

## **ACT to End Violence against Women**

### **Global Civil Society Steering Committee**

The ACT Global Civil Society Steering Committee is comprised of sixteen women's rights experts and activists working on ending violence against women from a diversity of perspectives and regions. The role of the steering committee is to ensure continuous alignment with the strategic priorities and needs of women's rights movements and advise on the overall strategic direction of the ACT programme.

#### **ACT Civil Society Steering Committee Members:**

##### **Dr. Anita Kemi DaSilva-Ibru**



Anita Kemi DaSilva-Ibru is a specialist healthcare physician who is dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls through medical practice, social activism and wider public advocacy against gender-based violence.

Professionally, Dr DaSilva-Ibru is a consultant specialist in obstetrics and gynecology, as well as a public health physician, with over 30 years' experience in medical practice spanning 3 continents. She is also the founder of the Women at Risk International Foundation (WARIF), a leading non-profit organization that addresses the prevalence of sexual violence, rape and the trafficking of young girls and women across Nigeria and Africa. Dr. DaSilva-Ibru has become a recognized thought leader in the gender space and in the field of women's health internationally. She is a member of the distinguished 2024 Forbes 50 over 50 Europe, Middle East & Africa (EMEA) List and her 2020 TED talk on the 'shadow pandemic' has gained a significant global audience.

WARIF is one of Nigeria and Africa's foremost organizations drawing the world's attention and advocating against gender-based violence. With a holistic and survivor-centered approach to helping affected girls and women, WARIF also implements preventative initiatives to successfully tackle the issue's root causes. Dr DaSilva-Ibru's goal is to bring about a world in which all women and girls can live in societies free from violence.

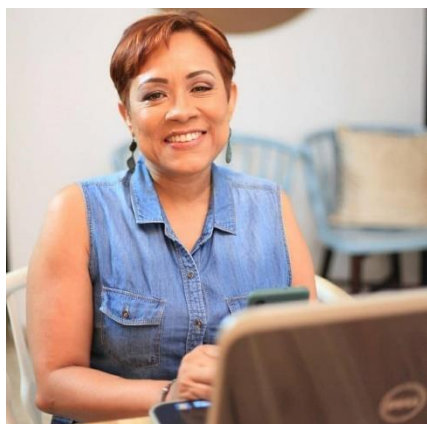
Dr DaSilva-Ibru is a recipient of numerous regional and international awards, including her recognition as a CNN COVID Heroes & Newsmaker, receiving an Award of Excellence by National Council of Women Affairs in Nigeria. In 2023, she was the recipient of the Gold Award for Thought Leader of the Year and in 2024, the Silver Award by Women Changing the World organization. She is a founding member of the Women in Healthcare Network (WIHCN) - the first female healthcare platform in Nigeria.

## Elizabeth Dartnall



Executive Director, Sexual Violence Research Initiative, SVRI With 25+ years of expertise in health systems, mental health, and addressing violence against women and children, Liz is an experienced global health specialist. Her career encompasses roles in both government and research in a range of countries across the world. Liz possesses a profound grasp of the policy-making process and the pivotal role of research in shaping policy and practice. Since 2006, she has overseen the Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI) and successfully transitioned it into an independent NGO with the backing of multiple partners. Committed to feminist, ethical, and equitable approaches, Liz continues to lead research and policy initiatives that play a key role in building a violence-free world for women.

## Escarly Janette Urbano de León



Escarly Janette Urbano de León overcame childhood polio, which impacted her mobility, yet she maintained a positive outlook. At 12, she began engaging in women's rights activism, inspired by her aunt. In 2005, she earned a law degree from the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo (UASD) despite her disability. That same year, she joined the Circle of Women with Disabilities, dedicated to empowering women with disabilities. Escarly also became involved in inclusive sports, taking leadership roles in the Dominican Sports Club for Wheelchair Users. Her dedication to disability rights led her to become a facilitator in 2007, and later a consultant in psychosocial rehabilitation and employment mediation. In 2016, she joined the Pontifical Catholic University Madre y Maestra

(PUCMM) to support inclusion services, and in 2024, she was elected president of the Faculty Council of CIMUDIS, an organization advancing disability rights.

