



Pollution Externalities & Community Realities

TCI FELLOWSHIP CONFERENCE

TCI 2021 FELLOWSHIP CONFERENCE: REFLECTION

On October 6th, 2021, True Costs Initiative virtually convened our inaugural *TCI Fellowship Conference: Pollution Externalities & Community Realities*. Our goals for this global event were to i) build community; ii) spotlight the incredible advocacy of our global class of Fellows; and iii) spend time with each other in celebration, conversation, music and poetry. The conference consisted of two sessions. The first part, the plenary, was attended by 77 people – grantee partners, funders, and TCI allies and friends – from 23 countries and representing at least 37 organizations from around the world. The second part, the Fellows-Only session, was designated for Fellows to share their experiences and connect with their peers directly and openly.

While the conference was conducted in English, we made Spanish interpretation available throughout the event to increase the accessibility of the Conference.

During the plenary [Kinobe](#), a Ugandan musician, creative arts producer, educator, and philanthropist set a peaceful and powerful tone by welcoming in participants to the Conference with music composed specifically for the event. He invited all participants to “travel with me,” and impressed us all with his broad range of musical talents and intuition on what this community needed to hear and feel.

We also heard from our illustrious keynote speaker Nnimmo Bassey of [HOMEF](#). In his keynote he shared a story of crime, assault, and resistance. Nnimmo discussed the multi-dimensional impacts of oil drilling and unpacked the complexity of oil pollution. He spoke of hard truths but also left us with reasons for hope.

Diana McCaulay regaled us with an excerpt from her most recent book “[Daylight Come](#)”. In her provocative and emotional reading, she invited us to consider “How do you live when daylight kills?” Participants heard and felt the weight of the climate crisis, the implications it may have for our future and peered into the emotional toll that a climate catastrophe can take on the relationships between a family and community.

[Samantha Atukunda](#) at Greenwatch and Dr. [Meche Lu](#) at Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide (ELAW) shared stories from the field.

During the Fellows-only session, our TCI Fellows streamed in from around the globe to share their challenges, triumphs, and hopes for their respective Fellowships. We carefully constructed this environment so the Fellows could speak freely, unwind, and connect with each other.

[Video Recording: ENGLISH](#)

[Video Recording: SPANISH](#)

QUOTES FROM ATTENDEES

"I can't remember attending a webinar where what I would first encounter is beautiful music. It is such a heartwarming welcome and a hopeful ending to the event." — **Participant**

"[This was] truly a transformational day....gave us hope and brought a spirit that I didn't even realize was missing." — **Participant**

"I am really surprised seeing a musician from Uganda playing with this instrument which is originally West African specialty, (Guinea and Mali). The instrument is called Kora" — **Mamady Koivogui, Association Mines San Pauvreté (ELAW Fellow)**

"I can't overemphasize how connective, impactful, and nurturing it felt to be part of yesterday's conference. I know it took a lot of work to make it happen, and it couldn't have been better...and it was such a reminder of how those intentional choices that you made have an even greater positive impact than you can imagine." — **Annie Lascoe, Accountability Counsel (Grantee Partner)**


"[It is] nice to hear my country's local dialect in an international forum. Very refreshing," — **Samantha Atukunda, Greenwatch (Grantee Partner)**

"The sharing of Nni[m]mo were at alternate times sad, interesting, and inspiring. Diana's reading, especially after I checked the link for her book, made me think what kind of environment would my children's children's children wake up in. I also enjoyed Meche and Samantha's sharing. Samantha's sharing about litigation fascinated me. I have always been fascinated by the law and how it can be harnessed for justice but has its ugly side as well. Maraming, maraming salamat! (This is Filipino for thank you very much)" — **Carmina Obanil, Coalition for Human Rights in Development (Grantee Partner)**

"...that was so beautiful! I really appreciated the centering of your grantees, and of art (music and literature). Thank you deeply for inviting us – it was inspiring and set a powerful tone for my week, ...I think it [the Conference] models so many good practices that we can learn from." — **Greg Regaignon, Wellspring Philanthropic Fund (Funder Ally)**

TRUE COSTS INITIATIVE FELLOWSHIP CONFERENCE 2021

POLLUTION EXTERNALITIES & COMMUNITY REALITIES



I planted a mangrove tree to remind myself of the work that needs to be done... It's time for our people to be able to breathe clean air, drink clean water, grow clean crops on clean land, & dream of a better future.

— **NNIMMO BASSEY**

COSTS EXTERNALIZED ONTO COMMUNITIES

2008-2009 OIL SPILL - 100K HECTARES DESTROYED

1300 OIL SPILLS FROM 2018-2019

1 LITER OF OIL POLLUTES 25 LITERS OF WATER

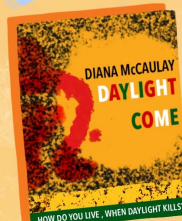
LIVING IN POLLUTION

GAS FLARING POISONED FOOD

Music & art are the fastest way to travel

I believe there is a separation between policy designers and communities they are trying to serve who are the real experts but don't have the opportunities to speak for themselves.

