ROCHELLE LINDSAY MC/MPA 2020 celebrated her graduation with her daughter. The 605 members of the Harvard Kennedy School Class of 2020 tuned in on May 28 for a virtual graduation celebration, with remarks from Dean Doug Elmendorf and guest speaker Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, a former finance minister of Nigeria.

PHOTO BY RAYCHEL CASEY
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AT HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL we have experienced the most unusual spring and early summer in recent memory—as I know many of you have as well. But despite the obstacles posed by the pandemic, we are pursuing our teaching, research, and outreach with great vigor and intensity.

I am writing this message on the day I welcomed the new mid-career class to the Kennedy School. I shared my excitement about the year that lies ahead and told these students that, like generations before them, would find their time with us to be thought-provoking, empowering, and inspiring. Indeed, our faculty and staff are focused intently this summer on building new online courses and cocurricular arrangements, and our students are working with us in these efforts.

In our research and outreach, we are helping public officials around the world respond to the pandemic with effective public management, economic programs, social policy, crisis leadership, international relations strategy, and much more. This issue of the magazine features insights from our faculty on what a post-pandemic world might look like, and how we can best protect people's lives and livelihoods. We are also working actively to help overcome the entrenched challenge of racial and ethnic injustice. This issue offers our experts' views on race, protests, and policing—how we ended up where we are and what we can do to create more just societies.

Along with the work of our faculty and students, we showcase in this issue the efforts of alumni who are using what they learned at the Kennedy School to serve others. Melissa Hortman MC'2018 is serving her state as speaker of the Minnesota House of Representatives. Taurai Chinyamakobvu MC'19 has helped create a website to share accurate public information about the coronavirus while protecting user data. Sarah Bell MP'2018 is improving nutrition for children in Mozambique. Cara Myers MC'19 is helping central banks deal with economic crises, and Cara Myers MC/MPA'20 is improving nutrition for children in Mozambique.

At the virtual graduation ceremony for the Class of 2020, I reminded our graduates that the Mozambique School Lunch Initiative founded by Cara Myers MC/MPA'2018 is helping to feed children and build local agriculture.

To Be More Than We Were For Melissa Hortman MC/MPA'2018, the pandemic and the killing of George Floyd have changed the meaning of leadership.

POLICYMAKING IN A PANDEMIC

In a world gripped by the pandemic, HKS experts outline the role policymakers can play.

DESTINATION UNKNOWN

How do leaders make decisions in uncertainty?

A MOVEMENT GREATER THAN THIS TRAGIC MOMENT

Leading thinkers from HKS analyze a reckoning over race and injustice.

A NEW HARVEST

The Mozambique School Lunch Initiative founded by Cara Myers MC/MPA'2018 is helping to feed children and build local agriculture.

BE TO MORE THAN WE WERE

For Melissa Hortman MC/MPA'2018, the pandemic and the killing of George Floyd have changed the meaning of leadership.
Harvard Kennedy School MOVED TO ONLINE TEACHING AND LEARNING last spring in order to protect the community during the pandemic. Remote learning brought more flexibility to the classroom. As Dean Doug Elmendorf wrote in a message to the HKS community, “Our mission is not changing, but the way we advance that mission needs to adapt to our new circumstances.”

By early May, more than a thousand class sessions had taken place over Zoom, along with countless meetings, conversations, office hours, seminars, and events—and more than a few coffee breaks and happy hours. On June 3, HKS made the decision to move to remote teaching and learning in the fall, continuing the work of the spring semester.

Each term, the Dean’s Discussions give the HKS community a chance to engage with faculty outside the classroom. This spring and summer, the sessions, which typically are live events, went online, attracting hundreds of participants. The sessions, moderated by Dean Elmendorf’s chief of staff Sarah Wald, focused on the coronavirus pandemic:

- COVID-19: Leadership in Crisis, Leadership Through Crisis
  Panelists: Matt Andrews, Julia Minson, Wendy Sherman

- COVID-19: The Economic Costs and Consequences
  Panelists: Linda Bilmes, Karen Dynan, Jason Furman, Rema Hanna

- COVID-19: Global Crisis Response and Management
  Panelists: Marcella Alsan, Juliette Kayyem, Dutch Leonard

- COVID-19: The U.S. Response and Its Impact on International Relations
  Panelists: Nicholas Burns, Samantha Power, Kathryn Sikkink

- COVID-19: Race and the Pandemic
  Panelists: Desmond Ang, Cornell William Brooks, Khalid Gibran Muhammad, Leah Wright Rigueur

- COVID-19: Gender and the Pandemic
  Panelists: Hannah Riley Bowles, Kimberlyn Leary, Zoe Marks, Janina Matuszak

- COVID-19: Threats to and Opportunities for Democracy
  Panelists: Matthew Baum, Cornell William Brooks, Erica Chenoweth, Archie Bung

- COVID-19: Effects in Developing Countries
  Panelists: Eliana Carranza, Jeffrey Frankel, Rema Hanna, Isabel Guerrero Pulgar
Enforcing Environmental Law

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT poses important challenges for many Latin American countries. Driven by international demand for agricultural commodities, the rapid expansion of croplands and cattle ranching has heightened social conflict and environmental destruction. In a region characterized by extreme land inequality, decentralized governmental systems, and weak institutions. A new article by Ford Foundation Associate Professor of Democracy and Development, CANDELARIA GARAY, "The Multilevel Politics of Enforcement: Environmental Institutions in Argentina," examines how environmental regulations can be effectively enforced. Looking at the conservation of Argentina’s Chaco Forest, Garay and her co-author explore how various nonstate actors, such as conservation groups and producers, along with language ambiguity in legislation, can lead to wide differences in enforcement and thus in subnational deforestation rates.

