

# Mentors

Over the course of the hackathon, participating teams will have the ability to meet with this group of mentors in order to help gain a better understanding of the core issues associated with providing health services to displaced populations in the different context areas. Mentors have been selected so as to have a wide range of expertise on hand to answer questions, provide in-depth context, and help guide your ideas to “real-world” relevance. We encourage you to make use of this valuable resource! Schedule a time to meet with any of these mentors through this [Mentor Sign-Up Sheet](#)

---

## **Akosua Adu-Boahene**

**Key Areas of Expertise: Public Health, Social Innovation & Entrepreneurship in Healthcare; Healthcare Organizations; Non-Profits; Community Organizing; Refugee and Migrant Health**

**Bio:** Akosua is a Doctor of Public Health candidate at the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health. She has an interest in social innovation and entrepreneurship in healthcare. Akosua became interested in public health upon seeing the adverse effects of systemic ills on her community. Partnering with the Empowerment Temple of the International Central Gospel church in 2012, she coordinated quarterly health fairs, that were open to the local community in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. Akosua brought together local clinicians, healthcare organizations, and medical students to offer care including: health screenings, health education seminars, and access to necessary resources.

While pursuing her MPH, she published a health needs assessment, and laid the groundwork to open a non-profit clinic free clinic. In 2019, WTL Health Clinic, Inc. became licensed as an Organized Ambulatory Care Facility in Rhode Island, providing high-quality primary care services. As Practitioner in Residence at Brown University’s Swearer Center for Public Service in 2019, Akosua leveraged healthcare professionals, community resources, and students to provide high-quality primary care at WTL Health Clinic, Inc. to the underserved community. She received her Bachelor of Arts from Knox College in Illinois, and her Master of Public Health at Brown University’s School of Public Health

-----

## **Maria Carinnes Alejandria**

**Key Areas of Expertise: Health Inequalities; Food Security; Mental Health; Disaster Resilience; Research Methodology**

**Bio:** Maria Carinnes Alejandria is an anthropologist who researches on issues relating to health inequalities in the Global South. Dr. Alejandria is the lead of the Social Health Studies of the University of Santo Tomas where she is also an Assistant Professor in the Department of

Sociology. She currently serves as the Editor in Chief of the Journal of Social Health. She completed her PhD in Anthropology from the University of the Philippines Diliman where she explored Food insecurity among older adults in an informal settlement in Manila. She is also affiliated with Brown University Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Studies as a Global Fellow, Philippine's Health Technology Assessment Council as a Core Committee Member, and the Association for Asian Studies-Philippine Studies Group as treasurer and international advisory board member.

Her most current publications include the edited volumes *Disaster Archipelago: Locating Vulnerability and Resilience in the Philippines* and *Aging in the Global South: Challenges and Opportunities*. She also published journal articles that explored issues on food security, pediatric tuberculosis, mental health, and older adult health among informal settlers in Metro Manila. Dr. Alejandria has led projects related to social health, disaster resilience, and food security that were funded by World Health Organization, Brown University, UNDP, UNAIDS, the Philippine's Department of Science and Technology, and the National Research Council of the Philippines

-----

## **Camila de Macedo Braga**

**Key Areas of Expertise: Civil Society Responses to Pandemics; International Security; Peace and Conflict Studies; Violence and Organized Crime; Research Methods**

**Bio:** Camila de Macedo Braga, PhD. in Political Science, with an emphasis on International Security and Peace Studies is currently a post-doctoral fellow at the Institute of International Relations (IRI-USP), an associate researcher for the International Relations Research Center