## Ghida Anani

Ghida Anani is the Founder & Director of ABAAD – Resource Centre for Gender Equality, a leading CSO in the region advocating for gender equality. Ghida is putting in place the infrastructure for a sustainable system of protection against gender-based violence. She engages stakeholders that others avoid or fight: men, parliamentarians and ministries, and religious leaders. She has led a number of public opinion campaigns, notably the #Undress522 which resulted in a historical parliamentary vote, repealing Article 522 – the infamous “rape-marriage” law - from the Lebanese Penal Code. In 2019, the campaign received the first prize “UN SDG Action Award” for the most impactful campaign globally.

As an expert in GBV and Child Protection, Ghida has published a number of studies, articles, training kits and community educational materials on GBV & Child Sexual Abuse in Lebanon and the MENA region. She

has also dedicated some of her time teaching at the Faculty of Public Health at the Lebanese University. In 2018, Ghida was listed by the World Bank as one of 10 Inspiring Women Entrepreneurs Making a Difference across MENA and in 2019 she was selected by the UN Solutions Summit as one of the 10 extraordinary solution makers across the globe advancing the SDGs." In 2024, Ghida was elected as a board member of the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA).

### **Irene Mwendwa**



Irene Mwendwa is the Executive Director at Pollicy with experience in human rights and tech policy. She is an experienced legal professional with extensive experience with innovative collaborations across public, private, and civil society sectors. Irene structures and executes projects that deliver better policies and legal frameworks on public policy issues such as elections and technology

### **Jelen C. Paclarin**



Jelen C. Paclarin is a feminist, educator, community worker and has been part of the women's movements for the past two decades. She is the executive director of the Women's Legal and Human Rights Bureau (WLB). The Women's Legal and Human Rights Bureau Inc. (WLB), formerly Women's Legal Bureau was established in 1990 by feminist human rights advocates wanting to effectively address the prejudices suffered by Filipino women before the law and in the legal system. WLB emerged as the first consciously feminist legal organization advocating feminist legal advocacy as a strategy for the promotion and defense of women's human rights. WLB acts as Co-Coordinator, Weaving Women's Voices in Southeast Asia. WEAVE is a regional group of women's organizations and advocates from seven ASEAN countries, namely, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Malaysia, Philippines, and Thailand. WEAVE aims to enable and facilitate meaningful and informed participation of women in the ASEAN processes and mechanisms. She represents WEAVE in various ASEAN and regional level dialogues.

She was also part of the International Evaluation Reference Group, in charge of monitoring the progress of the Safe and Fair Project of the EU in partnership with ILO and UN Women which is being implemented in 10 countries in Southeast Asia from 2020-2023. In addition, she was the Chair of the ASEAN Civil Society Conference/ASEAN Peoples Forum (ACSC/APF) in 2017. Moreover, she has co-written several papers and has acted as a facilitator and resource speaker

in various meetings and trainings on women's human rights, sexual violence against women and girl children, access to justice, economic justice, ASEAN, etc. at the national, regional, international levels. She is also a part-time senior lecturer at the International Studies Department of Miriam College

Foundation teaching feminist legal theories, women's human rights, feminism, and gender analysis to name a few.

### Joy Watson



Joy Watson is a senior researcher and writer. Her work focuses on analysing public policy and funding flows from the perspective of working towards greater social equity. She works both in South Africa and globally on research and social justice initiatives that seek to prevent and address violence against women and girls. Joy has served as a senior researcher and technical advisor to the South African Parliament and as a policy analyst to the Human Science Research Council. She has extensive experience in developing and working on civil society advocacy campaigns that seek to promote social justice and to find effective ways of engaging with states. Her research on violence against women in South Africa has been used as the basis for a television documentary. She has co-authored two collections of essays - *Nasty Women Talk Back* and *Striving for Social Equity*. Her debut novel, *The Other Me*, published by Karavan Press, sought to use literature to highlight the harm of emotional and psychological violence. It was long listed for the Sunday Times Prize and was shortlisted for the UJ prize in 2023.

