

2022-23 Advocates

Jelena Hrnjak

Programme Manager
NGO Atina
SERBIA



Jelena Hrnjak is a women's rights activist who believes in the strength of civic actions as key in the fight for equality. She is committed to providing direct support and long-term assistance to women and children victims of human trafficking and gender-based violence. As a Programme Manager of NGO Atina, Jelena has been managing the work of the organization for the past 14 years. She is considered one of the most experienced professionals in the field of combating human trafficking in Serbia, especially when it comes to programming and providing support to children who have survived sexual exploitation. She has been lecturing and leading trainings in Serbia as well as regionally and internationally. For almost a decade, she worked as a journalist in Switzerland and Serbia. She graduated from the Faculty of Political Science at the University of Belgrade. She is an alumnus of the Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence, the International Visitors Leadership Program at the U.S. Department of State, and the leadership-building program at the Vital Voices Global Partnership. She engages with the Council of Europe as an international expert on human trafficking. Jelena is also the editor, author, and co-author of numerous research papers, analyses, and newspaper articles on the topic of human and women's rights protection.

Isabel Flota

Institutional Communication Officer
International Indigenous Women's Forum
MEXICO



Isabel Flota (she/her) is the Institutional Communication Officer for the International Indigenous Women's Forum/Foro Internacional de Mujeres Indígenas (IIWF/FIMI). As a Maya woman who has experienced discrimination firsthand, she joined FIMI to advocate for Indigenous communities facing the same racism, discrimination, and alienation from their culture that she experienced. FIMI is a global network that mobilizes Indigenous women from all parts of the world to find consensus on agendas, coordinate objectives, and develops leadership. The organization bridges together women-led initiatives at the national, regional, and local levels. They empower Indigenous women to lead international decision-making processes. By doing so, FIMI hopes to have the perspectives of Indigenous women consistently and seriously included in human rights discussions on an international level.

Isabel has a bachelor's degree in Communication Sciences from the Universidad de las Américas Puebla and a master's degree in Political Journalism. She uses this knowledge in her role as the Institutional Communication Officer for FIMI. Her role allows her to spread Indigenous knowledge, promote education, and provide training on Indigenous communication media. Isabel has been part of the Alianza de Mujeres Indígenas de Centroamérica y México and founded the news agency Notimia for Indigenous and Afro-Descendant women. She continues on her advocacy path dedicated to intercultural communication and amplifying the voices of Indigenous women.

Ana María Belique

Founder and Leader
Reconoci.do
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



Ana María Belique (she/her) is a founding member and a leader of Reconoci.do, a movement that mobilizes and empowers Dominicans of Haitian descent, campaigns for equality and their citizenship rights, and supports those who need legal support to access their documents.

In 2013, the highest court in the Dominican Republic ruled that Dominicans born to foreign parents between 1929 and 2007 were to be retroactively stripped of their Dominican nationality. The majority of those affected by the judgment are Dominicans of Haitian descent who have long been affected by the Dominican Republic's denationalization policies. In response to the Dominican Republic's refusal to issue her birth certificate—which she had sought in order to enroll at the university—in combination with the “collective reality of thousands of others,” Ana María founded Reconoci.do. With partners, Reconoci.do has litigated and advocated before dozens of domestic and international bodies.

Eventually, Ana María was able to obtain her birth certificate and earn a bachelor's degree in sociology. Her undergraduate thesis provided a historical analysis of the methods of resistance by Haitian sugarcane workers in the Dominican Republic. She has coordinated the publication of two books, *Nos Cambió La Vida* (Our Lives Changed) and *Somos Quien Somos* (We Are Who We Are), which document the stories of members of the Reconoci.do movement who have been denied Dominican citizenship.

Ana María also leads the Black Dolls initiative which seeks to empower black women from the bateyes, poor villages on sugar plantations with limited or no access to electricity and government services like schools and health centers, to highlight the values of Afro identity and to create economic opportunities.

Antonia Moreira

Head of Strategy
TRANSMoras Association
BRAZIL



Antonia Moreira (she/her) is the Head of Strategy of Ateliê TRANSMoras Association, a trans-led non-profit organization that aims to promote the inclusion of trans people in Brazil. TRANSMoras Association seeks to advocate for the rights of trans people, especially travesti people, because of the increasing violence these communities face in Brazil. TRANSMoras uses fashion to showcase the contributions trans people make to Brazilian culture, build critical narratives around society, and validate the existence of trans identities as legitimate. The organization has been developing collective work that contemplates trans people's material and symbolic demands while fostering new possibilities of life for trans people. By teaching regenerative design and manufacturing techniques such as upcycling, TRANSMoras Association has made designing clothes a source of self-expression and income more accessible to trans people. The organization sustains itself by forming a network of creative types where knowledge and resources can be shared with one another.