— **KINOBE**



They called it different things: Change, then Crisis, followed by Emergency... Finally they - you never knew who "they" were - realised that the worsening climate converged with poverty, geography, and history. So now they call it the Convergence.



THE PEOPLE ARE LITIGATING, PROTESTING, & RESISTING

Changing Policies & REVERSING GOVERNMENT DECISIONS



CLEAN UP THE NIGER DELTA NOW!

MECHE LU



For the FELLOWS - You will not feel alone because you have a huge community as you stand for environmental rights.

— **SAMANTHA ATUKUNDA**

WORKING HORIZONTALLY TO MAKE CHANGE

COLLABORATION BETWEEN SCIENTISTS & LAWYERS



2021 FELLOWS PROFILE

LEON DZUMBIRA | ZIMBABWE | ZIMBABWE ENVIRONMENTAL LAW ASSOCIATION (ZELA): 2021

As TCI-ZELA's Africa Institute for Environmental Law Research Fellow, **Leon Dzumbira** will contribute to empirical knowledge generation to empower communities and key stakeholders to hold Government and corporate actors accountable for environmental and human rights violations. Leon will be the lead researcher on programs focusing on natural resource governance issues.

OBERT BORE | ZIMBABWE | ZIMBABWE ENVIRONMENTAL LAW ASSOCIATION (ZELA): 2021

As TCI-ZELA's Chinese Investments Fellow, **Obert Bore** will enhance the capacity of ZELA to foster corporate accountability on Chinese investors and assist communities on access to remedy from human rights violations arising from Chinese Investors' activities in the natural resource governance in Zimbabwe and Africa. Additionally, he will support ZELA's efforts on influencing legislative and policy reforms, and capacity strengthening of duty bearers and stakeholders.

SHARDE SLAW | UNITED STATES | ENVIRONMENTAL LAW INSTITUTE (ELI)/HOWARD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW (HUSL): 2021

Sharde Slaw is a rising 3L at the Howard University School of Law, where she has been a Fellow at the Howard University Environmental Justice Center, helping to develop advocacy tools for communities facing exposure to lead and particulate matter and assisting in developing climate justice policies. Sharde brings to ELI a passion for environmental justice, diversity, and inclusion.

INDIGO BROWN | UNITED STATES | ENVIRONMENTAL LAW INSTITUTE (ELI)/HOWARD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW (HUSL): 2021

Indigo Brown is a rising 3L at the Howard University School of Law, where she has been a member of the Charles Hamilton Houston Moot Court team and of the Howard Energy and Environmental Law Society. Indigo has focused her legal education on environmental law, with a particular emphasis on environmental justice.

ELLIS WALTON | UNITED STATES | ENVIRONMENTAL LAW INSTITUTE (ELI)/HOWARD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW (HUSL): 2021

Ellis Walton is a rising 3L at the Howard University School of Law, where he has been a Fellow at the Howard University Environmental Justice Center, Chairman of the Senate External and University Affairs Committee, and Vice President of the Howard Environmental and Energy Law Society. While at ELI, Ellis drafted case studies in a report designed to help communities plan community revitalization efforts with an environmental justice lens, among other projects.

JOSEPH AHIMBISIBWE | UGANDA | ENVIRONMENTAL LAW ALLIANCE WORLDWIDE (ELAW): 2020-2021

Joseph Ahimbisibwe is a Staff Scientist at [Advocates for Natural Resources and Development \(ANARDE\)](#) in Kampala, Uganda, working to protect natural resources through advancing good governance and holding government and corporations accountable. Through this Fellowship, Joseph has worked with ELAW's science team to support his organization as they protect Bugoma Forest, near Lake Albert, from plans to log the area for a sugarcane plantation. This has also enabled him and his team to protect communities from a polluting marble mine in Moroto District in northeast Uganda.

MAMADY KOIVOGUI | GUINEA | ENVIRONMENTAL LAW ALLIANCE WORLDWIDE (ELAW): 2019-2020

As part of his organization [Association Mines San Pauvreté](#)'s effort to ensure the proposed Mandiana Gold mining project does not threaten communities, ecosystems, and public health, **Mamady Koivogui** and his team built on his previous work to design a six-to-eight month advocacy program. This program is aimed at assessing the gold mining company's compliance with its commitments to environmental protection and human rights.

ISAÍAS RAMOS | PANAMA | ENVIRONMENTAL LAW ALLIANCE WORLDWIDE (ELAW): 2019-2020

Isaías Ramos is a biologist at Panama's [Centro de Incidencia Ambiental \(Center for Environmental Advocacy - CIAM\)](#) with more than 20 years of environmental science experience. During his virtual ELAW Fellowship, Isaías reviewed a proposed law declaring a moratorium on mining activities in Panama. He worked with other ELAW Staff Scientists to advance CIAM's work informing communities and decision-makers about threats posed by climate change and large-scale metal mining.

