteen-year-old named Chris. Although he was navigating Philadelphia crime and declining school system, he remained an engaged student. Against all odds, he eventually went on to college.

During his sophomore year, he was imprisoned after a wrongful arrest. After an emotionally difficult year, he was acquitted and released but without any resources to ensure a smooth re-entry into society. Still, his determination carried him to the finish line and across the stage for graduation.

Stories like his are not rare. He is not an anomaly or a coincidence. This reality is a symptom of a sickness I hope to cure as an unapologetic youth advocate at the intersection of leadership development, philanthropy, and community social good dedicated to improving the life outcomes for youth of color.

Throughout my decade-long career, there has been a direct and positive impact on the life outcomes for students like Chris. While strides have been made, there is still more to be done. Just like Chris, working in philanthropy has shown me—genius is equally distributed but opportunity is not. My time at Harvard Kennedy School will equip me with additional resources needed to straddle philanthropy, social innovation and social justice.

For centuries, African-Americans have built and sustained communities. For us, community is a ritual presence. It embodies a feeling of connectedness with those who have similar traditions, identity and understanding. The Sheila C. Johnson Fellowship embodies these traditions. As a young African-American woman in philanthropy, I am often the “only black voice,” “the interpreter of the black experience” carrying burdens too heavy for me to bear. The Sheila C. Johnson Fellowship is the community of affirmation I have longed for.

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS
Temple University, BA of Science, 2010

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS
Echoing Green: Senior Associate, Black Male Achievement Fellowship Program
Independent Consultant for Advocates for Youth, AMPED Strategies, Roddenberry Foundation, Obama Foundation
National Convening Council: President Obama’s My Brother’s Keeper Engagement Associate
AccessMatters: Program Coordinator & Program Manager
City of Philadelphia – Youth Commission: Member
WeThrive: Board Member
Black Youth Project 100 (BYP100): Member
NAACP Humanitarian Award: Recipient
Center of Progressive Leadership: Fellow
LeaderShape – Certificate in Leadership Development
In my personal, educational, and professional experiences as a Black and Japanese-American woman, I have always been drawn to the work of amplifying voices of communities of color and dismantling racism.

My own experience has served as my guiding star for how to approach this work. Because in middle school I was in an academic achievement program for students of color, when I was a Yale Admissions Officer, I emphasized visiting similar academic programs during my travel to the Midwest. Because in college I was a sociology major with a passion for photography, when I worked for a documentary film company, I made sure to pitch stories from historically silenced communities. Because I worked with community members in Medellín to envision the future of their neighborhood as it gentrified, when I came back to New York to work on housing and workers’ rights legislative campaigns, I focused on how to involve communities in discussions of their own neighborhood’s future. Because of my experience as an advocate in New York City, I saw how more money usually meant more access to insider knowledge and political control, and I am now working at a tech start up that focuses on democratizing knowledge and supporting grassroots organizers to be as powerful as paid lobbyists.

My experiences inform my approach to my work which is both personal and purposeful. I also know my own experiences are just my own and I acknowledge that limitation. I decided to pursue a Master in Public Policy at Harvard Kennedy School because I wanted to expand my experiences and learn about others’ experiences. I know that I will learn how to create policy that is data driven and informed by the experiences of the communities the policy affects. I am especially excited to build a learning and professional community with my fellow Sheila C. Johnson Fellows. With them, I will be able to learn, share, and innovate new ways to make change with peers who are passionate about the same communities and the same problems as I am.
“Because of the incredibly motivated people the Sheila C. Johnson Fellowship brings together, I feel confident in my ability and others’ to use our time at Harvard to gain tools and networks to help us advance racial justice in the United States and globally. Being a fellow has provided me with the most important resource beyond what the MPP curriculum offers me – it’s a community of social justice warriors who can rely on each other for the rest of our lives. I am forever grateful to be a member of this community, especially under the political climate, and I am poised to tackle the most pressing challenges of inequality and injustice.”

Amanda Matos
Harvard Kennedy School
Sheila C. Johnson Fellow
MPP Candidate
David M. Rubenstein established a fellowship in 2008 for first-year joint degree students at Harvard Kennedy School and Harvard Business School.

Harvard Kennedy School and Harvard Business School have created a fully integrated joint degree program in business and government that represents an innovative approach to preparing leaders for a growing area of practice of critical importance to global society. Students enrolled in the joint degree program are prepared to work in positions of influence at the intersection of business, government and nonprofit organizations, dealing with challenges in such critical areas as healthcare, the environment, economic development, and government relations.

The Center for Public Leadership (CPL) provides a co-curricular program to Rubenstein Fellows focused on the leadership challenges and opportunities of a multi-sector career. Programming will include a welcome retreat on Cape Cod with all CPL fellows, a multi-day field experience to a U.S. city, and leadership seminars throughout the year focused on cross-sector leadership.
ABOUT DAVID M. RUBENSTEIN

David M. Rubenstein is a Co-Founder and Co-Executive Chairman of The Carlyle Group, one of the world’s largest private equity firms. Mr. Rubenstein co-founded the firm in 1987. Since then, Carlyle has grown into a firm managing $201 billion from 31 offices around the world.

Mr. Rubenstein, a native of Baltimore, is a 1970 magna cum laude graduate of Duke, where he was elected Phi Beta Kappa. Following Duke, Mr. Rubenstein graduated in 1973 from the University of Chicago Law School, where he was an editor of The Law Review.

From 1973-1975, Mr. Rubenstein practiced law in New York with Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison. From 1975-1976, he served as Chief Counsel to the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee’s Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments. From 1977-1981, during the Carter Administration, Mr. Rubenstein was Deputy Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy. After his White House service and before co-founding Carlyle, Mr. Rubenstein practiced law in Washington with Shaw, Pittman, Potts & Trowbridge (now Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman).

Mr. Rubenstein is Chairman of the Boards of Trustees of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the Smithsonian Institution, and the Council on Foreign Relations; a Fellow of the Harvard Corporation; a Trustee of the National Gallery of Art, the University of Chicago, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, Johns Hopkins Medicine, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, and the Institute for Advanced Study; and President of the Economic Club of Washington.

Mr. Rubenstein is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Business Council, Harvard Global Advisory Council (Chairman), Madison Council of the Library of Congress (Chairman), Board of Dean’s Advisors of the Business School at Harvard, Advisory Board of the School of Economics and Management at Tsinghua University, and Board of the World Economic Forum Global Shapers Community.

Mr. Rubenstein has served as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Duke University and Co-Chairman of the Board of the Brookings Institution.
NARRATIVE

Born in London to a Beninois father and a British-Antiguan mother, I spent my formative years in West Africa. Growing up in Côte d'Ivoire in the mid-1990s and early 2000s, I witnessed the unrest that eventually plunged that country into a civil war. I remember the constant coverage of the conflict in neighboring Liberia, military juntas in Nigeria and the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo playing on the BBC World Service. It was around this time that the Economist described Africa as the “hopeless continent.”

My desire to understand what drove people to these conflicts and how conditions could be changed within the African continent guided my academic and professional endeavors. Today, my focus is on finding ways to avert these conflicts in the future through sustainable and equitable economic development. As a result of my experiences to date and of my future projects, I intend to play a catalytic role in the development of the financial sector on the African continent.

Having gained experience in the investment banking divisions of Barclays and Bank of America Merrill Lynch, I was keen to apply this knowledge to support high impact investments across the continent's vastly differing economies. Consequently, I jumped at the opportunity to join the International Finance Corporation's Sub-Saharan African investment team. At IFC, I contributed to transactions in more developed, middle income markets such as Kenya, in lower income economies such as those in the West African Monetary Union, and in fragile or conflict affected states including Liberia, Guinea, and the DRC. These different experiences all highlighted to me the crucial importance of financial innovation; both to unleash the continent's untapped growth potential and, as a tool for lifting people out of poverty.

I applied to the MPP program because effective financial sector development is necessarily a public-private partnership: one that intersects business, policy, and social impact. By combining my professional experiences to date with the educational component of the joint degree and the leadership development experiences of the Rubenstein Fellowship, I hope to contribute significantly to a new generation of leadership; one that seeks to maximize collaboration between the public and private sectors in order to serve the collective aspirations of a continent on the rise.
I am a first generation Nigerian-American, and I celebrate my firsts wholeheartedly. However, I recognize that these firsts come with challenges: with each upward step I take in my professional career, the less diverse my communities have become. The U.S. Office of Personnel Management issued a preliminary diversity initiative for the federal government in 2016, but the private sector lacks comparable mandates. Living in a country where only three percent of publicly traded companies publish diversity and inclusion policies, I plan to pursue a career that promotes and institutionalizes diversity and inclusion initiatives, driving upward mobility and financial security for all underrepresented groups.

My professional experiences have shaped my approach for promoting diversity and inclusion within organizations. Whether setting multi-year investment policies for nonprofits or supporting multinational corporations through large scale initiatives as a consultant, I witnessed the role that governance structures play in developing and sustaining organizations’ long term outcomes. I gained firsthand experience institutionalizing policies while shaping Brown University’s Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) as a trustee of my alma mater—showing me the power that well-developed policies hold in fostering change.

As a Rubenstein Fellow, I will have an unparalleled breadth of resources to transform as a leader. I know that my multi-sector career will be dynamic, and my joint degree cohort will be partners throughout the journey towards positive change. Equipped with a lifelong relationship with the Rubenstein community, I am forever grateful for this opportunity to explore my leadership potential at the intersection of business and government. I plan to forge lasting relationships across the Harvard community and support my peers where possible, and we will collectively grow as leaders.
NARRATIVE

I have long been interested in the power of metropolitan policy to impact community and economic development through careful management of the built environment.

I chose to spend the last five years in the private sector because I wanted to understand the interaction of public and private priorities in prominent real estate projects; working with professional sports teams became the ideal case study. The creation of new stadiums and arenas is often rich with debates over the use of public funds, the adequacy of transportation networks, and the level of public access to new amenities. Decisions must be made about sustainability and local workforce development, and concerns about gentrification addressed.

My roles managing community and political engagement on such issues has involved leading neighborhood meetings and collaborating with local officials to produce robust environmental reviews, securing funding agreements, revising zoning and accelerating ancillary investment. Along the way, I’ve become acutely aware that a city’s public development framework, private real estate ventures, and civic spaces each shape its people’s ability to thrive.

At Harvard, I’m interested in exploring the other ways in which the built environment impacts opportunity, including examining strategies for increasing equity and improving social and physical resiliency. A joint degree student with both HKS and HBS, I remain focused on the public-private intersection. I seek to identify innovative technologies from the private sector, from modular construction to automated transport, that will shape physical and community development in the future, and gain a better understanding of how those in office can create the infrastructure to respond to changes in technology, energy, and climate. Most important, I hope to use my time at Harvard to develop the analytical and interpersonal skills necessary to make a significant impact.

Urban planning is inherently interdisciplinary, and the Rubenstein Fellowship offers a thrilling opportunity to meet other future leaders whose passions and expertise may intersect with mine. I am also eager to visit an unfamiliar U.S. city during the January field experience and expand my understanding of the common challenges and goals shared by American municipalities.
In 1990, nearly half a million Americans worked for newspapers. Now, that number has shrunk by more than half. Today, consumers of U.S. media increasingly have a difficult time distinguishing between real news and fake, and we often consult journalistic sources that confirm our views rather than challenge them. Just 32% of Americans trust the mass media, a historically low figure, according to a 2016 Gallup survey.

In other words, journalism is facing real threats from all sides. On the one hand, technological disruption has devastated the old business model of advertising and print subscriptions. On the other hand, journalism has a trust problem; the public has deteriorating views of the media.

These issues, which reflect societal and economic shifts, have major, disturbing implications for democracy in America—not to mention societies around the world where free speech is not protected. An informed citizenry is a necessary component of a functional democracy, and impartial journalism is a central component of that education. If we fail to find a new way forward—a business model that is economically viable and works to restore journalism’s trust gap—the fissures in our democracy will continue to widen.

As a Rubenstein Fellow, I hope to explore these ideas and deploy them in the service of journalism. Having worked as a newspaper reporter in Pittsburgh for five years, I believe it’s critical that we preserve this craft for generations to come. This challenge requires fresh thinking and an understanding of the institutional, political, and economic shifts taking place in this industry. The Rubenstein Fellowship provides an exceptional opportunity to develop leadership skills across several disciplines.
I remember visiting Washington, DC, for the first time while in high school and being in awe of the history and institutions concentrated there. That experience left me wanting to learn more about my government, my country, and my specific role within it. As an undergraduate, building upon that visit to Washington, I used my coursework as an opportunity to learn more about the two identities that resonate most strongly with me: Catholic and American.

While being able to study these identities was helpful, I found that my understanding grew more through action and experience. I came to realize that, for me, the key link between my Catholic faith and my American ideals is the importance of service to others. From the seemingly-dull (but truly fascinating) issues of student government to the life-changing experience of volunteering in post-Katrina New Orleans, I began to see what it means to lead through service. I also became aware of how much I appreciated being part of a community—whether on campus, in the Big Easy, or elsewhere.

After college, I ended up in my home state, teaching high school in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, as a Teach For America corps member. I was inspired by my students who overcame hardship to succeed in the classroom and beyond, but I was heartbroken to see my other students who, due to social constraints, were never able to reach the levels of success I know they could have achieved. In my classroom, it became clear to me that public service is not about a city. It is about people.

As an MPP/MBA candidate, I hope to synthesize my previous public service experience with the managerial and analytical skillsets I developed in the private sector to more holistically address the conditions I observed impacting my former students. I believe that there are great opportunities to improve policymaking and public management at the state and local level, and I look forward to using my time as a Rubenstein Fellow to learn from individuals and organizations that are successfully collaborating across sectors and levels of government to achieve these goals.
For the past three years at The New York Times, I have had a front-row seat to the disruptive effects technological innovation has had on society. Underfunded newsrooms across the world have gone dark, the role of journalism in society is being openly questioned, and disinformation and “fake news” have spread across social networks. Yet the role of the free press, enshrined in our Bill of Rights, remains a critical element of a functioning democratic system, empowering voters to shape society’s destiny through the participatory democratic process.

I have always been fascinated by companies—like the Times—that play essential public service roles but rely on profitable business models to preserve independence and drive innovation. As a consultant at Deloitte, I had the chance to work with similar organizations in fields including education, healthcare, finance, and defense. Properly calibrated and regulated, these organizations help extend access to and enhance the effectiveness of critical services that underlie a prosperous society.

My experiences witnessing the disruptive, even existential changes faced by the media and other industries have convinced me that embracing and harnessing change to refocus on a core mission is the best path forward. Today, for example, the Times has more than three times as many (mostly digital) subscribers as three years ago. These changes have enabled the company to continue to fund a newsroom of over 1,300 journalists who report from more than 150 countries in written word, video, audio, multimedia, and virtual and mixed reality.