Getting What You Pay For

AROUND THE WORLD, with few exceptions, the public sector pays higher average wages than the private sector does for employees of similar rank and skill. The rules determining public-sector salaries also differ from those in the private sector: Salary increases tend to be abrupt and irregular, driven by the forces of labor supply or political concerns rather than by employee productivity, and salary caps provide less incentive for skilled workers to excel. Rafik Hariri Professor of the Practice of International Political Economy, RICARDO HAUSMANN, in his new working paper, "You Get What You Pay For: Sources and Consequences of the Public Sector Premium in Albania and Sri Lanka," explores these differences in Albania and Sri Lanka, the sources of wage compression, and how they determine individual self-selection into public or private-sector work. Hausmann finds that although the economies of these two upper-middle-income countries differ in important ways, they display similar patterns when it comes to public-private pay differences, providing valuable information about public-sector issues on a larger scale.

Maximizing Research Excellence

WHAT CONTRIBUTES TO high levels of research productivity and impact? In her new working paper, “What Maximizes Research Excellence? Productivity and Impact in Political Science,” Paul F. McGuire Lecturer in Comparative Politics, PIPPA NORRIS analyzes a large-scale survey of political scientists around the world. She explores three areas that might shape excellence: personal characteristics, such as gender and qualifications, working conditions, such as academic rank and job security, and role priorities around the importance of academic research. Her findings show that these considerations, particularly working conditions, can affect scholars’ potential for success in complex and nuanced ways. The paper provides insights into the barriers that academics face and opportunities for mitigation—including, for example, enhancing the path forward for early-career, women, and minority scholars.

The Case for No First Use

SINCE THE DAWN of the Cold War, when the Soviet Union enjoyed a preponderance of conventional forces in Europe, the United States and its NATO allies have made “first use of nuclear weapons if necessary” a cornerstone of their defense policy. But according to JOHN HOLDREN, the Teresa and John Heinz Professor of Environmental Policy and a former science advisor to President Obama, this position is long overdue for a change. In his article, “The Overwhelming Case for No First Use,” Holdren writes that adopting a “no first use” policy—guarantees that the United States will never initiate a nuclear strike—would raise the country’s credibility in its stance against proliferation, reduce foreign adversaries’ incentives to acquire nuclear weapons, lower the risk of nuclear accident or miscalculation, and stop the race for ever more-powerful nuclear weapons that could make a first strike effective. Regardless of whether other world powers follow suit, Holdren writes, adopting this policy offers “the most conspicuous opportunity not yet taken for the United States to devalue the currency of nuclear weapons in world affairs.”
PROFILE

SPRING EXERCISE at the end of her first year at HKS was about an imaginary smallpox epidemic, and Sarah Bell MPP 2003 was her team’s lead on the economic impact assessment. Nearly two decades on, Bell’s career in central banking has seen her weather a few more (real) crises—including Puerto Rico’s banking crisis in the mid-2000s and the financial meltdown of 2008. Now at the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) in Switzerland, a bank for central banks that also acts as a forum for member central banks to cooperate and discuss developments in the world economy and financial markets, she’s dealing with perhaps the greatest crisis yet—the global economy and financial markets, developments in the world banks to cooperate and discuss of 2008. Now at the Bank for banking crisis in the mid-2000s and Sarah Bell

What sparked your interest in public service? My mother ran a nonprofit for ways involved in public service. my parents were in different

As an undergraduate, I studied politics and economics, and I was focused on economic development—Africa in particular. When I got to the Kennedy School, I thought I was going to concentrate on economic development. But I took courses on regulation and markets, and I got more interested in those topics. One memorable class on financial markets and institutions included a field trip to the Federal Reserve. After that visit, I was kind of hooked. I did a summer internship at the New York Fed and then spent 15 years working there, including the last few years as chief of staff, before coming to the BIS where I am currently the adviser to the general manager. This role gives me a broad view of activities across the BIS and in the central banking community. What I got out of my experience at the Kennedy School more broadly, though, was training in how to think about policy decisions in the context of a high degree of uncertainty. That has definitely been a theme for me throughout my career.

What has your experience in the banking community. What I gotten out of my experience at the Kennedy School more broadly, though, was training in how to think about policy decisions in the context of a high degree of uncertainty. That has definitely been a theme for me throughout my career.

What do you think is the role of central banks in this moment of crisis? Central banks are in a unique position right now, because in many ways they can act more quickly than fiscal authorities can. They have the operational capabilities to stand up facilities rapidly, particularly in contexts of uncertainty. So that’s been an amazing development.

What are some of the biggest lessons you’ve learned about communication in the banking community? When time is of the essence, leaders should cut words, minimize reading level, make messages skimmable, and chunk messages.
BUILDING A SAFE VIRTUAL SPACE
Taurai Chinyamakobvu MC/MPA 2019 has harnessed technology to improve remote learning and information sharing during the coronavirus pandemic.

“TAURAI CHINYAMAKOBVU MC/MPA 2019 enjoyed classroom discussions during his time at Harvard Kennedy School, but he was sometimes frustrated that conversations with classmates could not continue seamlessly after class. “When the class is done, the conversation often stops,” he says. He saw potential for a digital solution that would allow students to connect, discuss, and share information outside the classroom. With a background in blockchain technology and fintech (the financial technology industry), Chinyamakobvu knows the digital landscape well. He even founded a cryptocurrency exchange in his home country, Zimbabwe.