### Leyla Zuleikha Makhmudova



Leyla Zuleikha Makhmudova is a Central Asian gender and security expert, decolonial feminist scholar and community leader with ten years in feminist movement building and social entrepreneurship and seven years in professional consulting, advising, and expert training for local non-profits, government bodies, international organisations, and financial institutions.

She is Founding Strategic Director at FemAgora Central Asian Feminist Organisation, and co-Founding Lead at launching grassroots-initiated and accelerated Central Asia Fund for sustainable development of the region. As a survivor of domestic intimate partner violence and anti-violence activist, Leyla advocates to position survivors as key stakeholders in EVAWG, anti-GBV programs, and to prioritize holistic security of crisis responders.

She serves on advisory committees of UN Women Kazakhstan, FRIDA Young Feminist Fund, Global Fund for Women and MFA Kazakhstan. She regularly contributes to intergovernmental processes as Generation Equality Forum, Beijing PfA and High-Level Political Forum in Geneva. Her BA in Education is from Suleyman Demirel University in Kazakhstan and MA in Gender, Conflict, and Violence from Sussex University funded by Chevening Scholarship. She is currently in her Political Science PhD at Johns Hopkins University.



## Ljubica M. Fuentes O.



Ljubica M. Fuentes O. is a feminist lawyer and activist for the rights of women and LGBTIQ+ people. Specialist in gender mainstreaming in education, sustainable cities, justice and sexual and reproductive rights. She is Founder and Executive Director of the initiative Ciudadanas del Mundo, the first organization in Ecuador dedicated to the prevention of gender violence in higher education. In this space she has led projects such as: menstrual justice in classrooms, the first law in Ecuador to prevent educational violence, schools to strengthen reporting routes, protocols for action and prevention in universities, promotion of effective LGBTIQ+ youth participation and the observatory of purple academic investment.

Ljubica is the first Ecuadorian woman to be part of UNESCO's Youth and Student Network. She is also the youngest woman to be part of the Civil Society Advisory Group of UN Women Ecuador. She collaborates with UNICEF in initiatives such as U-Report and Generación Más. In 2023 she became the first woman to occupy two equality advisory councils in Ecuador. She dedicates her life to make the voice of women visible in educational spaces, which is why she is an international lecturer, TEDx Speaker and columnist. She has received several awards for her career, among them the "Dolores Cacuango" Award, in recognition of her struggle for the defense of women's rights in her locality. The core of her work is: "education must be feminist or not be at all, so nobody else has to survive it"

## Dr. Mabel Bianco



MD, feminist, recipient of Master's in Public Health, and specialist in Epidemiology and Medical Statistics. In 1989, she created the Foundation for Studies and Research on Women-FEIM, which promotes gender equality, the end of violence against women, and the acknowledgement of women's rights in the country and region. In 2006, she participated in the creation of the campaign Women Won't Wait. Since 2012, she has been the co-president of the Committee of NGOs for the CSW for Latin America and the Caribbean. Since 2014, she has been a member

of the UN Women's Major Group and is the facilitator for Latin America and the Caribbean 2019-21. In 2020 she was elected co-coordinator of Coordination Mechanism of Majors Groups and other Stakeholders till February 2024. She is the head of the Argentine delegation of W20 and since 2022 she is Advisor in W7. She integrates the steering committee of FFP Collaborative. In 2024 She was elected Director for Latin America and The Caribbean in the International Federation of Ageing - IFA- and member of the ACT Civil Society Steering Committee. In 2017, she received the "Distinguished Woman" award from the UN Committee on NGOs for CSW New York. From 2019 when the Mechanism of CS participation for Regional SDG she was elected co-chair till 2023. In 2011, she was considered one of the women who

moved the world by Newsweek. In 2019 she was designated among the 100 influencers by the BBC and in 2020 by Apolitical. She is also the author of eight books and over 200 articles

#### **MA. Elena Bravo Hernández**



MA. Elena Bravo Hernández is a rural migrant. She graduated in sociology from the Autonomous Metropolitan University in Mexico. She studied a master's degree in social psychology at the Autonomous University of the State of Puebla (2004). Currently, she is a master's student in clinical psychology and psychotherapy (2024) at the Center for Psychoanalytic Research and Studies. In her early days, she worked in government institutions in Mexico, in areas of work on women's migration issues, as well as sexual and reproductive rights (CONAPO and COESPO). She also served as an advisor and later as director of areas of the Puebla Institute for Women; from these positions she contributed to training in gender perspective and public policies for government officials (1995-2003).