(*Núcleo de Pesquisa em Relações Internacionais*, NUPRI) at the University of São Paulo, as well as a research associate for the Center on Conflict, Development, and Peacebuilding (CCDP) in the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva. Since 2018, Camila co-ordinate the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies (CCP) at the University of São Paulo, expanding the focus of research on structural and armed violence and organized crime in non-traditional contexts, such as established democratic societies. At the present, CCP is starting a project in partnership with *Fundação Perseu Abramo* (FPA) to address how the multiple peripheries in the national territory have experienced the current COVID-19 pandemic. This project investigates how different peripheral communities in Brazil have experienced and responded to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic given the ineffective state response and the extent to which the pandemic has enhanced existing problems in the Brazilian structural matrix, such as the extreme inequality and the marginalization (both material and symbolic) of the peripheries that have been placed in the margins of the state. Between 2011 and 2017, Camila worked on a number of cases of State promoted or endorsed violence, in distinct parts of the world (Sudan, East Timor, Brazil). From Ph.D. research to individual consultancies, Camila's

professional academic experience has been focused on research, fundraising, and project development.

-----

## **Hank Brightman**

**Key Areas of Expertise: Humanitarian Response; Law; Civilian-Military Humanitarian Response; Trauma Support; Natural Resource Management; Emergency Response**

**Bio:** Dr. Heath “Hank” Brightman is a (full) professor in the Civilian-Military Humanitarian Response Program within the College of Maritime Operational at the United States Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island and also serves as the distinguished EMC Informationist Chair (an eight-year, endowed appointment). He is also a Commander (Cryptologic Warfare Officer), and Commanding Officer of Cryptologic Warfare Group SIX – Fort Devens (Mass). He is an adjunct faculty member at several graduate and undergraduate institutions, and maintains a part-time private practice focused on trauma support, wellness, and recovery in Newport, Rhode Island.

From 2008-2016, he served as an Associate Professor, Professor, and Director of Applied Research & Analysis in the War Gaming Department of this institution and served as a tenured Associate Professor and Criminal Justice Department Chair at Saint Peter's University (Jersey City, New Jersey) from 2000-2008. Dr. Brightman spent more than ten years in a wide range of environmental law enforcement, supervisory natural resource protection, emergency hazardous waste contingency response and white-collar crime investigation with the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service and the United States Secret Service.

-----

## **Tom Cotter**

**Key Areas of Expertise: Emergency Response and Preparedness; Global Health Emergencies; Socioeconomic Determinants of Health**

**Bio:** As Project HOPE’s Director of Emergency Response and Preparedness, Tom Cotter, MPH, manages day-to-day operations of Project HOPE’s domestic and global COVID-19 response efforts. Tom has nearly a decade of experience in international disaster response and global health emergencies, having responded to disasters such as major earthquakes in Haiti and Papua New Guinea, hurricanes across the Atlantic, cyclones in Africa and the Philippines, the 2015 Avian Flu outbreak, and a polio outbreak in Nigeria.

In addition to earning a Masters in Public Health with a focus on complex humanitarian emergency management from Boston University School of Public Health, Tom also completed training on the management of health emergencies in large populations with Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and a field study on the socioeconomic determinants of health with the University of the Philippines.

-----

## **Meseret Kassahun Desta**

**Key Areas of Expertise: Child Protection; Gender Issues; Migration; Urban Governance; Peace and Security; Violence Against Women; Social Policy**

**Bio:** Meseret Kassahun Desta is an Ethiopian woman working for inclusive development and social justice. Currently, she is a research associate at University of Johannesburg Faculty of Humanity, Department of Social Work. She has a PhD in Social Work from the Jane Addams College of Social Work at the University of Illinois at Chicago and more than 10 years of experience as a practitioner, teacher, and researcher. Her research interests include gender issues, child protection, urban governance, migration, and peace and security issues. She has taught at the School of Social Work at Addis Ababa University. The major courses she has taught include Social Development and Social Change as well as Social Policy Development and Analysis. She is the founder and a researcher at EMAH Social Development Consulting. As a consultant, she has carried out formative studies and evaluations of social programs in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa for different UN agencies and international NGOs. Meseret has publications on governance, violence against women, and child protection.