TCI FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM: SNAPSHOT

TCI ORIGIN STORY AND ETHOS

As we and our grantee partners learned over the past few years, there is a need for greater scientific and legal expertise in the environmental and human rights space. Fellowship programs stood out as a potentially effective framework to increase resources and strengthen the capacity of the next generation of scientific and legal advocates.

Our “WHY”:

- i) Access to resources and opportunity are essential for the human and environmental rights leaders of tomorrow.
- ii) Advocates with varying expertise and experience levels need a platform for getting their work seen and their voices heard; and
- iii) Protecting the planet and communities will require advocates who are equipped with the skills, training, exposure, and career mentorship to help situate them to lead well.

Our Fellowship Program developed organically and evolved to meet partner needs. Longtime TCI grantee partner [ELAW](#) has a history of hosting Fellows, supporting their advocacy, and learning through a customized Fellowship program. Their work has served as a source of inspiration. Other TCI allies and advisors include [EDLC](#) and [Trust for Mutual Understanding \(TMU\)](#), who provided examples of relationship-first Fellowship programs based on trust and a commitment to true bilateral exchange.

In conversations with some of our grantee partners and allies with long-term and established Fellowship programs, we noted some gaps.

Too many Fellowship programs fail to reflect the diversity of the advocates in the field and often skew towards white, Global North-based Fellows. Global South Fellowship opportunities, when they exist, often go to those who are already academic and social elites. Some people within the Fellowship sphere both domestically and globally have intimated to us that Fellows sometimes feel they have limited room to craft their own project within the broader framework of the host organization's advocacy. Public interest lawyers and law students have much less career guidance and fewer remunerated Fellowship opportunities available to them. It is uncommon to find Fellowship programs geared towards *both* lawyers and scientists and grounded in an appreciation of how both disciplines complement and strengthen each other. Fellows rarely get the opportunity to learn from other Fellows in an intentional manner or have sustained opportunity and connection with Host Organizations post-Fellowship.

WHO QUALIFIES AS A TCI FELLOW?

The Fellow should be an *early career* lawyer or scientist in the field of human or environmental rights and must already be working or willing to work closely with a Host Organization. In keeping with our September 2021 Report [“Re-envisioning Technical Support and What Constitutes “Expertise.”](#) TCI recognizes the importance of valuing a range of expertise and skills which have traditionally been ignored. We also recognize the importance of valuing the knowledge and lived experience of affected communities and advocates (particularly those who have been historically marginalized) who may not possess traditional academic credentials, but whose work is essential to the legal and scientific advocacy that is necessary to protect people and their environment. As such, we are open to Fellows with this kind of knowledge, expertise, and lived experience. Additionally, Fellows can already have the position of Fellow with their Host Organization and can still be a joint TCI Fellow. Fellows cannot have already been a TCI Fellow in the past.

WHICH HOST ORGANIZATION QUALIFIES TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION?

Host Organizations are TCI's current and occasionally past grantee partners. With their existing Fellowship programs, Host Organizations must be committed to providing bilateral exchange, career development opportunities, and effective mentorship. Host Organizations must be able to support Fellow(s) to pursue their unique projects that address real-life problems while ensuring the alignment between the Fellow's project and the needs and strategies of the Host Organization. Host Organizations must also have experience and skills supporting individuals with their visa application, relevant travel documents, and other arrangements if required.

LENGTH OF FELLOWSHIP AND SIZE OF GRANT

The TCI Fellowship Program is a one-year program, but Host Organizations have the authority and flexibility to design the length of the project and their Fellow hosting period based on either their existing Fellowship program structure or a conjunctively agreed-upon timeline. Fellowship funding, ranging from US\$10,000 to US\$20,000, can complement existing Fellowship funds that a Host Organization is devoting to a Fellow. It can also be allocated as the main resource to effectively host a Fellow. The funds are only dispensed *directly* to Host Organizations.

APPLICATION PROCESS AND TIMELINE

Fellowships are provided by *invitation only* and are ultimately awarded to Host Organizations. TCI accepts Fellowship grant applications twice a year around February and May. Off-cycle requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis to address needs on the ground.

Initial Conversation: Meetings and/or Concept Note submission to determine Host Organization's Fellowship goals and TCI's alignment, which may lead to additional requests for information.

Application Period: Open for three (3) weeks starting from when a selected Host Organization receives an official *invitation to apply* from TCI.

Fellowship Grant Recommendation: Around mid-to-late March (for the February application period) and June (for the May application period), TCI will notify Host Organization of our decision regarding the application.

Touch Point & Fellow-TCI Engagement: i) Introduction Meeting attended by TCI Team, Host Organization, and Fellow; ii) a 3-month check-in attended by TCI Team, Fellow and Host Organization (optional); iii) Pre-Fellowship Conference Gathering attended by TCI Team and Fellow; and iv) Annual TCI Fellowship Conference.