As the Head of Strategy, Antonia has helped build strategic planning, short and mid-term goals, fundraising approaches, and, finally, brand strategy for the organization. Antonia has a degree in Communications and Advertising from the Pontifical Catholic University of Campinas. At the intersection between market and activism, Antonia fosters the inclusion of trans people while also working towards developing TRANSMoras Association as an institution.

Jade Jacobs

Co-Director and Knowledge and Research Manager

Iranti

SOUTH AFRICA



Jade Jacobs (they/them) is an LGBTQIA+ activist from South Africa. They joined the human rights movement because they want to help end the violence, fatal hate crimes, and human rights violations perpetrated against the LGBTQIA+ community in South Africa. Jade's passion for activism is rooted in their personal experience within the LGBTQIA+ community, which has motivated them to continue working towards creating more inclusive and supportive spaces. They act as both the Co-Director and the Knowledge and Research Manager of Iranti, a media-advocacy organization dedicated to strengthening African LGBTQIA+ rights movements. Iranti uses narratives to advance human rights by serving as a platform for various kinds of collective evidence-based documentation. By creating archives of human rights violations, engaging in policy reform, and influencing changes in legislature, Iranti helps strengthen movements at local, national, and regional levels. Through Iranti, different movements can help shift public dialogue and perceptions around sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.

Through their different roles, Jade is working towards strengthening Iranti's ability to document human rights violations and ensure the successful implementation of organizational strategy. Jade holds a master's degree in South African Sign Language and a bachelor's degree in Linguistics from the University of Witwatersrand. In 2022, they attended the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association World Conference and are using their skills to work towards engaging LGBTQIA+ rights in high-level advocacy spaces.

Dayana Blanco Quiroga

Coordinator

Warmi Shining and Uru Uru

BOLIVIA



Dayana Blanco Quiroga (she/her) is an Indigenous Aymara advocate of women's rights, Indigenous rights, and environmental justice. She is the founder and main coordinator of the Warmi Shining and Uru Uru projects. The Warmi Shining and Uru Uru projects are part of the NGO Fundación Pueblos de Montaña's effort to build the capacity of Indigenous girls impacted by climate change and gender-based violence. Girls are empowered through English classes, leadership workshops, and activities that make them more knowledgeable of social justice issues and the ways to tackle them. Warmi Shining teaches Indigenous girls leadership skills that help them overcome obstacles in their personal, academic, and professional lives. Uru Uru creates awareness of environmental justice issues and empowers Indigenous girls to advocate for their rights. Uru Uru generates spaces that encourage debates aimed at finding solutions to climate change issues affecting Indigenous communities. By seeking environmental justice and an end to violence against Indigenous women, Dayana hopes to bring peace and security to Indigenous communities in Bolivia.

Dayana has a bachelor's degree in International Trade from the Technical University of Oruro. She has participated in a multitude of different programs around the world at the Pace Center for Civic Engagement, the U.S Institute of Peace, Harvard Crossroads Emerging Leaders Program, and Young Peace Builders of The United Nations Alliance of Civilization, just to name a few.

Marine Kapanadze

Civil and Political Rights Program Director
Georgian Democracy Initiative
GEORGIA



Marine Kapanadze (she/her) is a human rights lawyer currently serving as the Civil and Political Rights Program Director at the Georgian Democracy Initiative, a local non-governmental organization in Georgia. She is actively engaged in the protection of different vulnerable groups including LGBTQ+ activists and journalists and has represented them before state bodies and courts. For more than nine years, she has been monitoring cases of discrimination, hate speech, and hate crimes; litigating strategic cases; and advocating for changes in legislation and practice. As a part of her job, she is also in charge of fundraising and communication with various stakeholders, including local and international organizations, state bodies, donors, etc. Moreover, she lectures at universities and conducts trainings on freedom of speech, national anti-discrimination mechanism, and the rule of law.

Marine believes that establishing a peaceful and prosperous society is impossible without respecting each individual's rights regardless of ethnicity, gender, or other backgrounds. Therefore, she actively works to promote the idea of pluralism and equality as the basis for peace, welfare, and development. Furthermore, she is passionate about transferring her knowledge and experience to the younger generation. To this end, apart from her primary work, she is actively engaged in educational activities and youth initiatives focusing on empowering and inspiring youth to transform Georgia into a modern democratic state.