Change is inevitable, but I believe it’s the duty of my generation to channel these changes to create a more equal, just, and prosperous world. My goal is to foster cross-sector collaboration that embraces technological innovation to achieve common goals across government, business, and civil society. I plan to use my time at Harvard as a Rubenstein Fellow to deepen my understanding of the interaction between the public and private sector, and the disruptive changes they face, to explore novel but realistic solutions to society’s most pressing challenges.
My interest in local government began in Bangalore, India where I was studying the global impact of migration with McKinsey. Struck by the widespread inequities immigrants face from inadequate integration and the potential for effective solutions on the national and local level, I strove to learn about how the private and public sectors could partner to bring about change.

I explored this intersection further after joining McKinsey’s social sector practice upon returning from India. There, I worked with philanthropies and national governments on issues ranging from implementing personalized education for students, to increasing access to reproductive health. Working on these wide-ranging issues, I came away with a particular focus on the importance of local governance and collaboration and its ability to “make or break” impact—particularly in fields such as workforce development and mobility that are at the intersection of the private, public, and social sectors.

As an economic development policy advisor in the Mayor’s Office for the City of Chicago, I had the opportunity to develop the local strategy and programs that impact the City’s residents. From developing the City’s Amazon HQ2 bid with a coalition of CEOs and civic leaders to helping shape the City’s strategy in mobility and workforce development, I witnessed that not only is the development of consensus and mutual respect across widely varying stakeholders possible but that it is necessary for the continuity to create lasting change. To achieve this, I believe we need to activate greater civic leadership at scale among individuals, organizations, and corporations and focus on realizing our shared goals with an entrepreneurial approach.

Activating change on the local level will require creative policymaking and bridging the gap between the public, private, and social sectors; individuals, companies, and government. As a Rubenstein Fellow, I aim to deepen my understanding of how to foster consensus and collaboration amongst diverse leaders with varying values and objectives. These learnings will help me develop new approaches to leading issues in education and employment, housing, and mobility.
NARRATIVE

I became interested in international development when I was eighteen and took a gap year in Egypt. It was my first time living outside the United States, and I was incredibly excited to immerse myself in a culture so different from home. I lived with an Egyptian host family, learned Arabic, volunteered at a local nonprofit focused on poverty alleviation, and along the way discovered a passion for the Middle East and international development, which has stuck with me ever since.

When I graduated from college, this deep interest led me to an unexpected place—consulting in Dubai. Working at McKinsey, I found ways to promote development in the public and private sectors. I helped local firms develop growth strategies to create jobs and expand to new markets. I worked to spur foreign investment into the region through public-private partnerships. I identified reforms to generate income for municipal government, allowing cities to provide better services to their residents. Overall, I gained the business mindset to drive efficiency and growth, and the chance to apply that mindset for social impact.

After nearly two years consulting, I rediscovered my roots in international development. Recalling my volunteer experience in Egypt, I joined IRC, where I helped implement the organization’s ambitious strategy and its life-saving humanitarian programs. I found opportunities to return to the Middle East—Jordan, Tunisia, and Libya—along with the chance to expand my horizons to countries as diverse as Serbia, Greece, and Niger. As I learned about how to meet basic needs during civil war or after natural disasters, I realized that my focus within international development lies outside humanitarianism. Instead, I hope to concentrate my efforts less on crisis response, and more on innovative, sustainable solutions.

I believe that the Rubenstein Fellowship will provide an unparalleled opportunity to explore and achieve that goal. I am very excited to learn with its community of students whose interests span the private, public, and nonprofit sectors. I look forward to seeing how the experience will help each of us better serve those in need around the world.
Guillaume Delepine

Harvard Kennedy School Master in Public Policy Candidate, 2021

Narrative

I grew up in Cupertino, California, home to Apple and some of the countless other companies that have given Silicon Valley its name and reputation as an epicenter of technology innovation and wealth creation. As innovators in my hometown have realized tremendous personal fortunes, inequality has become a first-order concern. Amid rising tech salaries, less lucrative professions are becoming economically unfeasible, and technology advancements further exacerbate the problem by threatening entire industries. Further, while San Francisco’s real estate market continues to explode, homelessness is becoming an ever more present problem. There are too many talented innovators in Northern California for Silicon Valley’s legacy to be one of inequality and runaway wealth creation.

I first started working to address inequality as an operations intern at Oportun, which was a microlender known as Progreso Financiero at the time. The experience motivated me to help underprivileged, and specifically—underbanked, populations. It also showed me that business solutions can have a major impact on social objectives, provided they are executed effectively. In that context, we observed that achieving profitability would enable Oportun to secure less expensive financing, and in turn, provide more manageable loans to our customers. To learn more broadly how to make an impact on social enterprises, I looked for a more general business experience at KPMG, where my team advised major players on emerging technologies including self-driving cars, alternative energy sources, quantum computing, machine learning, and more. The experience showed me how central execution and decision making are to ensuring a social enterprise’s success. It is my hope that my time there has prepared me for the day when business success is the same as social success.

After graduating, I hope to take what I will learn as a Rubenstein Fellow and apply it to a social enterprise of my own, combatting inequality wherever I see it, in as scalable a way as I can. I am confident that three years of tackling these issues with a team of like-minded fellows will prepare me to deliver some real impact to the world.
I aspire to create systemic improvements in health outcomes for Americans by developing policy at the state or federal level that weaves the social, business, and policy mandates of this industry into a more efficient and effective US healthcare system.

My experience lends itself to building bridges between sectors. After working with a range of businesses, including healthcare providers, as a Business Analyst with McKinsey & Company, I spent a year focusing on workforce development opportunities for unemployed young people with Generation, a McKinsey-founded nonprofit. The overarching goal of the organization—to bring business solutions to major social issues—inspired me, as I believe business and social good can have mutually beneficial goals. I returned to McKinsey to work in their Center for U.S. Health System Reform, where I focused on healthcare policy. I worked with clients across the system, and the need for collaboration across sectors was apparent.

U.S. healthcare faces a dual challenge—our system achieves worse outcomes and incurs higher costs than most other developed nations. No doubt, our system is complex and in many cases, fails to incentivize consumers, hospital systems, or insurance companies properly. I want to be part of the solution by better understanding those complexities and reshaping the incentive structures to encourage innovation. I expect my career to include a combination of private and public sector leadership roles in healthcare, and my ability to have an impact will hinge on being capable of developing and responding to policy with an appreciation for the role of the public, social, and private sectors in providing healthcare for the United States. I am optimistic about the ability of the U.S. healthcare system to evolve in a manner that leads to better outcomes and lower costs for everyone. However, achieving this will take collaboration amongst stakeholders who have an understanding of the industry along with a grounding in the challenges of setting public policy. As a Rubenstein Fellow, I will develop the experiences and support system to become a leader in the path to lower costs and higher quality across the U.S. healthcare system.
When I was four years old, I asked: “Why does money exist?” I believed that people should be able to obtain basic survival necessities without needing money because, for some, money was difficult to acquire. I was unhappy to observe the impact that economic status has on quality of life. My mother explained to me that money simplifies transactions, as it is a universally accepted means of payment in exchange for goods and services. Since then, I have tried to better understand society and how a community’s wealth affects the amount of goods and services it receives. Although I acknowledge money’s merits and necessity, I continue to believe that using money to determine what essential goods and services a community receives leads to inferior outcomes. Since starting my career, I have further attempted to remedy the effects of income inequality by facilitating and attending pro bono volunteering events for Barclays’ Legal department. Through my work, low to moderate income New Yorkers, including artists, business owners, veterans, and immigrants, receive free and tailored legal advice. At work, I have gained a greater appreciation for the private sector’s role in shaping and responding to policies.

I wish to return to studying public policy to understand the different roles and the intersectionality of the private sector, public sector, and nonprofits in alleviating income inequality. Harvard and the Rubenstein Fellowship will show me the tools needed to create new solutions that produce better results in disadvantaged communities. The classroom will provide me with methods to examine strategy, scale businesses, and increase profitability as well as a thorough grasp of the historical and social context around income inequality and quantitative policy analysis skills. In combination with the leadership development through the Rubenstein Fellowship, this skill set provides an understanding into how to analyze the social impact and sustainability of a program while managing key stakeholder expectations and creating lasting change. Through this collaboration, I hope to act as a trailblazer and provide innovative solutions that alleviate the current level of global inequality.
NEIL HOWELL

HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL MASTER IN PUBLIC POLICY CANDIDATE, 2021

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS
Harvard Business School, MBA Candidate, 2021
Boston College, School of Arts & Sciences Honors Program, BA in Political Science, Minor in Eastern European Studies; Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps, Semper Fidelis Society Officer in Charge, 2013

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS
United States Marine Corps: Captain, Financial Management Officer
Deployed with Combined Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve 2016-2017, Financial Plans and Operations Officer, Joint Service Commendation Medal
1st Marine Logistics Group, Budget & Operations Officer, Navy & Marine Corps Commendation Medal

NARRATIVE
I grew up fueled by a strong desire to serve my country born in the aftermath of 9/11 and the years of sacrifice watched from afar; I joined the Marines so that I, too, could do my part. Recent experiences in Northern Iraq directly spurred my interests at the intersection of policy and economics. The stipend program I managed delivering cash payments to the Kurdish Peshmerga required both financial acumen and a firm grasp on the geopolitical forces at work. Neither the policy, nor the financials were sufficient alone. Among other initiatives, this clearly elucidated the impact possible when the international community combines policy with economics to augment traditional hard power.

The theory of economic growth breeding contentedness, thereby poisoning the well of radicalism, is not a novel concept, but one with which I’ve recently become acquainted. More than simply relevant in the near term, development can drive a region and a people away from the abyss of insolvency and toward greater stability. Concerned about ISIS in the short-term, Iraqis and Kurds I spoke with worried about jobs and oil prices and housing and keeping the next iteration of violence at bay for the long-term. Providing focused, direct economic support, the international community impacted both combat operations against ISIS and sowed the seeds for future stability. Indeed, the connection between the economic stability and political stability could not have been more clear.

In varying degrees, much of the developing world stands at a crossroads where the scales can still be tipped by not only the broad brush of policy, but also the acute focus of individual action. In more turbulent areas, the union of private sector initiatives and public sector policies is requisite if one is to create impactful initiatives where the inherent risk is higher than in more developed markets.

I am truly grateful for the opportunity to partake in the HKS/HBS Joint Degree Program and the Rubenstein Fellowship from which I hope to gain deeper insights into the geopolitical and economic factors at work, facilitating an impactful career in these more trying, complex regions.
HARSHINI JAYARAM
HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL MASTER IN PUBLIC POLICY CANDIDATE, 2021

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS
Harvard Business School, MBA Candidate, 2021
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, BS in Computer Science and in Management Science, 2014
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Tau Beta Pi Honors Society, 2012-2014

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS
Microsoft, Azure Identity: Program Manager 2, 2016-2018
Microsoft, Azure Identity Customer Champion Award, 2017
Microsoft, Distribution and Services Platform: Program Manager, 2014-2016
Junior League of Seattle: Advocacy Committee Vice-Chair, 2016-2017
Kappa Alpha Theta Seattle Alumnae Chapter: Website Chair, 2016-2017

NARRATIVE
It is very exciting to work on products that change the way people interact with our world, and their perceptions of what is possible. This feeling drew me toward technology from a young age—beginning with my earliest memories “driving” a truck with an early 1990s VR headset, through the high school class where I learned to write a program that could consistently beat me at a simple game. To pursue this interest, I majored in computer science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. I also majored in management science, so I could more deeply engage in driving long-term strategies of technology.

After graduation, I worked at Microsoft on a product that includes Windows Update and let me explore large-scale systems. My next team, Azure Identity, focused on identity protection in cloud solutions. As I worked in these spaces, I noticed many ways that more proactive policy could shape technology for the better. However, engineers are underrepresented in the U.S. government compared to the general population. I believe that the U.S. government needs more policymakers able to craft proactive policies based on an understanding of the relevant scientific challenges and tradeoffs.

I want to leverage my background in technology to create informed policies that encourage innovation, security, and ethical use for emerging technologies. I also want to grow the number of scientists and technologists in policy because I am convinced that this is a critically needed change. I am excited for the opportunity through HKS, HBS, and the Rubenstein Fellowship to learn how to better leverage my experiences to shape technology policy.
NARRATIVE

From a young age, I felt an intrinsic desire to help others, no matter how grand or small the gesture. Helping others gives me purpose. I owe that drive to my selfless, hardworking father, who at eighteen arrived in the United States from Greece in search of the opportunity to define his own American dream. Through his words and actions, he taught me the importance of giving back to our communities.

This teaching stayed with me and led me to begin my professional career at the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Committed to a noble mission, I would take part in one of the most impactful ways by which to serve others. The FBI’s mission, to protect the American people and uphold the Constitution, charges its workforce to investigate crimes and mitigate threats across a wide spectrum that continues to grow as humanity evolves. In an ever increasingly globalized and integrated world, it is undeniable that difficult and complex challenges are upon us.

Unfortunately, in many cases, the challenges have surpassed the jurisdiction of established laws, regulations, and judicial precedence. Even with only three years of government experience, this reality has become more and more apparent to me. In particular, the rapid rate of technological development and innovation, as well as the digital world’s expanding influence, is transforming various fields affected by public policy, to include cyber security, internet governance, big data, and renewable energy. In many ways, these fields are uncharted territories. We need answers to the questions posed by these policy gaps, and those answers were needed yesterday.

As the next step in my journey of service, I aspire to shape and resolve current and future debates related to science, emerging technology, and energy policy issues. As a joint degree candidate and a Rubenstein Fellow, I will grow as a leader in order to effectively collaborate across sectors to pave the path forward for these innovative and disruptive fields. I am both honored and excited to share this experience with a community of highly motivated, diverse individuals who are equally dedicated to a mission of service and change.

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

Harvard Business School, MBA Candidate, 2021

Georgetown University, BA in Government, Minor in Environmental Studies, magna cum laude, 2014

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Federal Bureau of Investigation, Above and Beyond Award Recipient

Saints Constantine & Helen Greek Orthodox Church of Washington, D.C.: Volunteer Girls Basketball Head Coach for Youth Ministry
I aspire to work at the boundary between the public sector and organizational design. I want to create environments where great leaders do not have to fight their own organizations to make change—and where better policy comes from adaptable, resilient organizations that reflect the strategies of those who lead them.

Growing up in a family with a history of military service instilled a deep connection to national security early in life, which solidified during college as I managed publications focusing on international affairs. I went on to McKinsey & Company for almost three years, where I focused on organizational change for government agencies and witnessed firsthand that this reform allowed policymakers to make better decisions.