Although the benefits of digital platforms are undeniable, he knows that real risks exist. Social media platforms often expose people to data mining and security and privacy vulnerabilities. Chinyamakobvu repeats a common saying about social media platforms: “If you’re not paying for a service, you are the product.” He focused on developing a social media model with an emphasis on user security, inspired by a course on digital transformation in government taught by David Eaves, a lecturer in public policy and the director of the digital HKS initiative.

Chinyamakobvu fleshed out his thinking at the Harvard Innovation Lab and then joined forces with a team at the University of California, Berkeley, that was focused on the same concept: building a social networking tool that protects its users’ data and privacy. The bi-coastal partnership led to the creation of LoopChat in 2019. “The mission is to have a platform where you can have secure interaction,” Chinyamakobvu says. “Creating a private space where people can socially network without the fear that their data is manipulated or exploited.” He explains that LoopChat does this in a few different ways. “Unlike other apps that enable you to discover and communicate with whoever is on the platform as long you have their phone number or other contact details, LoopChat allows you to communicate with only the people you want to engage with by sharing your account QR code.” Chinyamakobvu also points out that some encrypted apps notify users when people in their contacts join the app. “This doesn’t happen on LoopChat, as we see it as an invasion of privacy,” he says.

The tool was tested in a few courses at UC Berkeley and proved useful when in-person teaching for the spring 2020 academic term was replaced by remote learning because of the pandemic. It has grown rapidly since, with more than 50,000 users registered by the end of June from Harvard, UC Berkeley, Yale, UCLA, the University of Washington, Boston University, and other institutions. Chinyamakobvu hopes that LoopChat will allow students to continue their conversations with classmates seamlessly in the way they might, say, in the cafeteria over lunch. “What we discovered is, for example, that a class can run on Zoom, but once the Zoom session ends, the conversation stops,” Chinyamakobvu says. “So people can create group chats and the entire class can join.”

In March, the LoopChat team developed a quick spin-off project in response to the pandemic. Concerned about the lack of information—and the prevalence of misinformation—regarding COVID-19, they put their heads together. Could they use their technical know-how to help provide the public with accurate, clear information about the coronavirus? Chinyamakobvu and his team thought so. In short order, the 10-person group developed an informational website, www.livecoronaupdates.org. It features regularly updated information on COVID-19 cases in the United States, advice to prevent the spread of disease, media updates, and opportunities for community members to connect with one another.

“We started on a Sunday and then worked through the night,” Chinyamakobvu explains. “We deployed it after four days.” The idea, he says, was to deliver an immediately useful and easily accessible service. “We were really motivated by a desire to serve the public and provide a single place where people can find reliable information that will help keep them healthy and safe.”

Chinyamakobvu believes that online resources like his team’s COVID-19 website and social platforms like LoopChat were especially valuable when employers had to rapidly figure out how to move online while people were quarantined. He is particularly interested in what work will look like in the immediate future. “There’s been a lot of talk about the future of work,” Chinyamakobvu says, “but the entire infrastructure of the global economy is not designed for remote workers.” He notes that people are social by nature and that “for us to be productive, we have to congregate,” but that it’s often more difficult online. He is interested in finding a technological solution that would allow people to gather and work together seamlessly while ensuring that their privacy and data are safeguarded. “What we found out is that when suddenly people had to break apart and social distance and work from different spaces, it forced a change,” he says.

The future of work—and of school—is happening now, Chinyamakobvu believes, whether we like it or not.
FOR MONTHS, THE CORONAVIRUS has stalked the globe. It has passed through millions, one person at a time, reaching every corner of the earth. And it has infected not only people but every aspect of human culture. Policymakers and the public sector face their biggest test in generations—as some say ever—as life and livelihood hang in a delicate, terrible balance. Facing health crises, economic collapse, social and political disruption, we try to take stock of what the pandemic has done and will do. We asked HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL FACULTY, in fields ranging from climate change to international development, from democracy to big power relations, to tell us how this epochal event has changed the world and what policymakers can do.

POLICYMAKING IN A PANDEMIC

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PUBLIC LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Democratizing Work

Julie Battilana, Alan L. Gleitsman Professor of Social Innovation, Harvard Kennedy School; Joseph C. Wilson Professor of Business Administration, Harvard Business School; founder and faculty chair of the Social Innovation + Change Initiative

AS THE UNITED STATES AND COUNTRIES around the world consider reopening after COVID-19, we are faced with a crucial question: Is our current societal model working, and if not, what kind of model do we want for tomorrow? Staying the course would be a recipe for disaster. Current levels of social and economic inequality both globally and locally have become untenable, and the current pandemic only reinforces them. Moreover, we are pushing the limits of what our natural world can endure. The status quo must change if we hope to survive the combined health, social, economic, political, and environmental crises at hand.

In May, Isabelle Ferreras, Dominique Méda, and I joined forces to ask a simple question: What can we learn from the crises we’re facing? At the time, admitted, our thinking was focused on making it through the COVID-19 period only. And yet, the solution we put forth in a joint manifesto, which has now been signed by 5,000 academics around the world, outlines a solution—democratizing work—that we hope can contribute to fighting the health, economic, social, and political crises stemming from COVID-19, as well as the long-standing crisis of anti-Black racism, about which calls for change have intensified in the wake of the tragic murder of George Floyd at the hands of the Minneapolis Police Department.