-----

## **Kate Dischino**

**Key Areas of Expertise: Emergency Response; Frontline Workers Training; Disaster Preparedness; Health Care**

**Bio:** As Vice President of Emergency Programs for Americares, Kate Dischino oversees Americares responses to domestic and international emergencies. She is often deployed to disaster zones on a moment's notice to lead field teams, coordinate aid deliveries, and implement emergency programs that meet survivors' health needs. Since joining Americares in 2012, Ms. Dischino has been on the frontlines of dozens of emergencies including Hurricane Sandy (2012), the 2013 Oklahoma tornadoes, Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines (2013) and the Nepal earthquake (2015). A certified emergency manager, she plays a pivotal role in the design of Americares emergency programs including a psychosocial workshop for frontline health workers responding to emergencies and a training program for pediatricians treating children affected by disasters. In 2015, Ms. Dischino oversaw the creation of Americares first disaster preparedness guide for free and charitable clinics to help ensure important health care providers can continue operating during emergencies.

A leader in the emergency response field, Ms. Dischino currently serves on the Board of Directors of the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters where she serves on the Executive Committee and formerly the first chairman of the Disaster Health Committee. She also participated in the development of the 2014 National Health Security Preparedness Index as a subject matter expert. Prior to joining Americares, Ms. Dischino served as the associate director of Save the Children's Domestic Emergencies Unit where she built partnerships and

strengthened the emergency management program. She earned a master's degree in international administration from the University of Denver and a bachelor's degree in international studies and Spanish from Muhlenberg College.

-----

## **Cesar Jeronimo Esquinca**

**Key Areas of Expertise: Social Work; Social Enterprises; Community Organizing for Social Innovation; Civil Responses to COVID-19 in Mexico**

Cesar Jeronimo Esquinca Enríquez de la Fuente is an international affairs exalumi from the ITAM in Mexico, he followed his specialty studies in Social Work and Intercultural Affairs at the University of Applied Sciences Fulda, Germany, and postgraduate studies in Global Health with the University of Manchester. He co-founded the branch of 180 Degrees Consulting in Mexico, where he developed the capacity building of social enterprises in the capital city. Afterwards he inaugurated the Field HR Area of Doctors Without Borders Mexico and Centralamerica, where he served as Head of Field HR till he left to South Sudan to work as Personnel Development Manager in 2017. Afterwards, he acted as Head of Personnel Development for the West and Central Africa in charge of recruitment, appraisal and training strategies for MSF in Cameroon, DRC, Niger, Uganda, Burkina Faso and a support tour in Iraq. Proud collaborator of #Verificado19s which supported the civil humanitarian response after the earthquake in Mexico September 2017, Alumni of the first generation of the MIT-Harvard Medical School Bootcamp in Healthcare Innovation, and founding member of the Global Health Center of the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey. Currently he offers advice and consulting services to health and disaster risk management projects, having worked with Google, the International Federation of the Red Cross and the ARISE Mx Network.

-----

## **Elizabeth Fussell**

**Key Areas of Expertise: Population and Environmental Studies; Internal Migration; Exogenous Shocks' Effects on Health; Governance Responses**

**Bio:** Elizabeth Fussell is Associate Professor of Population Studies and Environment and Society at Brown University and Editor-in-Chief of Population & Environment. She is a sociologist who studies international and internal migration in response to environmental and societal shocks and inequalities in the effects of these shocks. Since 2005, when Hurricane Katrina struck, she has investigated disparities in the disaster's long-term effects on the health, wellbeing, and residential mobility of the residents of New Orleans using innovative methods and datasets. She has extended this research agenda to study the effects of hurricanes and other exogenous shocks on the population of the United States. In a new research project she is examining the

migratory response of Puerto Rico's residents to economic recession, hurricanes, and other shocks.