Prior to starting the MPP/MBA program, I most recently served as a professional staff member on the Senate Armed Services Committee for Chairman John McCain, with a portfolio that included oversight of Department of Defense business operations. In this role, I immersed myself in the intricacies of Pentagon logistics, management practices, and financial audit—each of which represents an enterprise as large as a Fortune 500 company. My portfolio expanded over time to include science and technology for the Pentagon, and I found it a fascinating challenge to work toward drafting legislation that would unleash innovation from talented military personnel and civilians. Going forward, I hope to better understand how to break down such bureaucratic barriers wherever they stand and allow organizations to reach their full potential.

Based on these experiences, I aim to continue to work at the intersection of the public and private sectors. Despite the magnitude of lessons that these two communities have to learn from each other, neither knows the other beyond a caricature. I plan to use my time at Harvard to learn how to guide both types of organizations in new and challenging environments, and believe that the Center for Public Leadership will help make me successful in doing so. I hope to emerge from this fellowship with the fundamental management skillsets and deep policy knowledge to help me build the tools to contribute to the country's future.
NARRATIVE

One of the first things I learned to pray for as a kid was that everyone would have enough food to eat. My grandfather, who escaped from North Korea during the civil war, opened my horizon to the heartbreaking inequity that individuals often had no control over. Eager to help, I used to fill up plastic piggy banks to send food aid in elementary school. I've continued to dream bigger since then; through advocating for resources conservation in China, working in the agriculture practice in consulting, and exploring multi-sectoral partnerships in global philanthropy, I've strived to narrow how to best advance food security and equity.

While at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, I repeatedly saw seemingly promising solutions fail. I experienced firsthand that global health and development needs are far more complex than just creating new solutions such as pest-resistant seeds or incentivizing the private sector to provide their latest technologies to lower-priority markets in developing countries. Both are important and stem from good intent, but failure to truly account for local regulations and the economic circumstances, culture, and preferences of end users often contributed to the so-called tools graveyard. I encountered this challenge not just in agriculture and nutrition, but also across teams I worked with in primary healthcare systems and education.

I aspire to help innovation reach and serve the populations that need it most by working in this translation and uptake space in food security. Agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa is an initial focus, but with broader public-sector applicability in the approach—I seek to collaborate with interdisciplinary teams to translate solutions to be context-appropriate, remove barriers to adoption, and shape the enabling environment and policies. The public service degree and the Rubenstein Fellowship will equip me to better realize my vision. I look forward to learning how to take holistic systems approaches to foster sustainable progress and to grow as a leader in advancing these multi-sectoral challenges.
JULIAN LIJTSZAIN
HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL MASTER IN PUBLIC POLICY CANDIDATE, 2021

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS
Harvard Business School, MBA Candidate, 2021
Boston University, BA in Economics and BA in Philosophy, magna cum laude, 2015
Karbank Philosophy Fellow
Peter A. Bertocci Award for Academic Achievement and Humanitarian Service
Winner of the Best Cultural Group, Best Individual Programming, and Best Collaborative Programming Excellence in Student Awards while Co-President of the Boston University Mexican Student Association

NARRATIVE
Born and raised in Mexico, I have witnessed firsthand the chaos and beauty that come with living in the surreal metropolis that is Mexico City. Traffic, potholes, pollution and protests are something everyone, unfortunately, gets used to eventually. Yet, Mexico’s vibrant colors, historic folklore and mouthwatering cuisine are things that never cease to inspire me. In a country marked by contrasts, I want Mexicans to get used to peace and prosperity, but continue to be amazed by the wonders of our land.

As a student at Boston University, I co-founded the Mexican Student Association to give voice to Mexican students and culture through fundraising, academic and cultural events. During my junior year, eager to have a direct positive impact, I interned at the Mexican Social Security Institute, where I quickly realized my work made a tangible difference. After graduation, I returned to the Institute and was able to implement time-reducing programs for hundreds of hospitals and health centers nationwide. These initiatives allow millions of Mexicans to receive faster access to the care they require, and showed me the importance of planning, developing and monitoring people-centered public policy.

Because of my work, I was asked to join Pemex, Mexico’s national oil and gas company, as an advisor to the CEO. I was lucky to join Pemex shortly after the Mexican Energy Reform, which effectively transformed a decades long Pemex-held monopoly into an open market. This gave me the opportunity to work on projects that had never taken place at Pemex including our first ever profit driven Business Plan, joint-venture and deep-water development. These efforts changed the company’s perspective, guaranteed billions of dollars in investments, and affirmed the significance of the private sector in achieving progress.

As I look towards the future, I am excited to continue making a difference for Mexico. I want Mexicans to substitute poverty for opportunity, corruption for justice, violence for peace and insecurity for life in a community. As a Rubenstein Fellow I will strive to create, with the help of my peers and mentors, a sustainable intersection between the public and private sectors that works in benefit of the people in my country and around the world.

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS
Harvard Business School, MBA Candidate, 2021
Boston University, BA in Economics and BA in Philosophy, magna cum laude, 2015
Karbank Philosophy Fellow
Peter A. Bertocci Award for Academic Achievement and Humanitarian Service
Winner of the Best Cultural Group, Best Individual Programming, and Best Collaborative Programming Excellence in Student Awards while Co-President of the Boston University Mexican Student Association

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS
Petróleos Mexicanos (Pemex): Advisor to the CEO
Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social (IMSS): Advisor at the Institutional Strategic Planning Unit
Overheard Podcasts: Co-Founder
ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

Harvard Business School, MBA Candidate, 2021

The University of British Columbia, Sauder School of Business, BCom in Accounting and International Business with Honors, 2015

HEC Paris, Exchange Student, 2014

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Boston Consulting Group: Associate, Real Estate and City Development Sector

NARRATIVE

When I was young, I lived in a small and remote village in China and never saw electric lights until the age of five. Growing up without access to many resources, I always wanted to “see more” and improve the place I lived in. Driven by this desire, I became the first university student in my family, and the only one admitted to BCG in my university cohort.

My discovery, from a small village to international cities, helped shape my decision to join BCG’s Real Estate and City Planning Practice to help rural villages, like the one I grew up in, connect to a greater world. At BCG, our team has turned a small village in Jiangsu Province into a fashionable e-sport town by connecting with resources in Sweden, and designing the poverty alleviation policies for Liangshan, one of the most underdeveloped areas in China. I have also worked directly with the Beijing Government to oversee the Beijing Sub-center Plans, which will extend Beijing’s financial and commercial district 20km away from the current city center to alleviate congestion, protect historical architectures and expand development area—an initiative that was highlighted by President Xi Jinping in the 19th Party Congress.

I would like to dedicate my life to the urban development of China and other developing countries through better policy making. My small hometown village imprinted me with a close bond with the soil and the people who work on it. My work with BCG convinced me of the importance of effective public policies, and my studies at HKS, with the support of Rubenstein Fellowship, will equip me with the capabilities and network. All of these experiences will lead to my life mission to build great cities around the world, and open doors for people and nations.
STEPHEN MOCH
HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL MASTER IN PUBLIC POLICY CANDIDATE, 2021

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS
Harvard Business School, MBA Candidate, 2021
Princeton University, AB, Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Minors in Environmental Studies and Sustainable Energy (Program in Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering), *cum laude*, 2014
T.A. Barron Prize for Environmental Leadership, Princeton Environmental Institute, 2014

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS
Goldman Sachs, Executive Office, Environmental Markets Group: Associate
MizMaa Ventures: Summer Associate
Generation Investment Management, Generation Foundation: Summer Associate
Hudson Clean Energy Partners: Summer Analyst
Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers: Intern, Federal Government Affairs
Princeton Sustainable Investment Initiative: Co-Founder and President

NARRATIVE
I have spent a lot of time pondering light bulbs.
Beginning nearly ten years ago, I learned that both economics and policy are necessary to driving sustainability at scale—and this has evolved to my career goal of creating industry-wide shifts towards sustainability through the public and private sectors.
During my four years at Goldman Sachs, I was intimately involved in the formulation and implementation of a global, firm-wide environmental strategy and key business initiatives across sustainable finance. My initial environmental efforts, building support for my high school to invest thousands on a lighting retrofit and rooftop solar, evolved to building support for Goldman Sachs to target the deployment of $150 billion to clean energy by 2025.
My time at Goldman Sachs was complemented by a range of internships, from private equity and venture capital to the advocacy arm of Al Gore’s sustainable investment firm and the policy association of the auto industry. Through each experience, I saw firsthand the importance of capital in unlocking low carbon technologies and the importance of the public and private sectors in advocating for improved environmental policy outcomes.
So why light bulbs? Although only one piece of a far more complicated environmental puzzle, the shift to LED lighting is one of the fastest technology transitions in history and has broad implications for the transition to a low carbon economy. Despite the many hurdles that exist, I am optimistic that we are at the early stages of rapid change across multiple components of our global infrastructure, from the rise of impact investing to the potential for electric, autonomous vehicles.
I believe that driving change on a global scale will require combined progress through effective policy solutions, innovative financial structures and technology advances. I am excited by the Rubenstein Fellowship and the joint HBS/HKS program, which will provide me the skills to catalyze action in both the public and private sectors and craft productive relationships between government and business.
Enlisting in the U.S. Army Special Forces (“Green Berets”) allowed me to chart a path that exposed me to a wide array of cross-cultural phenomena and conflicts at the ground level. On deployments, I interacted with and directly managed foreign soldiers and civilians alike from countries as varied as Afghanistan, Romania, Japan, Thailand, Nepal, and the Philippines. It became apparent to me that what separates the prosperous and relatively peaceful nations from those facing constant internecine conflict is each state’s level of economic development. It was impossible to ignore the fact that I faced the threat of IEDs while leaning against homes made of dried mud in the desolate deserts of Kandahar and Helmand, when I could experience expansive cultural exchanges in Tokyo or Seoul. Deployments demonstrated that while violence can occur in developing nations, societies on positive economic trajectories can expect decreasing levels of conflict. In the future, I plan to tackle violence in emerging societies through targeted economic development.

Effective economic development in the emerging world requires a joint effort between multiple public echelons and the private sphere. Government entities can often provide social welfare-oriented visions, while private firms deliver industry best practices and efficient operational expertise. I was able to personally witness the success of such joint pursuits in countries such as South Korea, as well as the need for more dynamic cooperation in states across Southeast and Central Asia. Pursuing an MBA/MPP dual degree at Harvard allows me the opportunity to best learn how to combine the strengths of both the public and private sectors to achieve optimal social policies.

I view the Rubenstein Fellowship as crucial to this endeavor. The Fellowship will offer a diverse and mutually-beneficial support network of peers which I can both learn from and give back to as we progress in our careers together. As I grow as a global citizen and a leader at the Harvard Kennedy School, the Rubenstein Fellowship Program will be central to my education and leadership development.
NARRATIVE

Whether studying abroad in France, teaching in Japan, or working in Bangladesh, I have always been fascinated by the variations in how societies choose to allocate resources. In particular, realizing as a high school student that the access to quality education I enjoyed was far from universal, even in my home state of Massachusetts, sparked an interest in the tension between the United States’ promise of meritocracy and widely divergent opportunities across demographics. Seeing education as a catalyst for empowerment led me to pursue work in the international education space, where I hoped to channel academic opportunity as a driver for economic development and combating inequality.

Working with a women’s university in Bangladesh, I quickly discovered a passion for building programs that helped marginalized populations pursue their potential. Developing the university’s first program on mental health studies, I was struck by the poignant dearth of government action in a public health area that affects every community. Establishing a recruitment pipeline for garment factory workers, I was excited by the potential for corporations to wield their financial resources to move the needle on social issues. At the same time, I was frustrated by the seemingly meager market mandate for socially responsible business choices. I was ready for another cultural leap—this time, by shifting sectors. I moved to consulting in order to explore the advantages that for-profit players bring to the table when tackling complex social challenges.

With the recognition that social impact is not confined to the walls of nonprofits, I am eager to develop my ability to move fluidly amongst sectors as a leader in social urban policy. While the areas that interest me the most—education, public health, and economic development—are often within the purview of government, I believe that the greatest potential for innovation lies with the melding of expertise across the policy, business, and nonprofit spheres. Through the Rubenstein Fellowship, I am excited to learn from my peers’ experiences and be a member of a community that leverages self-reflection, experiential learning, and exposure to new territories to facilitate the fusion of these interdependent worlds.
As the son of immigrants, I grew up in Central Florida with a love of country that could only be passed on from parents who had made the choice to pursue a better life in the United States of America. After September 11, 2001, I was inspired to join the military, realizing that the country that had provided my family with such opportunity faced a new generational threat.

I began my military career on my eighteenth birthday by swearing to “support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic” as a new cadet at West Point. Over the past decade I have had the opportunity to wear the U.S. Army uniform in a number of capacities across the world. From working to help rebuild the security sector in Liberia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to serving along South Korea’s demilitarized zone, and flying Black Hawk helicopters and spy planes on combat missions in Afghanistan, my focus has been consistent: to promote the ideals of our Republic—and to empower those that I work with to do the same.

As a helicopter and spy plane pilot in Afghanistan, I led teams of soldiers as we planned missions and dynamically re-tasked resources to more effectively meet the demands of dozens of stakeholders. As a Company Commander, I led an aerial reconnaissance unit which flew manned spy planes across five continents. I was responsible for mission success, as well as the training and welfare of over 100 soldiers.

While pursuing my military career, I—alongside my wife—have also launched Operation American Dream, a federally-recognized nonprofit organization that creates educational scholarships for the children of fallen U.S. law enforcement, fire rescue, and military personnel.

As an HKS/HBS joint degree candidate, the Rubenstein Fellowship will help me to refine my core competencies and to apply my experiences in the military and nonprofit sectors to better serve the Republic that I have sworn to protect and defend.
DENIS O’LEARY
HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL MASTER IN PUBLIC POLICY CANDIDATE, 2021

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS
Harvard Business School, MBA Candidate, 2021
Washington and Lee University, BA in History, 2010

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS
J.P. Morgan, Investment Banking, Leverage Finance: Vice President
The Windward School: Trustee
The Scarsdale Concours: Co-Founder & President

NARRATIVE
Over the past eight years I’ve worked in leveraged debt origination, helping non-investment grade businesses access debt capital markets. During that time I witnessed how a weak financial footing compromised the viability of even the best organizations; I also became more aware of concerning trends in our nation’s financial trajectory. A combination of inadequate retirement savings, underfunded pensions, and increasing life expectancy continue to accelerate the breakdown of one of our most crucial safety nets: the entitlements system.

As a student of history, I was well aware of the importance of this system in moderating swings in our economy and how critical it is to the basic needs of some of our most vulnerable citizens. Waiting for the collapse was not an option: I decided it was time to put my financial background to a more meaningful use.