What these crises are teaching us, first and foremost, is that humans are not now and never were resources. They invest their lives, their time, and their sweat to serve the organizations they work for and their customers. As we say in the manifesto, workers are not just one type of stakeholder among many: They hold the keys to their employers’ success. Without workers, there would be no manufacturing plant, no deliveries, no production. All workers are essential. They are thus a firm’s core constituency. And yet they remain excluded from participating in the government of their
workplaces—a right that is still monopolized by capital investors. This exclusion is unfair and unsustainable, and it prevents organizations from reaping the benefits of workplace democracy.

What I have seen in my research is that workplace democracy may well be critical to the success of corporations in the future. I have been studying organizations that pursue social and environmental objectives alongside financial ones for more than a decade. It is time we turn to these organizations and learn from their work as the economy as a whole transitions toward setting clear goals for employee well-being and environmental and social metrics, in addition to financial performance. My research reveals a critical link to workplace democracy. Organizations that are more democratic—that give a voice to their workers—are better at staying the course and pursuing these multiple objectives.

Finally, democratizing workplaces is one of the most promising avenues for creating more just (including more racially just) workplaces where all workers—workers of color, women, workers with disabilities—have real control over their workplaces—a right that is still monopolized by capital investors.

This exclusion is unfair and unsustainable, and it prevents workplaces from reaping the benefits of workplace democracy. By giving employees representation in decision-making bodies and the right to participate and control their organization’s strategic decisions, we can collectively build institutions that are truly equitable and fair.

Municipal Lending Facility is welcome, but it is available only to states and very large jurisdictions and must be repaid within three years. That won’t help thousands of medium-sized communities that wish to issue longer-term debt to finance critical infrastructure projects that generate jobs.

States and municipalities are already taking steps to mitigate the damage. These include restructuring their balance sheets, entering into regional recovery efforts, carefully examining operating costs, adopting job-sharing, monetizing fixed assets, pruning overheads, and working closely with community banks. But at the end of the day, those efforts alone will not be enough to prevent cuts in vital local services that often fall on the most vulnerable. If night bus routes are curtailed, the night-shift nurse will be left standing outside the hospital waiting longer to get home.

Studies conducted during the 2008 crisis showed that each dollar invested this way produced a return to GDP of $1.30 to $1.55. In the current environment, we need to strengthen local communities by providing a flexible program of cash flow assistance and long-term liquidity to states and localities.

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FIGURE 6.3: HKS ARCHIVE

Everyone Stays Home

Juliette Kayyem, Belfer Senior Lecturer in International Security Studies

THE NEXUS BETWEEN WORK AND HOME has raised some interesting questions about how we prioritize “care,” mainly child care, as a critical infrastructure that needs to be prioritized in any crisis management response. We often think about a disaster, such as a hurricane or an earthquake, as impacting water or food supply, or an electrical grid. But what if the response to the crisis is that everyone—absolutely everyone—stays home? We can wish for an “opening up,” but if our kids are home—if we haven’t figured out the school and even the college issue—then it all seems rather beside the point.

The Rainy Day Is Here

Linda Bilmes, Daniel Patrick Moynihan Senior Lecturer in Public Policy

THE SINGLE BEST WAY to strengthen the national economy now is to help reboot local economies, which are reeling from the economic fallout of the pandemic. The United States has 90,000 jurisdictions—including cities, towns, school districts, and transit systems—that together provide the public with schools, water, sanitation, trash collection, safety, emergency medical response, and infrastructure.

Local governments are on the front line in fighting the pandemic: responsible for organizing local testing; contact tracing; treatment and isolation programs; buying protective equipment; and setting up a system to eventually deliver a vaccine. But their revenues have collapsed.

State revenues are a mixture of sales and income taxes, federal aid, and user fees. Following the 2008 financial crisis, most states prudently set aside rainy-day funds to improve their balance sheets. This time the revenue shortfall will be far deeper and will quickly deplete those funds. Many revenue-producing activities—such as tourism, international airports, conventions, and sporting events—are unlikely to return to pre-pandemic levels for years. States that entered the pandemic in a poor fiscal position are especially vulnerable. And, unlike the federal government, states must balance their budgets.

Meanwhile, local communities face an existential crisis. Revenues from sales taxes and user charges (tolls, parking fines, hotel and restaurant taxes, and the like) have dried up. And across America, small businesses—many of which are owned by minorities and women—are failing. Local governments will face a second fiscal crisis if property values fall, leading to a decline in property taxes.

State and local governments have already laid off 1.5 million employees, most of them teachers. Millions more are in danger of losing their jobs. Congress has provided some $200 billion in aid to states, but that is no match for the estimated $1.3 trillion revenue shortfall expected over the next three years. The Federal Reserve’s $500 billion Municipal Lending Facility is welcome, but it is available only to states and very large jurisdictions and must be repaid within three years. That won’t help thousands of medium-sized communities that wish to issue longer-term debt to finance critical infrastructure projects that generate jobs.

States and municipalities are already taking steps to mitigate the damage. These include restructuring their balance sheets, entering into regional recovery efforts, carefully examining operating costs, adopting job-sharing, monetizing fixed assets, pruning overheads, and working closely with community banks. But at the end of the day, those efforts alone will not be enough to prevent cuts in vital local services.

The End of Austerity?

Jason Furman, Professor of the Practice of Economic Policy

THE ECONOMIC RESPONSE to the pandemic by the United States and other advanced economies has been faster and larger than anything we have ever seen before, including dramatic policies of central banks and extraordinary actions by fiscal policymakers. As a result, household incomes are actually up rather than down in many countries, and although consumer spending has fallen, at least in the United States it has fallen by much less than it did during the 2008 financial crisis. If policymakers follow through, this could be a demonstration that early, large, and sustained fiscal policy responses can be successful in protecting families from the worst ravages of recessions and getting the economy back on track more quickly. Instead of debates over austerity in the wake of the financial crisis, we might have broad agreement on the critical role of fiscal and monetary expansions after this crisis.

