

Communities, Climate Change, and Health Equity Lessons Learned in Addressing Inequities in Heat-Related Climate Change Impacts

PARTICIPANTS BIOGRAPHIES



Zelalem Adefris is the CEO of Catalyst Miami. Before being named C.E.O. in April 2023, Zelalem was Catalyst Miami's deputy C.E.O., where she oversaw the implementation of the organization's critical programs, policy agenda, and strategic plan. Zelalem joined Catalyst Miami in 2016, and has a deep passion for achieving climate, social, and racial justice. In addition to her role at Catalyst Miami, Zelalem serves as a co-chair of the Miami Climate Alliance and as a philanthropic trustee of the Solutions Project. She has been recognized as a 2023 Rockwood Leadership Institute Fellow, 2020 Grist 50 Fixer, 2020 Florida International University Emerging Leader Finalist, and 2017 Miami Times New Generation of Dreamers awardee. Zelalem holds an M.P.H. in Global Environmental Health from Emory University and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Community Health from Brown University.

Rupa Basu is currently the Chief of the Air and Climate Epidemiology Section at the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) of the California Environmental Protection Agency. She has published extensively on research focusing on examining temperature and air pollution on health outcomes, including mortality, morbidity, and adverse birth outcomes while identifying vulnerable subgroups. Prior to joining OEHHA, she worked at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, after obtaining her PhD degree in epidemiology from The Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health and her M.P.H. degree from the UCLA School of Public Health. She collaborates with external agencies such as the Scripps Institute of Oceanography and the Kaiser Division of Research. She has served as a referee for many health journals and has been on several scientific advisory panels for reviewing grant proposals and reports for federal and state governmental agencies. She serves on several statewide and national climate change committees and has been an invited guest speaker on many occasions from academic settings, including teaching a course on climate change and public health at UC Berkeley to governmental leaders, such as former Governor Schwarzenegger. She was featured in the Emmy award-winning climate change documentary, *Years of Living Dangerously*, "Mercury Rising" episode with Matt Damon. Dr. Basu's work is widely cited and has received a lot of media attention, including *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *LA Times*, *S.F. Chronicle*, *National Public Radio*, and *B.B.C. World News*.

Nikki Cooley is of the Diné (Navajo) Nation and is the co-manager of ITEP's Tribes & Climate Change Program and co-director of ITEP, whose goal is to strengthen tribal capacity and sovereignty in environmental and natural resource management through culturally relevant education, research, partnerships, and policy-based services. She works across the continental U.S. and Alaska on outreach and training related to climate change adaptation, mitigation, and resilience planning with Tribal/Indigenous partners to assist Tribal Nations in addressing and preparing for climate change impacts. ITEP works in partnership with various federal, nonprofit, academic, and community entities. She serves as an author on the Human Health Chapter for the upcoming fifth National Climate Assessment (N.C.A.) and is a co-author on the 2021 Status of Tribes and Climate Change (STACC) Report convened by ITEP. Ms. Cooley has a Master's degree in Forestry with an emphasis on Traditional Ecological Knowledges from Northern Arizona University.

Jane Gilbert is the Miami-Dade County's Chief Heat Officer where she works internally across departments and externally with many partners to address the increasing risks to human health, lives and livelihoods associated with extreme heat. Prior to joining the County, Ms. Gilbert served as the City of Miami's first Chief Resilience Officer for four years. Prior to her public sector work, Ms. Gilbert managed The Miami Foundation's civic leadership agenda on sea level rise, Wells Fargo's philanthropy and community affairs in South Florida and served as the Executive Director for 3 nonprofits in Greater Miami. Ms. Gilbert holds a B.A. in Environmental Science from Barnard College and M.P.A. from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