To become part of the solution, I needed to broaden my knowledge, particularly regarding public policy as cooperation across the public and private sector will be central to progress. The dual degree from the Harvard Kennedy School and Harvard Business School, as well as the Rubenstein Fellowship, will enable me to bridge these two worlds and become a leader ready to drive change.
I have spent much of the past few years helping global retailers make strides in digital service delivery. This is far from where I expected to be working just a few years ago, but I have been inspired by the scale of change some companies are achieving, and motivated by the potential to transfer the benefits beyond the private sector. Digital innovations have a significant impact on companies and their customers, and I believe the same can be true for public institutions and the citizens they serve. By holding the government to the same standards of user experience to which we hold our favorite companies, we can improve the lives of citizens in their most vulnerable moments.

Today, citizens interact with a multitude of government agencies individually, and there is seldom a linkage of information across touchpoints. Citizens alone are responsible for learning to navigate this complex network. In the best cases, an investment of time and research to understand the services available for one’s particular situation allows one to benefit from the policies designed to support them. In the worst cases, individuals and families—often those for whom the policies were designed to help the most—have neither the time nor the institutional literacy to take advantage of the services they are due. We can do better, and the digital innovations exist to help us get there.

Over the next three years at Harvard, I hope to build a more complete understanding of citizen pain points in interacting with the public sector, and develop a framework to better guide the transfer of knowledge from the private sector to government on the topic of digital service delivery. I am humbled to have been included in the Rubenstein Fellowship, and look forward to being further humbled, inspired, and challenged by the communities that comprise the Center for Public Leadership.
MUHAMMAD SAFDARI
HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL MASTER IN PUBLIC POLICY CANDIDATE, 2021

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

Harvard Business School, MBA Candidate, 2021
Northwestern University, BA in Economics and Biological Sciences, 2010

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Facebook: Program Manager, Election Integrity
Teach For America: High School Science Teacher, Dallas-Fort Worth Corps
Redwood City, California: Planning Commissioner

NARRATIVE

America’s civic discourse is due for an overhaul. Across a variety of issues, we are pushing each other apart rather than working together constructively. Prior presidential campaign claims that we can “disagree without being disagreeable” and not be “divided into those red states and blue states” have not been realized.

I want to help improve our national conversation. Coming out of college, I felt that the key to better discourse sat in the classroom. While Teach for America presented a phenomenal opportunity to work towards a strong educational foundation with a group of future voters, I wanted to focus more directly on these issues and at a larger scale.

Inspired by self-organized groups that pushed for reform in Colombia and the Middle East, I moved to Silicon Valley in 2012 and began work at Facebook. With a ubiquitous platform connecting many people across the world, Facebook can be a powerful tool for people to learn more about issues, understand alternate points of view, and organize to support policies and candidates that matter to them.

Unfortunately, we have all seen that Facebook also has vulnerabilities in the civic space. I’m disappointed to see that some have weaponized that platform to disinform and polarize, and my role over the past year has been to program manage efforts to combat civic bad actors. Facebook is right to expand its investment in Election Integrity to focus on these issues. At the same time, this is the right moment for me to step back to study the ecosystem of factors contributing to the current state of our discourse, both on Facebook and beyond.

I believe that we can work together to build a country where we can discuss political issues more respectfully and effectively. With the support of the Rubenstein Fellowship, I want to understand how we can all be more thoughtful citizens through improved approaches to technology, education, or other means.
NARRATIVE

The trajectory of my academic and professional career was set in 2008. I witnessed the toll that the financial crash and ensuing recession took on families across the world, including my own, and it sparked my commitment to improve the world by reinvigorating risk management and long-term value creation in the private sector as well as strengthening and streamlining oversight in the public sector. I am motivated by my memories of the stress, panic, and confusion that I saw around me during the Great Recession and by the effects that still linger today to ensure that markets operate at the optimal blend of growth and stability.

In my undergraduate career, I deepened my passion for and developed my understanding of financial risk, from its history and causes to its cures and latest incarnations. My work culminated with my senior thesis exploring contingent convertible bonds and their applications to financial firms in distress.

After college, I joined Goldman Sachs in the Corporate Treasury department, which is responsible for funding optimization and liquidity risk management for the firm. It was an extraordinary opportunity for me to tackle the real-world challenges of financial risk in a large and critical institution, and it allowed me to learn how risk management and public policy interact, both in theory and in practice. The perspective that my position offered on the complexities of the financial system and prudent, economical risk management was invaluable, and my experience only intensified my desire to engage with these problems at the intersection of the private and public sectors.

I am profoundly grateful for the opportunity to pursue the joint MPP/MBA degree through the Rubenstein Fellowship as it is the ideal avenue through which to grow my knowledge of public policy and private markets and to enhance my skills in navigating the boundary between the two. I am enthusiastic to be joined by others who share my excitement for tackling the world’s most pressing problems through the combined methods of private and public engagement, and I am confident that, together, we can create a positive and lasting impact on society.
Imagine if the only thing you could do after 6pm is sit at home listening to the wildlife, talking with your family about your day. Imagine this in the dark, without a smart phone for distraction and no access to a TV, radio or educational materials. This is the reality for 1.1 billion people. Isolated villages around the world are often forgotten by government, and the private sector can be reluctant to invest given unclear regulation, fragmented markets and limited infrastructure linkages.

I started caring about energy after working at ExxonMobil and BCG. My roles required me to draw insights from data that would drive high priority decisions relating to day-to-day operations and long-term strategy. I soon discovered the scale of lack of electricity access and was inspired by the impact that connection has on economic opportunity in rural communities.

I was interested in how systemic change in rural communities could be achieved by working at the core of government to develop the systems needed for the private sector to flourish. I left BCG to take a position as Project Leader at the Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency, a government development institution. I learned that there are areas where government and the private sector both excel, and part of the magic is bringing these capabilities together in a way that works for low income populations, taxpayers and private investors alike.

I am now working at CrossBoundary, an investment advisory firm, to test off-grid energy business models in the field across Africa and build the case for how private sector mini-grids and governments can work together to deliver cheaper critical infrastructure to rural populations.

While progress is being made in the energy access sector, my ambition after Harvard is to support governments, private sector and donors to accelerate access to higher quality electricity connections.

The Rubenstein Fellowship will enable me to combine public and private sector perspectives while studying the MPA/ID and MBA degree at Harvard Kennedy School and Harvard Business School. This will equip me with the leadership and analytical skills to ultimately work towards increasing energy access and rural economic opportunity in Africa.
KYI ZAR THANT

HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL MASTER IN PUBLIC POLICY CANDIDATE, 2021

NARRATIVE

I grew up in Yangon, Myanmar, where I experienced firsthand political transitions, instability, and more recently steps towards democracy and economic development. As part of a family supported by a small business entrepreneur in Myanmar, my family and I went through life changing challenges not uncommon to many business owners in developing countries. Inadequate public policy frameworks in Myanmar led to a lack of access to credit, low financial literacy, and an absence of financial and social safety for the majority of the population. I grew up knowing many families who lived paycheck to paycheck and whose lives were overturned by an unexpected setback.

My undergraduate studies in economics and my close observations of U.S. policies while living in the U.S. directed me to believe that sustainable solutions can be achieved through public policy. Professionally, I moved from Goldman Sachs to the IFC to have the chance to apply my investment and financial knowledge in developing countries. At the IFC, I had the opportunity to work with businesses in countries transitioning out from political and economic conflict. For these countries, including Myanmar, I believe that public policy serves as the floodgate for progress. Working with entrepreneurs in Afghanistan, Madagascar, Senegal, Vietnam, and Gabon, I saw that the development of the private sector depends much on sound policy making.

It is my ultimate career goal to develop financial policies in Myanmar to offer social security to low and middle income populations and provide financial support for entrepreneurs and small businesses. I believe the MPP program will prepare me to play an active role in the development process in Myanmar and being part of the Center for Public Leadership will be an important milestone in this journey. I am honored to join the Rubenstein Fellowship and look forward to being part of a strong community of leaders from whom I can learn and share leadership stories with and explore ways to contribute to each of the causes we are committed to.

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

Harvard Business School, MBA Candidate, 2021
Harvard University, BA in Economics with High Honors, cum laude, secondary field in Psychology, 2015

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

International Finance Corporation (IFC), World Bank Group:
Investment Analyst, Global Agribusiness

Goldman Sachs: Analyst, Investment Banking Division, Equity Capital Markets Hong Kong
KEN WATARI
HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL MASTER IN PUBLIC POLICY CANDIDATE, 2021

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS
Harvard Business School, MBA Candidate, 2021
Stanford University, BA in Public Policy, 2011

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS
Fulbright University Vietnam: Director of Strategy and Planning
The Boston Consulting Group: Consultant
Youth for 3.11: Co-Founder and COO
Teach For Japan: Founding Team Member

NARRATIVE
On his first day of graduate school in America, my father was startled, watching his classmates furiously debate trade policy. Back in Japan, he was used to sitting in lectures where the professor would drone on, barely looking up from his notes. Over the next two years my father became a convert to the American style of education, and when he returned to Japan, he decided that he would provide his child with a similarly transformative education.

I followed in my father's footsteps—leaving Japan as a teenager to attend a New England boarding school and then Stanford. Since I always had a keen interest in how the rest of the world lived, I studied international development, dreamed of joining the World Bank, and worked in Cape Town, Bhutan, Tohoku, and Bangalore. But I kept coming back to a central question, inspired by my own lived experience: Why is educational opportunity concentrated among the few—both within and across countries—and does that necessarily need to be the case?

Once I began to focus on this question, I was hooked. Through my experiences helping to launch Teach For Japan, advising universities and school districts as a BCG consultant, and supporting the establishment of Fulbright University Vietnam, Vietnam's first independent, private, and nonprofit university, my appreciation for education's transformative potential has only expanded. I grew to appreciate the role that top rated education institutions, especially universities, could play in transforming, not only individuals, but society by accelerating knowledge creation, training the future workforce, developing leaders, and inspiring society to live up to a higher ideal.

Long term, I hope to build top quality education institutions in contexts where educational opportunities are not readily available, and to raise the bar for what families expect for their children. I am humbled to be invited to join the Center for Public Leadership and Harvard communities, and I hope to capitalize on this opportunity and accelerate my path to impact.
NARRATIVE

When I was fifteen, speaking barely a word of Spanish, I took a “sabbatical” from my high school in Syracuse, New York and moved to Chile. This year abroad gave me the first taste of independence and biculturalism that would eventually lead me to my passion for fighting malnutrition.

Having been captivated by Latin America in high school, I looked for any opportunity to go back once I got to college. At the invitation of a professor, I traveled twice to Guatemala to research post-conflict zones, which inspired me to move there full-time after graduating. I spent two years in the country’s second poorest province, where I saw malnutrition’s devastating impact on children. Seeking a solution, I joined Semilla Nueva, a small nonprofit working to reduce malnutrition in Guatemala.

Over the next three years, I learned how market-based initiatives can significantly increase nonprofit impact. In rural Guatemala, malnutrition stems largely from the ubiquitous consumption of corn, which lacks essential nutrients, so initially I poured thousands of hours into a grassroots campaign to educate families on diversified diets. Yet despite our efforts, families’ unwillingness to change their cultural staple curtailed our impact at less than 5,000 people. In response, I co-led Semilla Nueva’s strategic pivot to focus on producing and selling high-nutrient corn seed to rural farmers. Since then, we tripled the size of our team, became the first organization worldwide to commercialize high-zinc, quality-protein corn seed, and improved the daily diets of 100,000 Guatemalans.

Working in nutrition inspires me because of the potential scale of impact. Every year, malnutrition contributes to almost half of child deaths under the age of five and prevents millions more from reaching full neurological development, which has pervasive macro effects on economic development. I am pursuing a joint degree to identify and scale market-based initiatives to alleviate malnutrition. Through the Rubenstein Fellowship, I am excited to become part of a community with similar cross sector interests, and I look forward to supporting each other to achieve our personal visions for change.
ANGELA WINEGAR

HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL MASTER IN PUBLIC POLICY CANDIDATE, 2021

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

Harvard Business School, MBA Candidate, 2021
Brigham Young University, BS in Economics, Minor in Business Strategy, 2014

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Freshly Picked: Chief Marketing Officer
International Rescue Committee: Marketing Consultant
Bain & Company: Senior Associate Consultant
Inspire, Inc: Bain San Francisco Client Development Lead
Utah Caucus: State and County Delegate
United States Treasury: Markets Room Summer Economist Intern

NARRATIVE

I grew up in suburban Arizona, the daughter of two electrical engineers. At age seven, I vividly recall my father helping me build my first computer. I also recall, around the same age, my mother making all of us watch and take notes on the presidential debates and spending her weekends volunteering with the United Way of Arizona. Their deep interest in emerging technology and commitment to community service and involvement have shaped who I am today.

Halfway through college, I landed my dream internship in the Markets Room of the U.S. Treasury. My role was to help policy makers understand how financial markets, financial policy, and proposed regulation would affect banks and the broader economy. I observed how decisions made in the financial industry impacted the lives of millions of Americans, and I wondered which industry would drive the most change in my life and the lives of my children.

Since college, I have devoted my time to understanding the technology industry. At Bain & Company, I sought out tech-focused projects and clients, ultimately transferring offices to work in Silicon Valley for some of the world’s largest technology companies. After Bain, I took a role as Chief Marketing Officer at Freshly Picked, a baby apparel e-commerce startup with more social media followers than any other baby brand, to better understand social media and advertising’s impact on consumers. As an advertiser, I was able to meet with leaders at major technology companies. It startled me to learn how disconnected from the public sector they were, despite their key role in developing technological advancements that will impact all citizens.

Ultimately, I want to help ensure the technological advancements made in Silicon Valley are developed to achieve the greatest benefit to society as a whole. I am grateful for the opportunity to pursue my MBA and MPP at Harvard, and with the support of the Rubenstein Fellowship, I hope to continue developing as a leader and one day serve as a bridge between Washington, D.C. and Silicon Valley.
My commitment to resource stewardship takes root in my upbringing in Northern California, where I grew up hiking amongst oak trees and wild grass, towering granite and sequoias, and the salty air of ocean coasts. Witnessing scenes of environmental degradation personally—a sky muddled with exhaust in China, kids playing in mounds of garbage in South Africa, and pounds of paper cups traveling from my own office in New York to rapidly filling landfills—led me to question the environmental footprint of economic progress. A tour of a recycling facility in 2013 reinforced my interest in waste and ultimately pivoted my career. After leading several environmental initiatives at Oliver Wyman where I worked as a management consultant, I joined the World Bank in 2015 to solve environmental challenges at a global scale.

At the World Bank, I worked on projects to help cities grow sustainably, such as by advising a middle east government on improving waste disposal and engaging citizens, building a global database of waste management statistics called “What a Waste”, and helping a city in Lebanon identify investments that can mitigate carbon emissions while saving money in the long run. My experiences revealed that environmental issues disproportionately impact the poor, who are often the last to receive waste collection services and frequently subjected to the placement of waste near their homes. Importantly, I also learned that infrastructure and technology solutions are not enough. Political will, governance, planning, and—most importantly—financial resilience are cornerstones of lasting change.