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ECONOMY

“Instead of debates over austerity in the wake of the financial crisis, we might have broad agreement on the critical role of fiscal and monetary expansions after this crisis.”

JASON FURMAN
COVID-19 is causing the biggest economic downturn developing countries have ever seen. Governments and the international community have prepared for a tropical storm, but it increasingly looks like a Category 5 hurricane. — RICARDO HAUSMANN

The Perfect Storm
Ricardo Hausmann, Rafik Hariri Professor of the Practice of International Political Economy

COVID-19 IS CAUSING the biggest economic downturn developing countries have ever seen. Governments and the international community have prepared for a tropical storm, but it increasingly looks like a Category 5 hurricane. They need to act, and act fast, to ensure that they are adequately financed to withstand a collapse in tax revenues and the need for increased health and social expenditures. Absence of such action will lead to a combination of currency, debt, and banking crises. Recovery from such avoidable events is slow and painful.

The Tide Is Rolling Back
Rema Hanna, Jeffrey Cheah Professor of South-East Asia Studies

COVID-19 IS A GAME-CHANGER for most of the developing and emerging countries of the world, and not in a good way. Virus hot spots are flaring up in many low-income countries, and however difficult it is to combat the disease in developed countries, developing ones face even graver challenges. Fighting its spread is very hard. Social distancing remains nearly impossible in the dense megacities. The lack of clean water in many poorer towns and villages prevents effective handwashing techniques. For those who do become ill, health systems are less developed, with fewer hospital beds and medical personnel per citizen, less technology, less medical equipment, and less personal protective equipment. But it is not just the disease that will take a human toll. The corresponding slowing of the global economy from the pandemic is leading to unemployment and food insecurity. For the first time in more than 20 years, we expect global poverty to rise. That, in turn, may roll back gains in nutrition, education, and preventive health care.

Globalization—defined as interdependence across continents—is the result of changes in the technologies of transportation and communication, which are unlikely to stop. Some aspects of economic globalization, such as trade, will be curtailed, but while economic globalization is influenced by the laws of government, other aspects of globalization, such as pandemics and climate change, are determined by the laws of biology and physics. Walls, weapons, and tariffs do not stop their transnational effects.

Thus far, American foreign policy has responded with denial and blaming others rather than taking the lead on international cooperation. For a speculative counterfactual, imagine an American administration that took its cue from the post-1945 U.S. presidents I describe in Do Morals Matter? Presidents and Foreign Policy from FDR to Trump. For example, the United States could launch a massive COVID-19 aid program—a medical version of the Marshall Plan. Instead of competing in propaganda, leaders could articulate the importance of power with rather than over others and set up bilateral and multilateral frameworks to enhance cooperation. Recurrent waves of COVID-19 will affect poorer countries less able to cope, and a developing-world reservoir will hurt everyone if it spills northward in a seasonal resurgence. In 1918, the second wave of the pandemic killed more people than the first. Both for self-interested and humanitarian reasons, the United States should lead the G-20 in generous contributions to a major new COVID-19 fund that was open to all poor countries. If a U.S. president were to choose such cooperative and soft-power-enhancing policies, it might create a geopolitical turning point to a better world. More likely, however, the coronavirus will simply accelerate existing trends toward nationalist populism, authoritarianism, and tense relations between the United States and China.

A New Energy Landscape?
Meghan O’Sullivan, Jeane Kirkpatrick Professor of the Practice of International Affairs

THE CORONAVIRUS and the immobilization of much of the global economy that followed have created enormous challenges for energy markets. These challenges have been most pronounced in oil, in large part due to the fact that the majority of the world’s oil consumption is for transportation. Constraints on the mobility of billions of people around the world resulted in a drop in oil demand of approximately 25 million barrels a day, out of a pre-COVID-19 demand of 100 million. This cratering of demand led to a dramatic decrease in prices, including a day in which the American benchmark for oil went negative as prices.
of the world’s largest and most strategic industries could further exacerbate a teetering global economy, led to an unprecedented mobilization of international actors. In an extraordinary shift from past positions, the G-20, the United States, and even President Trump personally became actively involved in brokering a deal among OPEC members and other allied producers to agree to the largest oil production cut in history. This cut, and matching cuts by several million more barrels of oil per day in the United States, Canada, and elsewhere, has helped stabilize oil markets, albeit from historic lows. But critical questions remain, and debates are raging about whether the energy landscape will ever return to pre-COVID-19 parameters. One of the most important questions revolves around whether this abrupt rupture in energy markets can be translated into a boost for the transition to a more environmentally sustainable global energy mix. The answer to this question depends on how durable changes in consumer behavior are (particularly around travel) and whether governments seize the opportunity that pumping economic stimulus into their economies gives them to advance the energy transition. Europe has already demonstrated a willingness to use its stimulus packages to further the transition; China’s actions demonstrated a mixed intent, and—thus far—there has been little indication that advancing a clean energy transition is high on the list of U.S. policymakers’ priorities. The world has at least one opportunity to create a silver lining from the COVID-19 crisis, but it will require vision and action to realize.