Relevant to Hack for Humanity, Fussell has collected information on US county health and social resources that create capacity for managing an infectious disease outbreak in anticipation of a project analyzing COVID-19 outbreaks and response. She is interested in how the duration of the pandemic, governance responses, and changes in employment may affect residential mobility in the coming years.

-----

## **Stephanie Chow Garbern**

**Key Areas of Expertise: Global Emergency Medicine; Mobile Health; Displacement & Health; Humanitarian Response**

**Bio:** Dr. Stephanie Chow Garbern is an Assistant Professor of Emergency Medicine at Alpert Medical School of Brown University. She completed residency training in emergency medicine at Beth Israel

Deaconess Medical Center, fellowship in Global Emergency Medicine at Brown, and obtained a Master of Public Health degree from the Harvard School of Public Health and a Diploma in Tropical Medicine & Hygiene through the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine's East African course. She has served as a volunteer emergency response physician for International Medical Corps and has worked clinically or on research projects in Guatemala, Honduras, Peru, Liberia, Lebanon, China, Rwanda, Ghana, and Tanzania. Dr Garbern's research focuses on the use of technology including mobile health, wearable devices and prediction models to improve the care of populations in resource-limited settings. Dr. Garbern's recent research has investigated the use of wearable devices to improve monitoring in septic emergency department patients in Rwanda and Ghana, child protection concerns among adolescent Syrian refugee girls in Lebanon, and mobile health tools for management of diarrhea in Bangladesh.

-----

## **Elizabeth Dean Hermann**

**Key Areas of Expertise: Cultural Identity; Women's Empowerment; Community Development; Capacity Building; Sustainability**

**Bio:** Elizabeth Hermann is a Professor of Urbanism and Landscape at the Rhode Island School of Design. She is a cultural historian and designer whose research and teaching focus on socioecological frameworks for understanding the history and design of human settlements and place-making; cultural identity and land-based forms of resistance and struggle among marginalized communities; environmental and social resiliency; and issues of climate-change related displacement, disaster capitalism, and social and environmental justice. Hermann is

founder and co-director of TAASI East - the Centre for Transformative Arts, Advocacy and Social Impact (Providence, RI and Batticaloa, Sri Lanka) - an independent non-profit applied research lab working with partners in South Asia to develop and implement multi-disciplinary and multi-scalar social, physical and economic strategies for under-resourced, post-conflict and post-disaster communities. The work covers the arenas of community-led development; human capacity building; livelihoods; women's empowerment; education and institution building, the built environment and sustainable practices. TAASI East has worked in Bangladesh, India, and for the last decade, in the post-conflict regions of Sri Lanka.

-----

## **Hassan Hussein**

**Key Areas of Expertise: Economics; Humanitarian Response; Food Security; Displacement; Climate Resilience; Programming and Policy Development; Cash Transfers**

**Bio:** Hassan Hussein Ibrahim is a humanitarian aid worker by profession, economist by training, and has been in the field of humanitarian relief and development work for over 9 years. His research interests focus on Economic resilience, social Protec protection, humanitarian assistance, urban and rural economics, and the underlying, social and environmental factors that affect youth livelihoods. He has over 9 years' experience working with International Humanitarian and development Organizations in Somalia, eg. Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) Somalia Program from 2011 to June, 2017 as a Food Security Project Officer and Food Security and Livelihoods Coordinator and with Save the Children- Somalia as the Area Program Manager- Food Security and Livelihoods, with November, 2019 taken up his most recent role as Food Security and Livelihoods Technical Specialist (FSL TS) Somalia Country Office. Hussein Ibrahim has studied in Somalia at Mogadishu University in the faculty of Economics and Management Science and recently, at Kampala University, Uganda where he earned his Masters of Development Studies in 2014. Hussein Ibrahim's field work focuses on Economic and Climate Resilience, social Protection Programing and Policy development, Graduation Approaches and modeling, community lead Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Food security program design, development and implementation, monitoring and evaluation, Humanitarian Cash programing, and climate change adaptation. He has conducted several cross sectoral humanitarian field assessments Somalia focusing on Food security, Livelihoods Vulnerability Assessments, Youth labour Market Surveys and, information counseling and legal assistance and child protection and child rights governance. The multi-sectoral assessments were aimed to improve the delivery of joint and integrated programs to populations in need. Hassan Ibrahim supported recently post flooding assessment report conducted in Hiran (Central Somalia) and research paper on "more cash Bigger Impacts" A Field Experiment of Cash Transfers in Somalia, Hassan is also currently engaged in Gender Research (Women Economic Empowerment and Wellbeing for DFID resilience program in Somalia).