Through the joint MPA-ID/MBA at Harvard, I look forward to exploring mechanisms to intervene in complex systems with competing priorities while gaining the skills to design solutions that are ambitious, financially rigorous, and operationally efficient. I want to use these skills and perspectives to help cities tackle the challenges in environmental sustainability that accompany economic progress and to motivate both public and private actors to take action. I look forward to taking advantage of the rapid growth in emerging markets to implement locally appropriate, equal, and affordable systems the first time around.

I am thrilled to be part of the Center for Public Leadership community and to learn from the convictions that have shaped our ambitions. I look forward to supporting each other as we strive to build a world that is healthy, just, and sustainable.
“I am a first generation Nigerian-American, and I celebrate my firsts wholeheartedly. However, I recognize that these firsts come with challenges: with each upward step I take in my professional career, the less diverse my communities have become […] Living in a country where only three percent of publicly traded companies publish diversity and inclusion policies, I plan to pursue a career that promotes and institutionalizes diversity and inclusion initiatives, driving upward mobility and financial security for all underrepresented groups.”

Chichi Anyoku
Harvard Kennedy School
Rubenstein Fellow
MPP/MBA Candidate
The U.S. Latino Leadership Fellowship brings together talented and emerging leaders who are committed agents of transformation in U.S. Latino and other underserved communities. U.S. Latino Leadership Fellows have addressed disparities in their communities through efforts in public policy, education, economic development, health care, immigration, social entrepreneurship, and a variety of other fields.

The U.S. Latino Leadership Fellowship is a game-changing opportunity for practitioners, scholars, and activists ready to lead the transformation of U.S. Latino and other underserved communities.

U.S. Latino Leadership fellows are leaders who:

• Create sustainable change in underserved communities by leveraging community assets
• Inspire new ideas and innovative change in local and national programs and policies
• Build cross-sector partnerships and collaborations

In addition to their formal coursework, U.S. Latino Leadership Fellows participate in a yearlong co-curricular program that includes small-group discussions with members of the Harvard faculty as well as other leading academics and practitioners, personal and professional skill-building workshops, and a field experience trip. Taken together, these activities are intended to inspire, provide concrete opportunities for leadership skill-building, and connect fellows with an interdisciplinary network of peers and mentors that will last a lifetime.
ABOUT THE WILLIAM R. KENAN, JR. CHARITABLE TRUST

Established in 1966 by a bequest from the estate of chemist and industrialist William R. Kenan, Jr., the William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust, in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, focuses on awarding grants in the areas of K–12 education, higher education, whole community health, arts and culture, and historic preservation.

A principal purpose of the Kenan Charitable Trust grants has been to support education, with an emphasis on enhancing excellence of teaching and access to high-quality education. The trustees have endeavored to carry out Mr. Kenan's wishes through various initiatives including endowed professorships, scholarships, and fellowships of distinction at esteemed colleges, universities, and arts institutions.

ABOUT THE COCA-COLA FOUNDATION

The Coca-Cola Foundation operates as the global philanthropic arm for The Coca-Cola Company. Since its inception in 1984, the Foundation has awarded more than $900 million in grants to help protect the environment, promote recycling, empower women and enhance the overall well-being of communities.

For more information about The Coca-Cola Foundation, please visit www.coca-cola.com/givesback.
PAULANI CORTEZ-VILLAS

HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL MASTER IN PUBLIC POLICY CANDIDATE, 2020

NARRATIVE

Growing up in South Texas’ Rio Grande Valley, I always knew that I wanted to leave. I did not have a particular destination in mind, but I knew that the border region of Texas that I called home was not for me. The schools in the area were all severely underfunded. Poor infrastructure meant that if I drove for a mile in any direction, I would encounter no fewer than five potholes. And above all, I felt that there were not opportunities for me to thrive. It was hard for me to imagine staying there for the rest of my life, but it was even harder to imagine raising children who would be subjected to the same constraints I felt when I was growing up.

To make a long story short, my plans on returning to the Rio Grande Valley have evolved drastically since I left at eighteen. My first few months of college were excruciatingly difficult, and I even changed my planned course of study because I felt I did not have the math or science background to succeed in the engineering courses I wanted to take. Talking with my new peers made me realize that the challenges I faced adjusting to Princeton were not a product of my own personal failings, but that of a system that was not built for me. This realization—along with the guidance of my mentors and the support of my friends and family—was the key to my eventual success in undergrad, and it provided me with a clear path forward. I now see that my perception of South Texas while growing up put the blame on a region and its people when it should have been directed at those who deny it the adequate resources it needs to thrive.

Through the U.S. Latino Leadership Fellowship, I hope to gain the leadership skills to go back home and make it a better place for the kids who live there. I want to bring a multi-issue child advocacy organization to a community whose children need someone fighting on their behalf, and I plan to leave HKS prepared for a career as a champion for kids in South Texas.

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

Princeton University, AB in Politics, Certificates in Gender and Sexuality Studies and American Studies, cum laude, 2017

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Partnership for America’s Children: Fellow
Tectonica Studios: Digital Campaign Strategies Intern
Caroline M. Picard Prize in Politics Recipient

HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL MASTER IN PUBLIC POLICY CANDIDATE, 2020
In the Letter from Birmingham Jail, Dr. Martin Luther King expounded that “[H]e knew through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed.” As someone who faces oppression as an undocumented Latinx, my desire to demand freedom for myself and my community members is what drew me to the Harvard Kennedy School and to the Center for Public Leadership.

In 2006, Arizona voters passed Proposition 300, which prohibited undocumented students from paying in-state tuition at Arizona public colleges. Overnight, the cost of college tuition quadrupled. I was a junior in high school, and I lost the motivation to go to college. Thankfully, my mother was by my side. She reminded me that we migrated to the U.S. for a better life. She had faith I would receive an opportunity to go to college and she encouraged me to stay motivated. My senior year in high school, I applied for and received the Alberto Hurtado, S.J. Scholarship to attend Santa Clara University on a full ride. Because of the challenge I overcame, I decided to give back to my community.

After college, I worked for Immigrants Rising to advocate for increased college access for undocumented students. In the four years I worked in San Francisco, I worked with local and international government agencies and higher education institutions to develop pro-immigrant policies that empowered undocumented students to graduate from college and go on to successful careers. As I reflect on my future in policy and at HKS, I am determined to study our economic policies in order to propose efficient changes that maximize personal and economic well-being and enable Latinxs and low-income communities to flourish throughout the U.S. After Harvard, I aim to work in either local government or in the private sector to bring my vision to life.
DENISSE ROJAS MARQUEZ
HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL MASTER IN PUBLIC POLICY CANDIDATE, 2020

NARRATIVE
I envision equitable healthcare and education systems for U.S. Latino and underserved communities. Growing up as an undocumented immigrant, my family and I had limited health care options and as a result, we would delay treatment for illness and use free or subsidized healthcare. Through these difficult experiences, I was inspired to bring change to my community as a physician and policy advocate.

When my family and I left Mexico for the United States, I was only ten months old. As a resident of Fremont, California, my family found new opportunities that enabled my two siblings to attend college. My path, however, had many roadblocks. Because of my immigration status, I was ineligible for financial aid and I became discouraged when school counselors could not offer guidance for achieving my educational goals. Moreover, I was painfully separated from family members, who as a result of stalled policies on immigration, left for Canada.

Remaining steadfast in my aspirations, I graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, in 2012. That same year, I co-founded a national organization called Pre-Health Dreamers (PHD) to provide advising, resources, and advocacy for undocumented youth like myself. In just a few years, PHD has reached over 800 members. As a result of PHD's advocacy in partnership with academic groups, more medical schools are considering undocumented students for admission.

I have now completed three years at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai and am taking a pause to pursue a public policy degree at Harvard Kennedy School. Through this dual training, I hope to envision, design, and implement systemic changes that address disparities in healthcare for Latino and underserved communities. I also want to work on education policy and build platforms for students and educators to better engage in policy efforts. I believe engaging stakeholders will yield innovative solutions that are truly driven by community-need. I look forward to engaging with my cohort in the U.S. Latino Fellowship.
“In 2006, Arizona voters passed Proposition 300, which prohibited undocumented students from paying in-state tuition at Arizona public colleges. Overnight, the cost of college tuition quadrupled. I was a junior in high school, and I lost the motivation to go to college. Thankfully, my mother was by my side. She reminded me that we migrated to the U.S. for a better life [...] As I reflect on my future in policy and at HKS, I am determined to study our economic policies in order to propose efficient changes that maximize personal and economic well-being and enable Latinxs and low-income communities to flourish throughout the U.S.”

Rodrigo Dorador
Harvard Kennedy School
U.S. Latino Leadership Fellow
MPA/ID Candidate
The Wexner Israel Fellowship represents a unique partnership between The Wexner Foundation, the Israeli Civil Service Commission, and Harvard Kennedy School (HKS). This fellowship was created through the generosity of Les and Abigail Wexner via The Wexner Foundation and is anchored at the Center for Public Leadership, which has long benefitted from the Wexners’ generosity. The fellowship seeks to develop transformative leaders for Israel’s public sector. Each year, up to ten outstanding Israeli public service leaders are selected to pursue a Mid-Career Master in Public Administration degree at Harvard Kennedy School and to participate in a series of leadership seminars and institutes sponsored by the foundation itself.

The Wexner Foundation is focused on strengthening Jewish professional and volunteer leaders in North America and public service leaders in the State of Israel. The foundation’s leadership initiatives include an alumni network of 2,500 individuals, including more than 250 Israeli public officials who participated in the Wexner Israel Fellowship Program since it was established twenty-nine years ago, and eighty members of the recently established Wexner Senior Leadership Program.

Wexner Israel Fellows engage in the following programs in addition to their HKS coursework:

- A weekly Wexner seminar incorporates the HKS experience into the Israeli public sector reality, and is focused on professional and personal leadership development, cohort building, and the North American Jewish community.

- Engagement with the Center for Public Leadership (attending retreats, faculty workshops, and student-led sessions with 100 other CPL-sponsored fellows) helps synthesize classroom learning with practical professional leadership.

- Interaction with the New England Jewish community and Wexner alumni in the region deepens productive relationships between Israeli leaders and their global Jewish community counterparts.

- Out-of-town institutes provide fellows with in-depth exposure to the cultural, political, and organizational realities of North American Jewish community life, and enables them to explore public policy and public service issues that tie in to their work back in Israel.
Leslie H. Wexner, founder of L Brands, started the company in Columbus, Ohio, in 1963 with one store and first-year sales of $160,000. Today, total sales for L Brands businesses exceed $12 billion. Mr. Wexner serves as Chairman and CEO of L Brands, a global leader in lingerie, fragrance and beauty, which includes Victoria's Secret, PINK, Bath & Body Works, White Barn Candle Co., La Senza and Henri Bendel. The company's products are available in more than 3,800 stores around the world. Mr. Wexner has a profound interest in the development of tomorrow's leaders through the works of Harvard University's Center for Public Leadership; the Wexner Foundation; and The Ohio State University. His areas of community interest include The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center; the Columbus Partnership; Wexner Center for the Arts at The Ohio State University; Nationwide Children's Hospital, Columbus; and the National Veterans Memorial and Museum, Columbus. Mr. Wexner has received the Alexis de Tocqueville Society Award of the United Way of America, Woodrow Wilson Award for Citizenship, Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, Knight of the Italian Republic and the American Jewish Committee Herbert H. Lehman Centennial Leadership Award. In 2015 he was named to Harvard Business Review’s Top 100 Best Performing CEOs; he was ranked at #11. Mr. Wexner is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences; chairman, The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center Board; chairman of the advisory council for the Center for Public Leadership at Harvard University; member of the Royal Shakespeare Company International Council; and chairman of the Columbus Partnership. He is also a founding member and the first chair of The Ohio State University Foundation. Mr. Wexner holds a B.S. degree in Business Administration from The Ohio State University and honorary degrees from Brandeis University; Hebrew Union College; Hofstra University; Marietta College; the Jewish Theological Seminary of America; the Hebrew University of Jerusalem; University of Tel Aviv; and Yeshiva University. Mr. Wexner was inaugurated by Harvard University into the Society of John Harvard Fellows, and serves as a visiting lecturer at Harvard Kennedy School.

Abigail S. Wexner, lawyer and community volunteer, is involved in philanthropic work nationally and locally, with a particular focus on children's issues. Mrs. Wexner is the CEO of Whitebarn Associates, a private investment company. She serves on the boards of L Brands, Inc., Advanced Drainage Systems, Inc., the KIPP Foundation, Harvard University's Center for Public Leadership, The Ohio State University, Nationwide Children's Hospital, the Columbus Downtown Development Corporation, the Columbus Partnership, Pelotonia, The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center, The Wexner Foundation, The Wexner Center Foundation and the United States Equestrian Team Foundation. She is founding board member and vice chair of the board for KIPP Columbus, founder and chair of the board for The Center for Family Safety and Healing and a past chair of the Governing Committee of the Columbus Foundation and Nationwide Children's Hospital. Mrs. Wexner also held a presidential appointment to The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. From 2005 through July 2012, Mrs. Wexner served as chair of the board of directors for Nationwide Children's Hospital. Under Mrs. Wexner's leadership, Nationwide Children's completed the largest pediatric expansion in our nation's history and has been named to U.S. News & World Report's America's Best Hospitals list every year since 2006. Prior to moving to Columbus, she practiced law from 1987 to 1992 with the London and New York offices of Davis Polk & Wardwell. She is a graduate of the Dwight School, New York City; Barnard College at Columbia University, Magna Cum Laude and Phi Beta Kappa; and New York University School of Law.

Mr. Wexner and Mrs. Wexner are the parents of four children, ranging in age from nineteen to twenty-three years of age.
SHIRA ARNON

HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL MID-CAREER MASTER IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION CANDIDATE, 2019

NARRATIVE
Trained as a Certified Public Accountant, I initially worked as a financial comptroller in the accounting department of the Ministry of Health (MOH). Ten years ago, I underwent a personal transformation which generated a strong desire to do something more meaningful in promoting excellence in healthcare for the population of Israel. I left my comfort zone and changed careers, switching to the field of economics at the MOH’s Division of Medical Affairs. This division plans, shapes, and creates healthcare policy in Israel. Within months of transferring, I led an inter-ministerial team whose recommendations were adopted by the government, resulting in the establishment of a new medical center in the country’s remote southern region. For the first time in my professional life, I no longer measured success based solely on financial criteria, but rather by my ability to improve the provision of medical services to each and every citizen, regardless of place of residence, ethnicity, or socio-economic status.