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Sounding a Retreat

Stephen Walt, Robert and Renée Belfer Professor of International Affairs

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC is the most disruptive global event since the Great Depression and World War II. More than 12 million people have been killed in less than six months; more than 250 million people have died; and many more deaths will occur even if effective vaccines or treatments are eventually found. The economic costs are staggering. Much of the world has fallen into recession, public debt levels are soaring, and future growth prospects have dimmed.

Yet despite these far-reaching effects, the current pandemic will not transform the essential nature of world politics. The territorial state will remain the basic unit of political analysis. The loss of international affairs, nationalism will remain a powerful political force, and the major powers will continue to compete for influence in myriad ways. Global institutions, transnational networks, and assorted nonstate actors will still play important roles, but the present crisis will not produce a dramatic and enduring increase in global governance or significantly higher levels of international cooperation.

Instead, COVID-19 is more likely to reinforce diverse trends that were under way before the first case was detected. In particular, it will accelerate a retreat from globalization; raise new barriers to international trade, investment, and travel; and give both democratic and nondemocratic governments greater power to track and monitor their citizens’ lives. Global economic growth will be substantially lower than it would have been had the pandemic not occurred. Relations among the major powers will continue the downward trend that was apparent before the pandemic struck.

In short, the post-COVID world will be less open, less free, less prosperous, and more competitive than the world that many people expected to emerge only a few years ago.

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Good and Bad News for Climate

Robert N. Stav Fellows Professor of Energy and Economic Development

THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC will likely have profound effects on both climate change and climate change policy. These impacts are mainly—but not exclusively—due to the severe economic downturn that has been brought about by the response of governments, firms, and individuals to the pandemic. With depressed economic activity, there has been and will continue to be a net reduction of emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases linked with the observed net decrease in energy demand. Without the pandemic, global emissions overall might have peaked in 2024. Instead, it now appears that they may have peaked in 2019. That’s good news for climate change, but economic recession is surely not a desirable approach to mitigating emissions.

The impact of economic recession is no doubt less positive for the course of environmental and climate change policy. Political will for environmental policies and regulations always decreases during economic downturns. However, governments’ financial responses to the recession can compensate for this, at least partly. Short-term financial assistance and economic relief have reasonably been focused on helping economies recover as rapidly as possible, and targeting relief to those in society who have been particularly disadvantaged. But a long-term economic stimulus could include elements that help move the network to a green, climate-friendly direction—less reliance on fossil fuels, greater reliance on renewable sources of energy, and greater efficiency in the production and use of energy. In the previous recession, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 included abundant use of such green incentives. Now the European Union’s proposed Economic Recovery Plan does likewise. Whether such an approach is used this year and next year in the United States, however, will depend upon difficult domestic political—not to mention the outcome of the November election.

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SOCIETY AND HEALTH

A New Look at Business and Government

Amithab Chandra, Ethel Zimmer Wiener Professor of Public Policy, Harvard Kennedy School; Henry and Allison McCance Professor of Business Administration, Harvard Business School

CORONAVIRUS AND OTHER HEALTH PANDEMICS will happen again, and sooner than we think, because of climate change. COVID-19 provides an opportunity to seriously examine the roles of business and government in society to figure out what each is best at doing, what each is ill-suited to deliver, and what they must do more of together. Those determinations must be made in a clear-eyed manner, with data, incentives, and a tremendous sense of social justice for the poor and vulnerable.

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The Worrying Rise of Digitalization

Mathias Risse, Lucas N. Littauer Professor of Philosophy and Public Administration

IN TIMES OF CRISES, such as pandemics, all of society’s underlying vulnerabilities are laid bare: The long history of injustice, of not respecting people’s rights as citizens and as human beings, lifts its ugly head once more. We hardly need reminders that this is all well in the human rights domain, but COVID-19 definitely is one. Also, many of the responses to this pandemic, in one way or another, have rather forcefully driven along the digitalization of our lifeworlds. The possibilities for surveillance as practiced by both governments and the private sector will increase enormously. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was formulated in response to centuries of hardship business and government in society: to figure out what role business and government in society: to figure out what role
An integrated strategy of capacity building is no substitute for immediate action to meet the basic needs and redress the violent injustices facing us in today’s crises. But such a strategy is a historically informed alternative to the temptations facing each of us to focus exclusively on the single ill or capacity about which we feel most strongly. The capacities we list here are complementary, not competitive. Society has already built a significant understanding of how to foster each of them, and has sometimes learned to integrate them in sustained programs that support deep and long-lasting social change.

Such programs should be put into action today by diverse actors at multiple scales in concerted efforts to rebuild a more just and sustainable world from the wreckage of our current crises.

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DEMOCRACY

A Just and Democratic New Normal

Archon Fung, Winthrop Laflin McCormack Professor of Citizenship and Self-Government

A PERFECT STORM OF THREE CRISES is battering America: a public health crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic, a civic crisis of widespread protests sparked by racist police abuse; and an economic crisis of record unemployment and dislocation. Between now and November, we may well face a fourth political crisis surrounding the presidential election, its conduct, and perhaps even its outcome. These crises have vanquished all sense of normalcy for now. But in the longer term, will we be able to create a better new normal? What world will COVID-19 leave behind?

Writing in the Financial Times, Peter Atwater foresees a “K”-shaped recovery. The upward part of the K—people who will do better than before these crises—consists of professionals and others at the top end of the income distribution, its construction, and perhaps even its outcome. These crises have vanquished all sense of normalcy for now. But in the longer term, will we be able to create a better new normal? What world will COVID-19 leave behind?