-----

## **Akshaya Kumar**

**Key Areas of Expertise: Human Rights; Vaccine Access; Crisis Advocacy; Collective Action; Human Rights Law; Conflict**

**Bio:** Akshaya is a human rights advocate with a special interest in addressing the complex challenges presented by moments where collective action could help prevent mass atrocities. She currently oversees Human Rights Watch's crisis advocacy globally from its offices in New York where she's focused on the Covid-19 pandemic, including equitable vaccine access. Akshaya travels extensively to support the organization's work on crisis, most recently to Myanmar and Bangladesh in response to the ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya community. She's passionate about combatting climate change.

Akshaya joined Human Rights Watch as Deputy United Nations Director. She previously served as a Sudan and South Sudan policy analyst at the Enough Project, and an adjunct professor at Georgetown University Law Center. She has also worked as a legal fellow at the Public International Law and Policy Group, advising the Government of South Sudan on the international legal questions raised during their post-secession negotiations with the Republic of Sudan.

-----

## **Chris Kwaja**

**Key Areas of Expertise: Peace and Conflict Studies; Military Responses to Pandemics; Security Policy; Human Rights;**

**Bio:** Chris Kwaja, *Ph.D.*, is a Senior Lecturer and Researcher at the Centre for Conflict Management and Peace Studies, Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola, Adamawa State, Nigeria. He is also a Visiting Research Fellow with the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), Abuja, Nigeria. He holds a Doctorate Degree in International Relations and Strategic Studies. He was an exchange fellow of Dispute Resolution at the University of Massachusetts, U.S.A and is an alumnus of the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, Switzerland.

His research focuses on the politics of identity in Africa, the privatization of security, democratization, conflict and peace studies, as well as security sector reform in transition societies. He recently led a research study on community perceptions of military involvement in pandemic response in Northeast Region. In 2014, Kwaja was part of the Humanitarian Assessment Mission of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to Plateau State, which was the first comprehensive humanitarian mission conducted by the NHRC in Nigeria. Most recently, in 2016 he was commissioned as the Zonal Coordinator for the North East region (Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe States), to conduct the National Survey on Small Arms, Experiences of Arms Violence and Perception on Security in Nigeria, by the



National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) / Presidential Committee on Small Arms and Light Weapons (PRESCOM)

-----

## Dave Polatty

**Key Areas of Expertise: Humanitarian Response; Pandemic Response; Domestic and International Military Humanitarian Responses; Civilian-Military Coordination; Emergency Management**

**Bio:** Dave Polatty is founder and director of the Naval War College's *Humanitarian Response Program* and a visiting scholar/adjunct faculty at Brown University's *Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs*. He specializes in humanitarian response, crisis planning, and military strategy and operations. The Humanitarian Response Program has been engaged with pandemic response research and simulation activities since 2005, and provides analysis and advice for the U.S. military's engagement in both domestic and international COVID-19 response.

Dave is also a fourth-generation naval officer and a Navy Reserve Captain. He has commanded five Navy Reserve units and currently serves as the Navy Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officer for Rhode Island. He was activated to support Rhode Island's COVID-19 response from March to July 2020 and has continued to provide periodic support to the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency and National Guard. While on active duty from 1992 to 2003, he served as a surface warfare officer and naval flight officer.