She was a member of the Civil Society Advisory Group of UN Women Mexico (2021 to 2023), and of the foundation and participation in programs on local radio stations and the internet on gender equality (1995-1997, 2015-2018). Her projects as a trainer include the preparation of women leaders in various places in Mexico and of national political organizations on public policies and gender perspective. In this regard, she also contributed to research on the political participation of women in municipalities, on sexual and reproductive rights, as well as on gender violence against indigenous women. Similarly, she collaborated with organizations of Indigenous Women's Houses and as a municipal councilor on indigenous affairs and the State Pardon Council.

She is currently co-founder of the Centro de Asesoría para el Desarrollo Indígena (Indigenous Development Advisory Centre), a civil association (2004), with which she works with indigenous women and youth from a gender and intercultural perspective and with participatory methodologies focused on the prevention of violence, sexual and reproductive rights, self-care and the right to political participation. She supported the decriminalization of abortion in Puebla. She has also collaborated with the Center for Gender Studies and currently works in the Institutional Directorate of Gender Equality at the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla. In addition, she is a member of the Association of Journalists and Writers of Puebla

## Maryangel García-Ramos Guadiana



Maryangel is the Executive Director of Women Enabled International (WEI). For the past 15 years, she has worked as a leader and advocate for human rights, focused on diversity, inclusion, gender, and disability. She has collaborated with different counterparts such as political institutions, private sector and higher education.

Maryangel is a passionate changemaker, committed to transforming the narrative and culture of inclusion. She joins WEI after leading the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at the Center for the Recognition of Human Dignity at Tecnológico de Monterrey, where she has been fundamental in developing strategies to strengthen community representation and promote equality for historically discriminated groups in one of Mexico's largest communities. She was also recently appointed President of the Council for Persons with Disabilities of the State of Nuevo León, Mexico, a five-year position in which she will play a leadership role in advancing the development of a State Plan for Disability Inclusion. She is also an organizational consultant whose work has reached more than 100 international organizations.

Originally from Mexico, Maryangel is a skilled communicator, dedicated to elevating the voices of our community. As the founder of Mexicanas con Discapacidad (WEI's partner organization), she established a National Network of Women with Disabilities that centers the voices and lived experiences of Mexican women with disabilities. Maryangel is also a dynamic speaker, frequently appearing in global forums and media.

She holds a bachelor's degree in design and art from the Centro de Estudios Superiores de Diseño de Monterrey (CEDIM), and an MBA from EGADE Business School. Her continuing education credentials include International Human Rights, Gender Studies, and Communication and Culture Strategy.

## Miryam Diane Ella Djangala Fall



Miryam Diane Ella Djangala-Fall is a Central African activist, survivor of conflict-related sexual violence and a passionate advocate for survivors of gender-based violence. Her lived experience, which resulted in the birth of her child, has become a powerful catalyst for her unwavering mission to support other survivors and to create pathways for justice, healing, and empowerment.

She is the founder and president of the Association AAESPE (Ele Songo na Popo ti E) and serves as the National Coordinator of the Central African Survivors' Movement (MOSUCA). Through MOSUCA, she has built a network of survivors, amplifying their voices and fostering collective advocacy for systemic change.

Miryam has played a key role in shaping regional and international frameworks, including her critical contributions to the African Union Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (AU-CEVAWG). Her leadership in consultations

and survivor-centered initiatives has ensured that the experiences and needs of survivors are central to these processes. Her work extends to local communities as the Focal Point for the Interim Reparative Measure Project in Dekoa, a region severely affected by conflict-related sexual violence. Supported by organizations such as the Dr. Denis Mukwege Foundation, the Global Survivors Fund, and the United Nations (UN Women and UNFPA), she has spearheaded initiatives advocating for reparative justice and holistic care for survivors.