If the future is this K, COVID-19 will merely have accelerated the trends toward economic, social, political, and health inequities that have been widening in the United States for the past 40 years; a quickening of the old normal as we knew it. But perhaps it is within our grasp to create a different new normal, one that is more equitable and democratic. We can see shoots of this better new normal in the civic federalism of local responses to COVID-19’s damage. Many governors and mayors stepped up with energy and creative solutions to protect public health and map the way to recovery. Some businesses and nonprofits took costly action early to protect their employees and communities. Labor and community advocates organized immediate aid, but also spoke up for the least advantaged.

There are more shoots visible in the huge protests following George Floyd’s killing. People of many races and classes have awakened to the reinforcing harms of economic inequality, disease, and racism. Himself an avatar of this intersectionality, Floyd lost his job as a security guard because of the pandemic, contracted COVID-19 in April, and was killed several weeks later by a Minneapolis police officer.

Will these shoots multiply into a robust new American democracy? Or will they be mowed down by the juggernauts of racism and plutocracy that preceded the pandemic? The answer is up to us.

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Information Is Survival Gear

Nancy Gibbs, Director of the Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy; Visiting Edward R. Murrow Professor of Press, Politics and Public Policy

THIS PITILESS SPRING OF 2020 has exploited the forces that already weakened us: our political divisions, our doubts, and our intersecting inequities. Partisan division turned public health measures into performance art; distrust of institutions deepened as they struggled to respond; and the weight of suffering, physical and economic, on communities of color has inspired people all around the world to risk their own health and safety to come into the streets in solidarity.

Early in this crisis, the World Health Organization warned of an “infodemic”—people overwhelmed by information, some of it true, much of it not, that made it harder for anyone to know what to believe. In the months since, we’ve seen just how viral conspiracy theories can be, spread by those looking to divide us even further or profit from our fears. So, both the media and the platforms that control so much of our information ecosystem face a reckoning that was long overdue. We are seeing that play out in real time, from the serial policy adjustments at Facebook and Twitter to the soul-searching in our largest newsrooms to the desperate efforts to save what remains of local news.

Good information is more than a democratic value; it is survival gear. When people show up in emergency rooms after drinking bleach in hopes of preventing infection, or blame 5G, social media platforms amplified both truth and misinformation, some of which are difficult for public health experts to respond; and the weight of suffering, physical and economic, on communities of color has inspired people all around the world to risk their own health and safety to come into the streets in solidarity.

As the pandemic hit, like a slow-moving hurricane, many took shelter indoors and followed along closely online, where social media platforms amplified both truth and misinformation about COVID-19. Rumors and conspiracy theories about medical recommendations, which are difficult for public health professionals to address, sit alongside data about potential risk and harm. Some health misinformation underpins in-person rallies to reopen the economy in the United States, where activists claimed that COVID-19 was a grand hoax by Democrats to hijack the election. When misinformation mobilizes, it can endanger the public.

For the past decade, we have witnessed social media platforms, such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, become the most indispensable conduits of information during social upheaval, elections, and natural disasters. But look back to their origins. They were not designed to be such critical communication infrastructure. YouTube began as a dating site, Facebook was a place for college students to network, and Twitter’s purpose as a microblog was described by CEO Jack Dorsey as “a short burst of inconsequential information.” How things have changed!

The lessons we learn today about how to handle health misinformation may hold the key to developing public policy on other forms of disinformation, especially as it relates to the role social media companies play in shaping content online. Tech companies are slowly coming to the realization that it’s not just their corporate reputations at stake. It’s also our lives.

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Good information is more than a democratic value; it is survival gear.

NANCY GIBBS
How do leaders make decisions in uncertainty?

“I KNOW THAT I KNOW NOTHING.” This observation, loosely attributed to the ancient Greek philosopher Socrates, raises a host of questions: What can you do when you know if not nothing, then not enough? When you are a public leader responsible for the well-being of a community, how can you best serve people? What should you do when the stakes are high but you have little knowledge to guide you?

With the coronavirus pandemic, the world is experiencing an unprecedented and long-lasting public health crisis that has left almost no community untouched. Leaders must make crucial and time-sensitive decisions that affect the lives, health, and economic well-being of the people in their communities, but they must do so with limited information. In these conditions of uncertainty, decision making is a challenge even for experienced leaders. How can leaders decide when to open up schools and businesses? What should they take into account?

Harvard Kennedy School faculty members offer advice for decision making in times of uncertainty—from the practitioners who have managed crises during stints in government to behavioral scientists who can provide insight into how emotions affect choices. Faculty members have reached out to inform and counsel public leaders and policymakers in the United States and across the world through Zoom videoconferences, blogs, opinion pieces, and podcasts reaching hundreds of participants—in addition to the lessons they provide to the internal Kennedy School community through courses,

BY NORA DELANEY

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ADAM MCCALEY
special teaching sessions, and community conversations like the Dean’s Discussions, a series of talks over the spring and summer that focused on the coronavirus and included a session on race and the pandemic.

The HKS faculty has shared a wealth of diverse evidence-based ideas about leadership during times of crisis and how leaders can be effective even under conditions of extreme uncertainty. This knowledge should give public leaders hope.

Technical versus adaptive

One way to think about the COVID-19 crisis is as an adaptive problem. RONALD HEIFETZ, the King Hussein Bin Talal Senior Lecturer in Public Leadership, developed a framework—known as adaptive leadership—that is used around the world.

Heifetz distinguishes between challenges that are technical and those that are adaptive. Unlike technical problems, adaptive problems often require that people develop new capacities. They are frequently generated by novel and unpredictable challenges, and usually no clear-cut approach to solving them exists.