Garry Harris is the President and C.E.O. of the Sustainability Solutions Group and Institute and the Managing Director Center for Sustainable Communities and the Executive Director and Co-Founder of the National Environmental Justice Institute. Mr. Harris' research focuses on cumulative impacts analysis of multi stressors on underserved communities including severe weather impacts caused by climate, health and economic disparities and environmental factors including air pollution. He is the Founder and Developer of JUST Science (science, engineering, technology and research) to mitigate environmental justice problems and issues including climate and extreme heat; and Founder and Developer of Building A Weather Ready Nation for All Initiative (research, science, specialized programming and technology applications) to mitigate climate impacts including extreme heat in underserved communities. Mr. Harris is also the co-author of Guidelines for Equitable Community Involvement in Building & Development Projects and Policies. He is the recipient of several awards and honors, namely the James C. Jones Humanitarian Award, the James R. Stewart Technical Achievement Award, the FEMA Community and Individual Engagement Award, the Environmental Leadership Award, the 100 Black Man of Atlanta Trailblazer Award (Community Engagement/Youth STEM Education), and the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Man of the Year Award for Youth STEM Education, Community Engagement. Mr. Harris is a member of the American Public Health Association, the NAACP Energy and Climate Justice Project and is a graduate and member of several specialized community and environmental groups and associations including Leadership Atlanta, Regional Leadership Institute, Institute for Georgia Environmental Leadership, the US EPA Environmental Justice Academy, the 100 Black Men of Atlanta (Youth STEM Education Leader), and the Omega Psi Pi Fraternity (Community Engagement/Youth STEM Education). Mr. Harris holds a B.S. Nuclear Engineering degree from the University of Virginia and M.S. degrees in Technology Management from Southern College of Technology, Quality System Engineering from Southern Polytechnic State University, and Sustainable Energy and Environmental Management from Georgia Institute of Technology, respectively.

Dana Habeeb is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Informatics at Indiana University. Trained as an architect and urban designer; Dr. Habeeb brings a design perspective to her research in environmental planning and health. With a focus on designing local interventions, she investigates ways to engage and empower individuals to respond to current and future environmental problems by synthesizing research in climate change, public health and environmental sensing. Her research explores how climate-responsive design can help mitigate climate change and address environmental challenges to improve the health of individuals and communities.

David Hondula is the Director of Heat Response and Mitigation for the City of Phoenix, Arizona. In that role, he helps coordinate and implement programs to protect people from dangerous summer heat and cool the city and make it more comfortable. Hondula joined the City in October 2021 following Phoenix City Council's vote to create the country's first publicly-funded local government office focused on heat. He was recognized as one of the Top 100 Influencers in Local Government in the United States in 2022. Hondula has been a faculty member at Arizona State University's School of Geographical Sciences and Urban Planning since 2016, and has co-authored more than 90 peer-reviewed research articles, book chapters, and technical reports related to extreme heat, public health, and urban climatology. He earned a Ph.D. in Environmental Sciences from the University of Virginia in 2013.

Sonal Jessel (she/her) is the Director of Policy at WE ACT for Environmental Justice. She leads the New York policy team and is responsible for advancing the organization's policy agenda at the local, state, and national levels, in addition to leading the Northern Manhattan Climate Action (NMCA) Plan. Sonal works with local, city, and state leaders to advance policy changes that improve environmental health and advances a just transition. She is appointed to the New York State Climate Justice Working Group.

Hunter M. Jones is the National Integrated Heat Health Information System (NIHHIS) Program Manager in the Climate Program Office (C.P.O.) of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). He manages the Climate and Health grant program at C.P.O., focused on applied community-based climate and health research. He led the development of the NIHHIS Urban Heat Island Citizen Science Field Campaign program, which empowers communities to map, model, and understand how heat is distributed throughout their communities and inform action to develop equitable climate resilience. His broader focus is on NIHHIS program building, including budgeting, staffing, public affairs, and other strategic initiatives such as Heat.gov. Hunter is the vice-Chair of the American Meteorological Society's Board on Environment and Health as well as a founding member of the Global Heat Health Information Network (GHHIN), serving on its Management Committee. Hunter develops new climate services for health capacity at NOAA and through international science diplomacy. He recently completed an Embassy Science Fellowship focused on improving climate services for dengue forecasting in Costa Rica and throughout South & Central America and the Caribbean. Hunter holds a B.S. in Computer Information Systems from Bentley University, a Master's in Environmental Management from Duke

University, and is pursuing a Ph.D. focused on disease vector ecological modeling at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