Miryam's resilience and dedication have been recognized internationally, earning her the Simone Veil Prize (2024) in France. Through her advocacy and leadership, she continues to inspire survivors to reclaim their narratives and challenge the structures that perpetuate violence and inequality. Her work represents hope and transformation, shaping a future where survivors are seen as agents of change in the pursuit of a world free from violence.

### Tarana J. Burke



For more than 25 years, activist, advocate, and author Tarana J. Burke has worked at the intersection of sexual violence and racial justice. Fueled by commitments to interrupt sexual violence and other systemic inequalities disproportionately impacting marginalized people, particularly Black women and girls, Tarana has created and led various campaigns focused on increasing access to resources and support for impacted communities, including the 'me too.' Movement, which has galvanized millions of survivors and allies around the world, and the me too. International nonprofit organization, founded in 2018. Her New York Times bestselling books *You Are Your Best Thing* and *Unbound* have illuminated the power of healing, vulnerability, and storytelling in the movement to end sexual violence.

### Zipporah D. NDIONE



Zipporah NDIONE is a Senegalese lawyer and feminist, president of the Senegal chapter of the West African Network of Young Women Leaders (ROAJELF/SENEGAL), and co-coordinator of the West African Young Feminists Network (RJFAO).

Holding a master's degree in Private Law and Communication and certified in Gender, Peace, and Security, she is deeply passionate about issues related to human rights, particularly those of women and girls. She is relentlessly committed to the fight against all forms of gender-based violence and gender inequalities more broadly. She has led regional advocacy efforts for flexible funding mechanisms to support feminist civil society organizations. At the national level, her work was instrumental to the adoption of legislation criminalizing rape and pedophilia in 2020, as well as the strengthening of holistic care structures for survivors of violence.



Her professional journey includes serving as a lawyer at the law firm Me Malick SALL & Associates, as a Technical Specialist in Communication at the Canadian Cooperation Support Service, and as a Grants Officer at Options. She has also worked as a consultant for organizations such as the Center for Advanced Studies in Defense and Security (CHEDS), focusing on youth, peace, and security issues, and for the global communication initiative against female genital mutilation, "The Girl Generation."

An alumna of prominent programs such as the African Union's African Youth Ambassadors for Peace (AYAP), the Friedrich Ebert Foundation's Young Leadership Program, and Women and Youth in Democracy (WYDE) by the Koffi Annan Foundation, The Oslo Center, WFD, and the European Partnership for Democracy, she tirelessly advocates for the recognition and realization of women's and girls' rights in Senegal, West Africa, and globally through her association.

### **Zulaikha Patel**

Zulaikha Patel is a distinguished Anti-Racism and Social Justice Activist, acclaimed Best-Selling Author, and International Speaker. As the Founder and Director of Dare To Change NPC, established in 2022, Zulaikha leads an organization dedicated to improving literacy rates among African children and fostering a culture of reading throughout the continent. Dare To Change NPC emphasizes the advancement of children and youth, guided by the belief that "a reading nation is a leading nation." In her role, Zulaikha manages both on-site and off-site programs, collaborates with partners and donors, engages with various schools, and develops initiatives to boost early childhood literacy.

In addition to her work with Dare To Change NPC, Zulaikha has served as an Advisory Committee Member and Ambassador for the Charlotte Mannya-Maxeke Institute since 2018. Here, she supports and participates in programs aimed at empowering women and girls while honoring the legacy of the iconic Charlotte Mannya-Maxeke, the first Black woman to graduate with a BSc degree in Southern Africa. Zulaikha actively contributes to the "Bring Her Up" initiative, a community engagement program designed to uplift and upskill girls from underprivileged backgrounds, fostering unity and sisterhood. Through her roles, Zulaikha Patel has demonstrated a deep commitment to social justice.