Marine holds a Bachelor of Law degree from the Free University of Tbilisi (Bachelor) and an LLM from the University of Cologne.

Sharma Aurelien

Executive Director
Solidarite Fanm Ayisyèn-SOFA
HAITI



Sharma Aurelien (she/her) is a lifelong women's rights activist specializing in the exploitation and exclusion of women and girls in her home country of Haiti. For the past seven years, she has worked for Solidarite Fanm Ayisyèn-SOFA, a Haitian non-profit organization helping women escape experiences of subordination, domination, discrimination, exclusion, and exploitation.

Since 2020, Sharma has been serving as SOFA's Executive Director. She has contributed to the expansion of SOFA's intervention programs, increased access to legal and medical services for victims of gender-based violence, spoken out against corruption within the Haitian government and judicial system, and raised awareness of the challenges facing Haitian women and girls.

Sharma is committed to helping women and girls escape violence and poverty through concrete action and services such as the support provided by reception centers (Dovanjou Centers) and access to income-generating activities offered by SOFA to abused girls and women. She has also been working on advocacy for Savane Diane land grab issue with Global Justice Clinic of New York University on behalf of SOFA to help members reclaim their land.

Through her work at SOFA, Sharma is also affiliated with the International Planned Parenthood Federation, Red de Salud de las Mujeres Latino, World March of Women 2000, and the International Federation for Human Rights.

Sharma has also worked in psychosocial services in order to help people overcome their trauma, including HIV counseling for HIV-affected patients on behalf of Centres pour le Développement et la Santé before her experiences with SOFA. She holds a BA in Sociology from Université d'État d'Haiti and a Master's of Sociology from École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris, France.

Anonymous Advocate

Communications and Advocacy Officer
Dana Social Group
ETHIOPIA

The advocate from Ethiopia (they/them) is an artist and activist who works on reshaping the public narrative of queer and trans people in contemporary Ethiopian culture. They joined the underground LGBTI+ movement in 2017 after identifying the evident gap in representation and inclusivity within the LGBTI+ movement and the greater feminist initiatives in the country; they launched various projects targeting LBQ and TGNC (lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, and gender-non-conforming) people. In 2019, they were elected as co-director of Dana Social Group and worked to strengthen the country's longest-running LGBTQI organization in its early stages of movement and community building. They also worked to establish Ethiopia's presence in global advocacy by co-writing shadow reports for CEDAW and UPR and participating in advocacy week in Geneva for the latter. Following their three-year term as director, they have held the role of communications and advocacy officer for the organization.

In 2022, they began to manage Negn, a media advocacy initiative devoted to sharing the complex stories of LGBTQ Ethiopians using storytelling, multimedia media production, art, and advocacy to challenge the powers and systems of oppression. Their work stands at the intersection of archival and future work, aiming to create an expansive platform for LGBT people to articulate their truth and give rise to new imaginaries free of censorship, judgment, and restraint. Their vision is to create a network of self-organizing queer creatives and media initiatives (existing and future) that will work towards advancing the rights of LGBTI+ individuals in Ethiopia through innovative media and advocacy strategies.

Anonymous Advocate

Motivated by the trauma she has experienced as a trans woman, this advocate became an activist so that she can fight for the rights of the trans community and improve lives. Her organization promotes a safe environment in which LGBTQ people, especially trans women, can safely and freely live their lives without fear of discrimination, stigma, or violence. The organization empowers trans women to rebuild their lives with dignity and purpose through direct services and support.

This advocate organizes spaces that foster a sense of family for trans women grappling with the effects of trauma. She designs projects with stakeholders, civil society organizations, and human rights organizations to raise awareness for LGBTQ rights and promotes justice for victims of violence. Her team works in conjunction with other organizations to place pressure on political leaders to recognize and promote LGBTQ rights.

**The 2022-23 HRAP started online in October. The advocates
will be on campus for the spring semester.**

**ISHR would like to thank the following for supporting the
2022-23 HRAP:**

Ambassador Nicholas Platt in memory of his wife, Sheila Platt

American Jewish World Service

Arcus Foundation

International Indigenous Women's Forum

UHAI-East Africa

Wellspring Philanthropic Fund

Dean of Humanities, Arts & Sciences, Columbia University

Harriman Institute, Columbia University

Institute of Latin American Studies, Columbia University

The Human Rights Advocates Program (HRAP) is now open for applications to the Fall 2023 program. To learn more about the program and apply, please visit: <https://bit.ly/ApplyHRAP>



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APPLY BY JANUARY 17, 2023

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