Raed Mansour is the Director of Environmental Innovation at the Chicago Department of Public Health. Through a health equity lens as a catalyst for transformational improvements, he implements collaborative community-driven and data-informed methods to lead several environmental innovations from an award-winning lead paint hazard prediction model for electronic medical records to leading public health work on climate change. Current projects include Our Roots Chicago tree equity strategy, the NOAA Heat Watch Campaign and Northwestern University's Diffusing Disasters working group on heat vulnerability, and The Partnership for Healthy Cities' award to co-develop a community air sensor network strategy. Raed serves as a member on the board of directors for Openlands, the Morton Arboretum's Chicago Region Trees Initiative Executive Advisory Council where he was also awarded Tree Advocate of the Year, and is an appointed member of the Climate Committee for the State of Illinois Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. Raed earned a Bachelor of Science from Purdue University in Neurobiology and Animal Physiology and a Master of Science in Health Communication from Boston University. He is an active member of the American Public Health Association, Sigma Xi Scientific Research Honor Society, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Raed also volunteers as the Chicago Park District Natural Areas Community Lead Steward for Ronan and River Parks.

Vivek Shandas is a Professor of Climate Adaptation and Director of the Sustaining Urban Places Research (SUPR) Lab at Portland State University. Professor Shandas studies the effects of urban development patterns and processes on ecosystems and social justice. He has published over 100 scientific studies and four books addressing the pressing needs for improving environmental and human health through modifications to the built environment and civic policies. He received his Ph.D. in Urban Ecology from the University of Washington (Seattle) and prior to his current role, he served as a school teacher, environmental policy analyst, and curriculum developer.

Cecilia Sorensen is the Director of the Global Consortium on Climate and Health Education at Columbia University, Associate Professor of Emergency Medicine at Columbia Irving Medical Center and Associate Professor of Environmental Health Sciences at Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University. As a physician-investigator at the nexus of climate change and human health, translating research into policy, clinical action, and education to build resilience in vulnerable communities is the focus of her research. Her recent work has spanned domestic as well as international emergent health issues related to climate change, including, extreme heat, degraded air quality, extreme weather events, emerging infectious diseases, women's health, and worker health. Dr. Sorensen is a member of the Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change and serves on the National Academy of Medicine Action Collaborative for Decarbonization of the U.S. Health Sector. She is the co-editor of the textbook Climate Change and Human Health: From Science to Practice.

Jora Trang is an attorney specializing in employment/labor law and has worked for over 20 years to advance social justice issues affecting marginalized populations. Jora served as the Managing Attorney for Worksafe from 2010 to 2019, and then as their Chief of Staff and Equity since 2020. Jora has been instrumental in directing Worksafe's legal work and advocating for protective worker health and safety laws, policies, regulations and standards; effective remedies for injured workers; stronger government enforcement; and increased capacity of worker leaders, worker advocates, and legal aid organizations to help vulnerable workers in California. Jora is the recipient of the 2020 Loren Miller Services Award.

Jessica Tredinnick is a public health professional with particular expertise in recognizing, characterizing, and preventing inhalation exposures. Ms. Tredinnick currently manages a global team of standards development, regulatory affairs, and policy professionals for 3 M's Personal Safety Division. Ms. Tredinnick has a background in environmental and occupational health, as well as journalism. Previously, she was a member of 3 M's Corporate Industrial Hygiene team and a coordinator of hazardous materials and first responder trainings at the University of Minnesota. She is currently serving on the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the International Society for Respiratory Protection.

Rev. Vernon Walker is a Senior Fellow at the Environmental Leadership Program and Senior Fellow at Tufts University Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life through the Institute for Nonprofit Practice. Rev. Walker also completed a Fellowship at Hebrew College's Boston Bridges Fellowship. Rev. Walker is currently a graduate student working towards earning a Master's Degree in Public Policy at Tufts University Department of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning Department, where he is a 2022 Neighborhood Fellow. Rev. Walker also receives the Robert Schalkenbach Scholarship for his studies. Rev. Vernon K. Walker was originally born and raised in Philadelphia. Rev. Walker attended Penn State University for college, earning a Bachelor of Science degree with a major in Organizational Leadership and a minor in Psychology. After graduating from Penn State University, Rev. Walker attended Boston University and earned a

Master's Degree in Theological Studies (M.T.S), focusing on community engagement. Throughout his time in Boston, Rev. Walker's social justice work has appeared in several different newspapers, such as the Boston Globe, Boston Herald, Bay State Banner, Commonwealth Magazine, and other newspaper outlets. Rev. Walker has also made T.V. appearances on Fox 25, New England Cable News, Boston Neighborhood Network, C.B.S. Boston, and N.B.C. 10 Boston. Rev. Walker has lectured about his social justice work at various universities and colleges across the United States.