The challenge of providing healthcare in times of escalating needs and limited resources requires leaders to have a balanced perspective which incorporates a deep understanding of economic considerations, along with healthcare needs. This understanding has led me to believe that many key leadership positions in the health arena that are traditionally filled by physicians can successfully be filled by other professionals. From my experience, I realize that I am capable of building consensus among politicians, financiers, physicians, and citizens.

Studying in the MPA program will certainly improve my negotiating skills, as well as strengthen my ability to lead teams and build broad consensus. In addition to the courses conducted by leading professors, I am excited about the opportunity to meet fellow students from all over the world and to learn from their experiences in different fields, management styles, and governmental structures. I hope to return from my studies with improved skills, new resources, and an international network of colleagues, all of which will enable me to continue my mission of creating an equitable system of high quality health care services for all residents of Israel.

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS
Bar-Ilan University, Israel, MBA in Information Systems, 2007
Bar-Ilan University, Israel, BA in Economics and Accounting, 1996

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS
Ministry of Health: Deputy Director of Medical Affairs
Israel National Road Safety Authority: Member of the Board of Directors
Medical Cadets Program, for high school students in the periphery: Founder
For the past twenty years I have worked in the legal department of the Israeli Parliament, the Knesset. I always believed that major discussions affecting the lives of those living in a democracy take place in the parliament and upon graduating from law school I applied for a clerkship at the Knesset so that I could be involved in those discussions.

Israel is one of the most culturally diverse countries. As a legal advisor in the Knesset, I am challenged to advise Knesset members representing very different positions on public policy, as to how, in the face of their faction's belief systems, they must still uphold and respect the laws governing the state of Israel's democratic parliamentary procedures.

The legal department of the Knesset plays a central role in the Israeli democratic system. In my professional capacity I contribute to the creation of progressive legislation and assist the members of parliament to understand, meet, and abide by the procedural protocols and applicable laws which govern their specific agendas. Additionally, I am called upon to advise and ensure that laws are upheld while Knesset members maneuver through their daily activities forwarding their constituents agendas.

As a legal advisor to the House committee and the Ethics Committee, the Speaker's Presidium and various Ad Hoc and Parliamentary committees, I am asked to draft opinions on various issues, in addition to periodic amendments to the Knesset bylaws and Ethics Code.

I am excited to collaborate with the international participants at HKS. The fellowship of this program will enable me to glean and incorporate best parliamentary practices used by other democratic countries upon return to the Knesset's legal department. I plan to use the academic year to immerse myself in comparative analysis of systems through which each participant approaches their public policy decision making process, at both the institutional and personal level, addressing the ever changing local and global trending public policy issues. I strive to understand how my position can affect positive change in parliamentary procedure.
HAGAY CARMI

HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL MID-CAREER MASTER IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION CANDIDATE, 2019

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

Bar Ilan University, Executive MBA, *cum laude*, 2010

Ben Gurion University of the Negev, MSc in Electro Optical Engineering, *cum laude*, 2006

Jerusalem College of Technology, BSc in Physics/Electro Optics Engineering, *cum laude*; Awarded Kaplan Prize for Outstanding Graduate of the Year from all faculties, 2000

Jerusalem College of Technology, Teaching Certificate for High-School in Science and Technology, 2000

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Israel Defense Forces: Head of Cyber & Dedicated System Research Branch, Lieutenant Colonel

Israel Defense Forces: Lieutenant Colonel, Head of R&D Branch; Major, Project Manager; Major, Deputy Branch Head; Major, Section Head; Captain, Research & Development (various positions)

Awarded the Israel Defense Prize by the President of Israel, 2018

NARRATIVE

Both my grandfather and father devoted most of their lives to military service and rose to the rank of Colonel. Although they were often absent from home, I understood they were doing their utmost to contribute to the nation. Following their example, I decided to devote my personal abilities to a public role in the field of technology and security. My career at the Israeli Defense Forces has combined my professional expertise, and my personal interests, with my leadership abilities. Today, as Lieutenant Colonel, I am the Director of a central Cyber and Research department, leading a hundred scientists and engineers.

One major reason for selecting the MC-MPA program is for me to develop a leadership approach that inspires employee commitment and motivation. From my professional vantage point, I see some of our most talented people leave military service because of the difficulty in finding the right work-life balance. Throughout my career, I have always made an effort to include the families of my personnel to build understanding and family support around them. As a senior commander, I intend to lead changes, empowering those with key positions to maintain a balanced life. A better approach to this issue will allow us to compete with the private sector and retain quality personnel in the organization.

During my studies at Harvard I will seek to discover how parallel organizations meet the challenge of promoting healthy balance to maximize retention of their personnel. In the near future, I hope to be appointed commander of a technological unit. Assuming a senior management position would strengthen my capacity to influence a prominent part of the Israeli public sector. I am looking forward to absorbing ideas, approaches, experience, and techniques that will move me out of my comfort zone and allow me to further develop as a leader. For the longer term, I’m interested in integrating into key positions at the public sector in the field of education or health. I’m convinced that the year in HKS will be an excellent preparation for these challenges as well.
NARRATIVE

I’ve been passionate about science and technology ever since I was a child. I have always been fascinated by the rules of nature and their utilization in the creation of instruments capable of achieving what has been previously considered impossible. This notion has drawn me to engineering and to an R&D leadership position at the Israeli Prime Minister’s Office. Leading ambitious projects is about much more than solving technological challenges. Such projects require bringing diverse groups of talented individuals to depend on each other and trust one another in order to achieve a mutual goal. Moreover, they require helping an entire organization embrace the opportunities, risks, and costs of the path to innovation. Hence, it is my privilege to engage and mentor various change agents in my organization and together with them assure the government has the best solutions to Israel’s evolving challenges. I look forward to honing my engagement skill set at the Harvard Kennedy School.

Israel is often referred to as the Start-Up Nation where both the private and public sectors view innovation as key to progress and prosperity. Yet, technology is agnostic and innovations can also be abused. I see it as the role of leaders to hold the moral compass and steer these advancements towards public good and to educate the public about technology’s implications and consequences.

In an era in which technology is ubiquitous and affects practically every aspect of life, I wish to grow as a leader capable of addressing the broad implications of innovations and changes. Being a part of the Wexner Israel Fellowship allows me to burst not only out of my defense and technology-centered “echo chamber” but out of the Israeli one as well. Through the Wexner Israel Fellowship I plan to engage and experience a broad spectrum of the Israeli public sector. In addition, the diverse multinational class at HKS and CPL in particular, will allow me to gain insights into how the intersections of policy and technology are manifested around the world.
NARRATIVE

My grandparents, served as role models throughout my life: their patterns of action around community, and open ways of thinking guide my actions, professionally and personally, as I strive to impart these to my own children. Steeped these values, my parents did not hesitate to leave their comfortable lives in Paris to realize their dream of living in Israel. Moving back and forth between France and Israel several times, I confronted challenges of integration. Meeting and living among so many people of diverse cultures and perspectives I learned to observe difference rather than judge it, cultivating my sense of belonging to the larger whole.

The commitment and sensitivity I developed to the importance of the greater good served my ambition of a career in civil service well; today as part of my work at the Ministry of Energy, I strive to evaluate national developments in broad terms, aspiring to positively influence the citizens of Israel.

Israel has always dealt with existential challenges on security, social, and economic fronts. Israel's inability to rely on its own energy resources has always been of prime concern. The discovery of natural gas reservoirs in Israeli waters was a revolution for the economy, with proven reserves sufficient for market needs for several decades.

As Chief Economist of the Natural Gas Authority, I am a partner in advancing the development of the natural gas market for decades to come. I implement national projects and government policy designed to promote the Israeli natural gas market, a key factor in increasing the economic growth of the Israeli market and improving air quality, in order to boost the wellbeing of Israeli society.

At HKS I hope to gain practical tools to deal with the challenges that characterize the public sector and to learn more about leadership, negotiation, risk management and energy innovation. Studying at the Mid-Career MPA program and taking part in the Wexner Israel Fellowship is an opportunity for me to become part of a network of senior public service leaders with whom I can implement high-impact projects, furthering sound leadership for generations to come.
RONIT HEYD
HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL MID-CAREER MASTER IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION CANDIDATE, 2019

NARRATIVE
Growing up in Jerusalem, diversity, inter-group tensions, and social inequality were always evident around me. On completing my university studies, I knew I wanted to dedicate myself to social change and to put the tools I possessed as a social psychologist into practice for the values I cared deeply about. I wanted to make an impact.

Seventeen years ago I was fortunate to join Shatil, the action arm of the New Israel Fund, which is the leading organization promoting progressive social change in Israel. In the various positions I held at the organization, including as Executive Director for the last eight years, I had the privilege of working with Israelis from all walks of life - religious and secular, Jews and Arabs, veterans and new immigrants - on the most burning issues in Israeli society. Together with my colleagues and partners in the field I worked to promote democracy and human rights, social justice, and religious freedom by providing capacity building to civil society organizations, organizing joint campaigns, and promoting policy change.

Growing extremism all around the world, but particularly in Israel, is a major concern for me. The use of fear mongering by politicians, coupled with the continuing occupation and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, lead to rising levels of overt racism and hateful attitudes towards minorities in Israel. I am embarking on this journey of studies at Harvard Kennedy School with the hope to gain a deeper understanding of policy and politics, to reflect on the challenges Western democracies are currently facing. I hope to learn from and be inspired by experts and leaders from around the world on how to strengthen social inclusion and democratic infrastructures in a diverse and conflicted society.

I am committed to dedicating my career to building the roads to justice and to full social inclusion for all Israelis. I am sure the Wexner Israel Fellowship and the invaluable pool of knowledge, experience, and insights at CPL will be the best path to transform into a much better advocate and leader for social change in Israel.

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, MA in Social Psychology, magna cum laude, 2001
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, BA in Psychology, summa cum laude, 1999

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS
Shatil, Leading Social Change: Executive Director
Shatil, the New Israel Fund: Director of the Social and Economic Justice Initiative
Shatil, the New Israel Fund: Coordinator of the Pluralism Project and Organizational Consultant
Psycho, Psychology Magazine: Chief Editor
The Lafer Center for Women and Gender Studies, the Hebrew University: Coordinator
Women and Their Bodies: Volunteer Writer and Editor
Author of Children Stories “Manyera the Witch”
NICOLE HOD STROH

HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL MID-CAREER MASTER IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION CANDIDATE, 2019

NARRATIVE

Born in Colombia, I grew up with a strong dual identity—Colombian and Jewish. I was exposed to the ramifications of poverty, drug trafficking, and war from a young age. I realized that injustice and inequality were the root cause for violence. After school, I was forced to study abroad for safety reasons. Living in Madrid, Paris, and New York showed me what it was like to live in societies free of war and poverty. I was committed to returning to Colombia and making a difference.

Upon my return I served as Senior Management consultant at Compartamos con Colombia and managed teams from multinational firms, to provide fundraising services to nonprofits, from a dance company for at-risk youth, to a micro-financial institution, to a prosthetics factory for landmine victims.

In 2009, I decided to move to Israel with my husband and two young children. It was not an easy decision, as we had to rebuild our lives, but I felt it was time to crystallize my Jewish identity by raising my children in Israel and contributing to its society. I was immediately inspired to see what the country had created in only 60 years. Yet, the growing polarization and intolerance between the different sectors of society became immediately apparent. I realized that Israel needed mechanisms to strengthen social cohesion and shared citizenship.

In 2013 I spearheaded the establishment of an organization called ANU to convene diverse Israelis to take joint action for the common good. Through this method, we have incubated 15 coalitions containing thousands of activists and organizations that advocate for different causes. When diverse individuals focus on their shared interests, they begin to remove barriers, initiating dialogue, showing compassion and standing in solidarity.

My diversity, both inherited and acquired from my experiences, allows me to view issues from multiple perspectives and nurture inclusiveness as a way of life. At HKS, I am eager to become part of a diverse, dynamic, and passionate community that will keep me inspired and motivated. I believe this ecosystem will broaden my perspective, unleash my creativity, and provide a strong foundation for ongoing professional development.

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

New York University, BA in Political Science, Minor in Philosophy, Deans Honor List, 2002

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

ANU-Making Change: Deputy Director and Member of the Founding Team
Agenda, Israeli Center for Strategic Communication: Strategic Development Management
Global Excellence: Program Director
Sidreh Lakiya Negev Weaving: Strategic Development Manager
Compartamos con Colombia (CCC): Senior Nonprofit Management Consultant
Give to Colombia: Program Director
United Jewish Communities (UJC): Special Projects Coordinator
David Ben-Gurion, the first Israeli Prime Minister said: “Its purpose and designation impose on the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) educational roles like no other army. In addition to its security role, the IDF was created to serve as the manufacturer of the nation’s pioneers and the cultural melting-pot of exiles, their union and their cultural rise.” I was born to a family of such exiles. In 1976 my parents immigrated to Israel from Georgia, a republic in the USSR. The only reason they needed to leave their home and friends was to live in the Jewish state. I was born a year later and the value of loving Israel was engraved in me.

From a very early age, technology and leadership have intrigued me, and thus when I joined the IDG in 1995, I seized the opportunity to incorporate technology and teamwork. I volunteered to the Ordinance Corps and have dedicated the last two decades to public service as an Ordinance Officer. My last position was the head of the Technology and Maintenance branch of the Northern Command. I was responsible for ensuring the competence of military-systems as well as the professional and leadership development of commanders and soldiers.

In March 2018, the Organization for Economic Co-operation in Development (OECD) published an economic survey of Israel. According to the survey, although Israel’s economy is strong, the gap in social cohesion is substantial, and poverty is high particularly among Israeli-Arabs and Ultra-Orthodox Jews. As a Wexner Fellow I intend to expand my efforts in reducing social inequality and increasing the social cohesion of Israeli society. Education is a key factor in attaining these goals. To quote Nelson Mandela, “Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world.” Throughout my years as a commander, I have always strived for the professional and personal growth of my soldiers providing them with various educational opportunities.

In the future, I intend to focus on expanding the integration of Ultra-Orthodox Jews, promoting educational solutions for career-soldiers, and enhancing technological education among Israeli youth.
NARRATIVE

My grandfather Shmuel, after surviving the horrors of the Holocaust, was approached by a stranger who said emotionally that Shmuel was responsible for saving his life in Auschwitz. He stated that through the darkest times, when all hope seemed lost, Shmuel's repetition of ‘Yidden Haltsach!’ (Jews hold on!) gave him the strength he needed to keep going and never give up. This lesson in brave leadership, and the power of one person to make a significant difference, is a strong part of who I am.

I have dedicated my entire career to safeguarding the security and wellbeing of the State of Israel, and all its citizens. There is nothing I would rather do. As a third generation Holocaust survivor, I was raised on countless gut-wrenching stories of eye level encounters with one of the most evil forces in the history of mankind. These accounts provide endless energy fueling my dedication and service.

I have been serving the State of Israel for over seventeen years, from various command, training, and staff positions in the Israel Defense Forces, to leading units of specialists in the Prime Minister's Office tackling national security issues. In my career I have experienced remarkable success, heart-breaking failure, and complex moral dilemmas that will remain a part of who I am forever. I have learned that humility and compassion are just as important in fighting terror as are tactics and cutting-edge technology, that better cooperation leads to better results, and that without following a coherent vision, actions in the field can never generate required long term change.

The next phase of my career will require me to transition from implementing policy to formulating policy. The areas I plan to focus on are: advancing inter-organizational and international cooperation, safeguarding ethics, and promoting adaptive policy. I plan to use my newly acquired tools from HKS and the Wexner Israel Fellowship program to improve my organization’s overall ability to deal with some of the world’s most complex and volatile security challenges.
“I am embarking on this journey of studies at Harvard Kennedy School with the hope to gain a deeper understanding of policy and politics, to reflect on the challenges Western democracies are currently facing. I hope to learn from and be inspired by experts and leaders from around the world on how to strengthen social inclusion and democratic infrastructures in a diverse and conflicted society.”

Ronit Heyd
Harvard Kennedy School
Wexner Israel Fellow
MC-MPA Candidate
The challenges we face in our public schools and public health systems, as well as in government at all levels, are too complicated to be solved without the insight and commitment of leaders with the highest quality professional training. But for many who have a strong aptitude for public service, the opportunity costs associated with acquiring the necessary training are too high.

In response to this problem, the Zuckerman Fellows Program makes it possible for individuals from the fields of medicine, law, and business to pursue public service degrees at Harvard Graduate School of Education, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, or Harvard Kennedy School, and thus become leaders for the common good. The Zuckerman Fellowship provides recipients with full tuition and health insurance fees plus a stipend for one year.

Zuckerman Fellows are selected on the basis of commitment to public service, leadership abilities, and intellectual and academic achievement.

In addition to their formal coursework, Zuckerman Fellows participate in a yearlong co-curricular program that includes small-group discussions with members of the Harvard faculty as well as other leading academics and practitioners, personal and professional skill-building workshops, and a field experience trip. Taken together, these interdisciplinary activities help the fellows integrate classroom learning with their individual career plans and interests.
ABOUT MORTIMER ZUCKERMAN

Mortimer B. Zuckerman is the Chairman and Editor-in-Chief of U.S. News & World Report and the co-founder and Chairman Emeritus of Boston Properties Inc.

He is a trustee of Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, a member of the Bank of America Global Wealth & Investment Management Committee, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Washington Institute for Near East Studies, and the Vice Chair and Treasurer of the International Peace Institute. He is a sponsor of the Harvard Kennedy School, a former Associate Professor of City and Regional Planning at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, a former lecturer of City and Regional Planning at Yale University, a past president of the Board of Trustees of the Dana Farber Cancer Institute in Boston, and the former Chairman of the Principal's International Advisory Board of McGill University. He is a former trustee of New York University and the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton. He is a former Chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations and served as President of the America-Israel Friendship League.

Mr. Zuckerman is a graduate of McGill University in Montreal where he received an undergraduate degree in 1957 with first class honors, a degree in law in 1961, and an honorary LLD in 2011. He received an MBA with distinction from the Wharton Graduate School, University of Pennsylvania, in 1961 and an LLM from Harvard University in 1962.

He has received honorary degrees from Colby College, Southampton College, Hebrew College, Berkeley College, the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, Tel Aviv University, and Hebrew University and an honorary Doctorate of Laws from McGill University and Columbia University. Mr. Zuckerman was awarded the Commandeur De L'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the government of France, the Lifetime Achievement Award from Guild Hall, the Gold Medal from the American Institute of Architecture in New York, the Sy Syms Humanitarian award from Yeshiva University, and a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal from the Canadian government.
In 2011, despite travel warnings and ongoing threats of violence, I arrived in Cairo in the midst of the Arab Spring to work for the United Nations World Food Program (WFP). WFP had engineered a method to fortify rice by adding vitamins A and B, successfully reducing malnutrition-related illnesses, including blindness in children, by over fifty percent. After months of assurances and explanations—and many cups of shai—we convinced over sixty rice mills to partner with us and produce over a quarter million tons of fortified rice, enough to feed nearly fourteen million people. But the thrill of accomplishment was tempered by questions I could not answer: How could we ensure the program’s longevity? Did we address underlying issues or simply patch over a systemic problem? How would this actually disrupt a cycle of poverty or lack of opportunity?

Questions like this brought me to the Millennium Challenge Corporation, where I helped design infrastructure and policy reforms to catalyze economic opportunity for vulnerable populations. Leading interventions in Burkina Faso, Mongolia, and Sri Lanka, I quickly recognized the critical role of the private sector in alleviating poverty. I also saw firsthand the dire need for policy makers, activists, and investors with the technical skills and the political savvy to address the complex structural causes of poverty. I want to serve in this vanguard. I believe it is critical to create social and economic policies that are both pro-business and pro-poor.

Now, more than ever, I strive with the utmost care, creativity, and expertise to advocate for those pushed aside by society. This commitment was born during my childhood in rural Alabama and honed in far corners of the world. I feel a deep connection to the people I work with and for. Helping to uplift them, to share their stories, and to empower their communities is the most meaningful and rewarding pursuit I have undertaken. Supported by a community of Zuckerman Fellows and armed with the skills that only Harvard Kennedy School can provide, I hope to forge new frontiers in the creation of economic opportunity and social mobility for our world’s most vulnerable.
My passion for public service and health stems from high school, when I volunteered at a public pediatric asthma clinic and helped establish a medical-legal partnership to meet patients’ socioeconomic and legal needs. This early experience exposed me to the myriad of social factors that affect health, and sparked my desire to work for underserved communities.

Since then, health-related public service has remained a priority that has permeated my life. As an undergraduate, I taught weekly health workshops in public high schools, studied the effect of nutrient supplementation on malaria risk during pregnancy in Tanzania, and led a service trip to increase clean water access in rural Bolivia. As a neurobiology major, I developed parallel interests in health disparity reduction and brain development. I brought these together through my internship at the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University and my work as a Cordeiro Research Fellow to reduce neural tube defects caused by maternal folic acid deficiency in Nicaragua. In medical school, I have had the opportunity to design and carry out a year-long service project in partnership with a community organization through the Albert Schweitzer Fellowship. My project aimed to support healthy early childhood development among low-income and homeless families, to improve health and educational outcomes for underserved children.

I am committed to applying what I have learned from these experiences to solve public service challenges. Childhood health and developmental disparity is a significant public service issue with broad repercussions in education and socioeconomic inequality that will require a highly interdisciplinary approach to address. As a physician, I hope to not only serve individual patients but also address such multifactorial challenges that systematically impact children’s health. I view the Zuckerman Fellowship as an opportunity to develop leadership skills and collaborate with others across disciplines to find solutions to complex public service problems. I hope that this fellowship, alongside my MPH program in Quantitative Methods, will enable me to become a better physician as well as a leader in the public sector capable of improving children’s health outcomes on a population level.
My parents and I moved to a Mexican village when I was five. I slept in piles of corn husks and learned to suck the sweet flesh off a ripe coffee bean. We played a hide-and-seek-style game we innocently called *Migra y Mojados*—Border Patrol and “wetbacks.” One friend’s big brother, Javo, commanded our gaggle of kids with tender, laughing authority.

I remember my friend’s father less well; most were *allá*—over there—in the U.S. Javo took his turn. And when he came home, his laughter was harsh. He drank. And when he picked me up and stumbled on the cobblestones, he scared me. It was only later that I came to understand the way a migrant—beloved at home—can be reduced to anonymous hands and muscle in a strange culture.

Back in Mexico in 2018, David sat across from me. He had arrived in the U.S. at two years old, and when authorities removed the shackles and he walked the bridge south across the Rio Grande it was like tumbling into a black hole. Tears came when he spoke of his wife and children—U.S. citizens—who depended on his paycheck and needed his love back in Texas. The profiles and report we produced at Human Rights Watch acknowledged the right of states to enforce borders, but what David and the many deportees taught us in tragically vivid detail was the importance of the right of family unity, a principle violated time and again in a broken immigration system. It has been my privilege to learn repeatedly, firsthand, about the complex tangle of laws that enable and ensnare migrant laborers and refugees fleeing violence.

Strengthened by the resources and inspiration from the Zuckerman community, I aspire to participate in the discussions that address the global crises forcing migrations and to help craft measures that seek to better the conditions of those uprooted by economic need or violence. To me, immigration policy is a matter of both head and heart. I intend to help those who cannot go back—and those who must follow wages across borders—go forward.
NARRATIVE

My interest in public health first began as an undergraduate at UCLA. I spent four years as a part of GlobeMed, a public health organization that partnered undergraduate students with NGOs around the world to work on grassroots level efforts to improve the health of communities. This is when I first began to understand the importance of one's community and environment in determining one's life trajectory.

My interest in public health continued after college, when I joined Teach For America. Teaching high school physics at an under-resourced school in south-side Chicago was the most challenging and rewarding experience of my life. I saw firsthand the differences in opportunity afforded my students relative to their wealthier counterparts just a few miles north of them. I also saw the potential that quality leadership had in making a difference in their achievement. My students did the most difficult work—internalizing abstract physics concepts while using self-reflection to drive personal growth—yet this was possible only when I established deliberate structures that allowed them to flourish. At the end of my second year of teaching, my students had made two years of science skills growth in a single year, and more impressively, each one of them became a better person during the process—as did I. Teaching taught me that effective leadership is not an inherent quality, but a learnable and practiced skill that cannot be mastered without relentless cycles of trial, error, reflection, and improvement.

My passion for public health, education, leadership, and science coalesced with my decision to pursue a medical degree at the University of California, San Francisco. As a future Emergency Medicine physician, I will learn to diagnose and treat disease at the individual level while understanding that maintaining healthy communities requires “a village.” My time as a Zuckerman Fellow and MPH candidate will provide me the valuable space to continue refining my leadership principles while learning to navigate healthcare systems and structures. I envision my future as a healthcare administrator in a county hospital setting, where I will continue serving as a physician-leader for the most vulnerable members of society.
The initial phase of my professional life was influenced by the September 11th attacks. Inspired to serve my country and follow in the footsteps of family members before me, I enrolled in the Naval Academy and graduated as a Marine officer. Over the decade that followed, I served alongside a diverse generation of Americans throughout the United States and around the world. From those men and women, I learned that the most critical part of leadership is empowering and serving those you lead, and I developed a deeper commitment to public service. Having now transitioned from active duty, I intend to carry that same commitment into a career in law and public policy through the Zuckerman Fellows Program.

After receiving a firsthand view of our foreign policy during multiple deployments, I became inspired to make a greater contribution to national security policymaking. To that end, I went on to serve as a National Security Fellow in the United States Senate. As I begin the next phase of my professional life pursuing this interest, I plan to develop skills in analysis, leadership, and decision-making from the extraordinary community of fellows and faculty at Harvard Kennedy School’s Center for Public Leadership.

Upon completion of my year at Cambridge, I will attend Georgetown’s law school, after which I plan to pursue a career in public policy as an attorney — drawing upon my education and experiences to better serve others. I am committed to applying what I have learned in the military and what I will learn as a Zuckerman Fellow to further a career in public service.
NARRATIVE

I spent my time between undergraduate and graduate school living in a small Turkish city called Denizli, which happened to be home to many Afghan and Iranian refugees. While these communities provided me with a certain sense of home, given my Iranian heritage and Farsi-speaking upbringing, my new neighbors viewed me with some confusion. Friends routinely asked why I had chosen to live in Denizli, as many only hoped to immigrate to the United States. My own parents shared their confusion—having left Iran due to the Iranian Revolution, they were perplexed as to why I would choose to leave the life they had built in California and return to this region.

My journey here, and the path that led me to work with displaced communities, began much earlier in life. As one of the only students of Middle Eastern descent throughout my K-12 education, I often felt obligated to be a spokesperson for a community about which I knew little. To better grapple with these conversations, I felt compelled to learn more about my heritage and the politics and history of the region.

Over time, these experiences developed into a deep interest in immigrants’ rights and in the Middle East, which in turn prompted me to study Middle Eastern politics and to begin working with asylum-seekers during my time at UC Berkeley. Later, this became the impetus for my move to Turkey, and ultimately for my decision to pursue a joint JD-MPP, in hopes of gaining the tools I need to become a more effective advocate for these communities.

My background and heritage allow me to see the Middle Eastern refugee crisis through a unique lens—the clients I have worked with often look and feel like distant relatives, in spite of the different paths our lives have taken. The Zuckerman Fellowship, as well as my education and the privileges I have had in my life, will provide me with the community and the tools necessary to empower refugees in the rebuilding of their lives.
PHILLIP JONES

HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL  MASTER IN PUBLIC POLICY CANDIDATE, 2021

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

Harvard Business School, MBA Candidate, 2021

United States Naval Academy, BS in History, 2012

Marine Corps Burke Scholar

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

United States Marine Corps: Infantry Officer

G-MEO China: Strategic Advisory Summer Associate

Ironbound Boxing Academy: Advisory Board Member

NARRATIVE

As the son of two Air Force pilots, I had the unique opportunity to grow up across the globe and experience the life of an expatriate from an early age. Additionally, when I was twelve years old my parents became missionaries and I was blessed to develop friendships that extended across cultures, religions, and creeds and defined my ever-evolving worldview as I entered the military service.

At the Naval Academy, it was my duty to influence the next generation of Midshipmen, a responsibility that I cherished. I was selected by the Superintendent to serve as the second black Brigade Sergeant Major in the Academy’s 166-year history and used my platform to help impact the lives of over 4,000 students on a daily basis. At Annapolis, I learned that a team is more than just the sum of its parts and that channeled diversity has the ability to tap into new solutions to resolve critical issues.

Post college, I served in the Marine Corps as an infantry officer and had the distinct privilege to lead men across multiple continents in support of America’s foreign policy. It was during this time that I saw how civilian leaders had the ability to influence people and military procedures on a macroscale. I witnessed the integration of women into previously closed assignments, the acceptance of Afrocentric hair regulations, and the disannulment of discriminatory social regulations. The positive effects of these changes will reverberate for generations and I want to help write the next chapter.

My aim is to serve in a position that taps into my deep passion for the welfare of American troops. My long-term goal is to serve in a management role where I can help direct resources and implement policy for the Navy and Marine Corps.

As I shift the scope of my service, I know that the joint degree program and the Zuckerman Fellowship will help hone my passions, fuel my intellectual endeavors, and redefine my global view, so that one day I can be a servant-leader who drives significant change across our military.
NARRATIVE

I was fourteen when I decided I would become a doctor, and having finished my third year at Harvard Medical School, I feel tremendously blessed to have found my vocation. I am constantly reminded how much of a privilege it is to care for those in need. As exciting as it is to be starting my career in an era when trends like technological advances and the industrialization of healthcare are revolutionizing how medicine is practiced, I recognize they also pose a significant challenge to the doctor-patient relationship. My greatest career aspiration is to ensure the value of that bond is not lost.

“Medical humanism,” which emphasizes compassionate and patient-centered care, has far more consequences than just improving patients’ subjective experiences: it benefits patients, providers, and the system at large. Physician empathy is actually associated with better care, including greater patient adherence to recommendations, fewer complications, and shorter hospitalization times. Humanistic physicians experience fewer malpractice claims, greater job satisfaction, and less burnout.

These issues will need to be addressed from multiple and complimentary approaches, but the way I plan to make my mark is through medical education. I have always valued mentorship experiences, and the continual training of medical students, residents, and fellows is a prime opportunity to impact culture from the bottom up, ultimately affecting numerous institutions for years to come. Within my desired specialty of surgery, teaching has traditionally focused on hands-on skills like knot-tying, but studies have shown that empathy can be taught too.

Pursuing an EdM from the Harvard Graduate School of Education is a critical step to make my goal happen. Beyond providing an opportunity to learn both the theory and the skills necessary for a career in teaching, educational research, and curriculum development, the Specialized Studies Program also affords the flexibility to explore my interests at the other Harvard graduate schools. Furthermore, the Zuckerman Fellowship Program’s leadership development curriculum will inspire and teach me how to think broadly about instigating change with other aspiring leaders.
I am committed to socioeconomic equity and social inclusion for all communities. I believe that an equitable education system is the most effective antidote to structural and socioeconomic inequity, and the most powerful catalyst for human flourishing. Further, I conceive of education as a human right, as recognized by most of the world’s countries through the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, its foundational covenants, and Convention on the Rights of the Child. Working to improve the U.S. education system will not only foster greater equity at home but also contribute to greater global solidarity and the common interest in ensuring that all people have their human right to an equitable education realized.

My academic, professional, and life experiences both at home and abroad have contributed to my macro-level understanding of why inequity is so pervasive in education. While my understanding has grown, my curiosity and commitment have also expanded. I am ready to “dig deeper” and craft more effective “systems change” strategies for structural reform by applying a social entrepreneurial approach to solution-oriented public interest work. By partnering with local institutions and communities, I hope to leverage innovative legal tools, effective capacity building practices, and policy advocacy to shift narratives from the dictates of dependence or cynicism, to the inspiration of collaboration and possibility.

The Education Policy and Management master’s program will equip me with the research and evaluation, management, and quantitative skills that social entrepreneurship, institutional leadership, and policy formulation demand. The Zuckerman Fellowship program will provide the multidisciplinary leadership training needed to find common solutions to the common challenges facing the communities each program member serves. I am humbled to be a fellow and I look forward to growing as a professional and public servant.
In my hometown, Memphis, Tennessee, there is a potter’s field with the horrifying nickname “Babyland” that serves as the final resting place for thousands of infants who died before their first birthday. For the majority of my childhood, zip codes in Memphis had the highest infant mortality rate in the nation, disproportionately affecting black mothers and their babies. Seeing this tragic result of Memphis’ racial and economic disparities inspired my career goal of improving care for women through a combination of clinical medicine and public health.

In my undergraduate years at UNC and in medical school at Johns Hopkins, I have sought to understand the connection between public policy and maternal health outcomes. My research interests in undergrad explored many angles of women’s health including the impact of expanding women’s rights in Morocco, the success of the Swedish prenatal care system, and barriers preventing African American women from receiving quality prenatal care. I spent time working directly with pregnant women at the time of their deliveries as a doula at UNC Women's Hospital. In Baltimore, I have again been confronted with stark health disparities which fall along racial and economic lines. As a medical student at Johns Hopkins, I have seen firsthand the effects of unequal access to reproductive education and healthcare. My research projects have focused on the incredibly vulnerable and overlapping populations of incarcerated women and women with substance use disorder.

Taken together, all of my experiences have brought me back to my same childhood goal of improving care for women and their babies. The two fields of medicine and public health offer a complementary approach to solving the most complex and ingrained health problems, like those that caused Babyland. At a time when healthcare for women is under attack, I hope that my experience as a Zuckerman Fellow pursuing an MPH at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health will help me to become an advocate for my patients to improve access to comprehensive reproductive healthcare.
VERONICA POLIN

HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL MASTER IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION/INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CANDIDATE, 2021

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS
Harvard Business School, MBA Candidate, 2021
Stanford University, BA in Economics & International Relations, Phi Beta Kappa, 2014

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS
IDinsight: Senior Associate
Evidence for Policy Design: Research Fellow
Inter-American Development Bank: Research Assistant
International Rescue Committee: Program Volunteer
Institute of Business Advisors Southern Africa: Member and Certified Advisor

NARRATIVE
I grew up in a multicultural family of immigrants and entrepreneurs from humble beginnings. My parents' tenacity through challenges and eventual business success showed me the potential for the private sector to lift families out of poverty, but also gave me a deep sense of duty to help those who had not been as fortunate. Growing up with multiple—and sometimes conflicting—ethnic identities also endowed me with a robust interest in other cultures and countries. As I grew older, I became passionate about finding ways business and policy could be used to create economic opportunities for the poor.

Working in international development, I have realized how hard it is to design social sector programs that create real, sustainable impact. I spent several challenging years leading the evaluation team for a public-private partnership in Uganda and Mozambique, experiencing some wins but also many failures. But I have also been motivated by successes such as in Zambia, where I had the opportunity to improve the implementation of a large sanitation infrastructure project, leading to better service delivery in peri-urban compounds. While I have been encouraged by the potential I have seen for cross-sector initiatives to solve global challenges, I have also been regularly frustrated by the way good intentions can fail when differing incentives and perspectives are not aligned.

Through a joint MBA and MPA/ID at Harvard, I hope to address this challenge by learning to speak the languages of business and policy, approaching development through multiple lenses. Ultimately, I want to lead organizations that can integrate the perspectives of governments, nonprofits, and entrepreneurs to design better products and policy serving the needs of the poor. As a Zuckerman Fellow, I feel privileged to have the opportunity to learn and grow with other passionate individuals from different disciplines, as I believe collaboration across sectors is the key to alleviating poverty. I look forward to building the skills and relationships in the coming years that will shape me into an impactful leader in the social sector.
Because healthcare is commoditized in America, access to healthcare is all but determined by two numbers—income and zip code. I am a public interest attorney working in healthcare policy and litigation. I have witnessed indigent women of color, undocumented families, LGBT individuals, and the people with disabilities bear the brunt of both economic barriers to care and legislative restrictions. These restrictions are part and parcel of the systemic injustices that contribute to health disparities along race, gender, and socioeconomic lines.

It was through my experience working in social services where I first witnessed the overwhelming impact of psychosocial determinants on the health of women and their families. Prior to law school, I worked for four direct service nonprofits in New York City, advocating for indigent women and children who had survived instances of rape, abuse, and domestic violence. During intake, I provided referrals for many women with unaddressed psychological and physical illnesses. Whether seeking child support modifications, custody, or orders of protection, every single woman walking through my door lacked adequate resources to address unpaid hospital bills and unmet medical needs. As a practicing attorney, my focus has since shifted to upstream health policy interventions and impact litigation in order to address poor health outcomes at their systemic roots rather than their individual consequences. I seek to address gender-based violence—and gender inequality more broadly—from a public health perspective.

If I am to continue my pursuit of health equity, I must fully comprehend the challenges that must be overcome as we progress toward this goal. As a Zuckerman Fellow, I can exchange innovative ideas with a diverse group of doctors, lawyers, entrepreneurs, and other advocates all united by a universal passion for public service and social justice. With a multidisciplinary framework, I will be better equipped to comprehensively address gender-based health disparities in all of their manifestations. I believe that quality healthcare is a human right and I intend to use the opportunity afforded me through the Zuckerman Fellowship to do my part in making this right a reality.
My identity as a gay, Afro-Latinx, cis-gender man has provided me with a unique insight into disparity. As a child, I quickly became aware of the socioeconomic differences spanning across communities when I would leave my home in one of Harlem’s projects for daily schooling in the Upper West Side of Manhattan. As a child of poor immigrants from the Dominican Republic, this notion was further amplified. The differences in our neighborhoods’ resources, education, drug and gang violence, and opportunity were irreconcilable despite being separated by only one mile.

When I volunteered in Uganda in 2008, it became clear that disease was not merely normal physiological processes gone awry, but the physical and mental condensation of socioeconomic maladies. Recognizing this in my own identities, I yearned to learn more about the micro and macro level contributors to wellness and disease for marginalized communities in the United States. I joined AmeriCorps in East Los Angeles and worked closely with underserved patients as a health educator for AltaMed Health Services. There, I gained an appreciation of how healthcare infrastructure influenced health outcomes. In 2011, I was hired by AltaMed to implement routine HIV testing policies and learned how devastating stigma and fear were as barriers in eradicating the disease. Later, as a Clinic Administrator of AltaMed’s HIV and Primary Care Clinic, I continued tackling healthcare inequities, realizing that we must leverage local community, schools, government, and business to address health disparities. Through these experiences, I was inspired to become a physician, functioning as a healer of the individual and society at large.

As a prospective director of a public health department or community health center, my goal is to close the health outcome gaps that our vulnerable communities face. As a Zuckerman Fellow, I am humbled and excited to work alongside a diverse group of peers, as I understand that our collective knowledge is required to achieve social justice. I look forward to gaining the leadership skills, mentorship, and long-term network and community that will assist me in helping to dismantle and rewrite the systems that prevent health and social equity.
Commitment to public service has long been a deeply-rooted part of my identity. From internships in Congressional offices to participating in and managing political campaigns to eventually working in state government, I have developed an unshakeable faith in the ability of government to improve people’s lives. But for the government to successfully enact bold programs, the public must have faith that its leaders are honest and transparent.

As an Assistant Attorney General for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and Director of the Division of Open Government, I have worked to build and implement a state-wide program to ensure the transparency and accountability of government actors. The Division has become the principal resource for the public, the government, and the press regarding the Open Meeting Law, and played a significant role in enforcing the Public Records Law.

Despite my efforts to improve government accountability, I feel that we are facing an oncoming wave of misguided nationalism that paints the very backbone of our civic society as poisonous. Government accountability is under assault by those who hold no reverence for its fundamental importance. In seeking an MPA, I am looking to have an even broader impact. I hope to work with other government leaders as the nation faces rapidly changing demographics, technologies, and environmental and energy landscapes. In doing so, I will continue to support transparent and accountable government, while helping build a national movement to empower government leaders to be bolder in their efforts to enact positive change and pursue social and economic justice. This must happen if our nation is to find unity and purpose to address our most difficult challenges.

With the help of the Zuckerman Fellowship, and through the Center for Public Leadership, I hope to eventually lead a public agency, empowered to enact audacious programs while ensuring that government acts with unimpeachable integrity. I hope to build a network of fellow public-sector leaders from across disciplines who are equally committed to bringing positive change through public service. Collectively, we will challenge the toxic narrative that is eroding faith in government.
My career path began while completing an ethnography of Tibetan refugee orphans living in exile in Nepal. I was struck by the potential of these children but also the barriers they faced as a result of poverty, prejudice, and political unrest in the region. I saw dozens of organizations dedicated to helping these children overcome their challenges, but each struggled to scale their programs. Since my time in Nepal, I have seen that many of the same challenges facing children there also exist in some form in the United States. In response, I have dedicated my professional career to bridging the gap between program-level innovation and system-level impact.

I spent the past four years at the Buffet Early Childhood Fund, a philanthropic organization that makes long-term investments in early education practice, policy, and science to improve the lives of the most vulnerable children in America. As Senior Program Associate, I designed an educator leadership program, launched a shared services platform, and helped shape a national funder strategy to address the field's workforce crisis. I saw the role that philanthropy can play in fueling the engine of social innovation by supporting the development of cutting edge interventions. Yet I also saw the critical role of partnership with stakeholders across the social, private, and public sectors to scale programs to the level of state and federal policy. I have come to realize that lasting impact requires more than personal passion or drive; it requires the collaborative effort of unlikely partners and allies working together towards a common goal.

My time at the Harvard Kennedy School is a continuation of my journey to bridge the gap between sectors. Through the Zuckerman Fellowship, I have the opportunity to learn how my colleagues have addressed the challenges of their respective fields. Through my experience, I look forward to refining the skillset needed to advance my goals while contributing to my colleagues achieving their own. I am excited to continue my work to embed systemic change for young children and families in the structure of public life and unlock the potential in every human being.
Growing up in Mexico as a daughter of Chinese immigrants, I learned to appreciate cultural diversity but also experienced the challenges of an immigrant family facing linguistic and financial barriers when seeking healthcare. Personally experiencing and witnessing these health disparities elicited by socioeconomic barriers across both sides of the Mexican-American border has led me to a career in medicine with a special interest in policy. Through clinical work before and during medical school, I noticed a stark difference in health access and resource distribution across different communities. I became involved with the Health Physician Shortage Area research project and had a clearer understanding of the limitations that defined health access in the communities in which I grew up.

As a recipient of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), I also have a special interest in policies revolving around health access for immigrant communities and feel a responsibility to advocate for those who are denied the privilege and security to fight for themselves.

Over the years, it became apparent that many of these obstacles are driven by policies and management decisions. Clinical clerkships have furthered exposed me to the realities and limitations in our patients’ lives that have inspired me to seek education beyond a medical degree. I look forward to taking the experiences and challenges I have witnessed into the upcoming year in which I will be pursuing a Master of Public Health (MPH) that will help me understand and address these socioeconomic factors. With the knowledge acquired from the MPH program with an emphasis in Policy, I will continue to advocate for legislations that will improve access to healthcare for patients. I hope to broaden my knowledge and skills to influence discussions that ultimately improve health conditions for the immigrant and underserved communities. As a Zuckerman Fellow, I look forward to the unique opportunity to collaborate with like-minded individuals across different disciplines and work together to grow and fulfill our desire to serve the public and our communities in our respective fields.
“Now, more than ever, I strive with the utmost care, creativity, and expertise to advocate for those pushed aside by society. This commitment was born during my childhood in rural Alabama and honed in far corners of the world. I feel a deep connection to the people I work with and for. Helping to uplift them, to share their stories, and to empower their communities is the most meaningful and rewarding pursuit I have undertaken. Supported by a community of Zuckerman Fellows and armed with the skills that only Harvard Kennedy School can provide, I hope to forge new frontiers in the creation of economic opportunity and social mobility for our world’s most vulnerable.”

Azeem Ahmed
Harvard Kennedy School
Zuckerman Fellow
MPP/MBA Candidate
For additional information about Center for Public Leadership Fellowship programs, please visit: http://cpl.hks.harvard.edu/student-fellowships

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