“When a problem is technical—it when it is a known problem for which we can engineer a solution—we can design a critical path from A to B, and people can adjust and innovate in their lives and organizations at an ongoing rate they can absorb.”

Heifetz believes that the coronavirus crisis is giving us a shared global experience that is generating billions of adaptive efforts—some unsuccessful, but many encouraging—from which we can learn much, both for this moment in the pandemic and for other challenges that will demand adaptive change.

Without a clear path, Heifetz says, leaders need to improvise and take corrective action often; this is the nature of adaptive work. “Leadership is an improvisational art,” he says. “You may have an overarching vision—that’s the easy part. The hard part is reading a changing reality and pacing the work so that your people can adjust and innovate in their lives and organizations at a rate that they can absorb.”

Like many other faculty experts, Heifetz emphasizes the importance of trust: “There are bonds that hold a community together. Bonds of trust, bonds of affection, bonds of affiliation, bonds of mutual identification, that enable us to stay in the tough conversations against the divisive forces that would allow us to fly off into isolation.” According to him, these bonds are holding communities together.

Some elements of trust are hard: Public officials must acknowledge the difficulties that people face in a crisis like the coronavirus pandemic. Heifetz believes that leadership requires respecting and speaking to the severity of losses in people’s lives. Delivering tough messages requires “an enormous degree of empathy, humility, and transparency,” he says. “Public officials need to be honest, even if they don’t have all the facts. And they need to pivot when they need to pivot.”

Lessons for leaders in developing countries

MATTHEW ANDREWS, the Edward S. Mason Senior Lecturer in International Development, is the faculty director of the School’s Building State Capability program, housed in the Center for International Development. Andrews has created a blog series—Public Leadership Through Crisis—that offers ideas to help leaders during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through this blog, he shares insights from the Building State Capability program and from “problem driven iterative adaptation” (PDIA) methodology, which brings together teams of officials and stakeholders to identify complex problems and break them down into more manageable components.

Andrews’ work is focused primarily on developing and transitioning governments, but he notes that many of the countries he works with are struggling with the same questions and issues that government officials are facing in the United States. In an episode of the Kennedy School’s podcast, PolicyCast, devoted to this topic, Andrews observed, “Even if you don’t have all those resources, there’s an incredible amount that you can do by better authorizing people, by mobilizing and inspiring people.”

For a series spanning several weeks, Andrews spoke with policymakers and public leaders in developing countries that do not have robust institutions to handle a public health crisis. He held Friday Zoom sessions—most of which drew 50 to 60 people from around the world—to talk through the nuts and bolts of leadership as the crisis unfolds in real time. “If ever there was a time when leadership matters, it’s now,” he says.

Andrews has been sharing a few takeaways with leaders. Most people he has spoken with have basic questions about what the public health response should be. “We don’t have a lot of resources, and we don’t have a lot of tools to throw at this,” he says. “So the public response everywhere has been to observe social distancing to try to stop the spread. Leaders who begin this earlier, Andrews says, will have more tools to work with. To be effective, they should communicate well, mobilize people to be on their side, and manage the politics of the situation so that societies are unified rather than fragmented.

What should leaders do when they communicate with their constituents? Andrews suggests, “Be honest. Empower people with facts. And be modest and give yourself the space to pivot when you need to.” He adds that being calm and reliable is equally important.

In addition to communicating effectively, leaders need to organize people well. In times of crisis, Andrews says, leaders often tend to “circle the wagons” and gather small teams around them. But a command-and-control approach, working through a rigid hierarchy, is often too brittle to be very effective. He says, “We found that actually most organizations—and this is in keeping with the literature—do that for a week, do that for two weeks, and then they actually find that things start to crumble.”

How emotions can sway decisions

JULIA MINSON, a social psychologist who studies conflict, negotiations, and judgment and decision making, has tips drawn from her research for leaders communicating in times of crisis. Minson, who is an associate professor of public policy at the Kennedy School, is particularly interested in the “psychology of disagreement”—that is, how people engage with opinions, judgments, and decisions that differ from their own. She observes that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused conflict and become
Leading through crisis in practice

WENDY SHERMAN provides a few overarching principles of leadership that she has observed and learned through her experiences in government. Sherman, who served as an undersecretary of state for political affairs in the Obama administration, was the lead U.S. negotiator in the talks with Iran that resulted in a nuclear agreement in 2015. She also led talks with North Korea during the Clinton administration. Now she serves as a professor of the practice of public leadership and the director of the Kennedy School’s Center for Public Leadership.

Sherman says that the pioneering leadership studies scholar Warren Bennis offers a good sense of the qualities needed to lead in uncertain times. Bennis, she says, talked about a leader having a guiding vision, having passion, hope, and inspiration along with integrity, candor, maturity, humility, curiosity, and “daring wonder.” Sherman believes that trust is also both a product of and a requirement for good leadership. “It’s not something that just exists. It’s given in that contract between people.”

She also draws from a model of leadership used by the U.S. armed forces, summarized as “Be–Know–Do.” Leaders should embody certain virtues and character traits, such as integrity. They should possess certain capabilities, including interpersonal and technical skills. And they should act. Sherman emphasizes that leaders benefit from knowing when to pivot in a crisis. “No leader can corral all the forces necessary to get to a perfect solution in the first instance,” she says. “We are all interconnected. Viruses know no borders. But the solution is to be apart. And for leaders to figure out how to bring people together by telling them to stay apart is a very difficult thing to do. So we all should be somewhat generous to our leaders, because they’re all going to fail at some level. And what a good leader does is learn from that failure quickly and be able to pivot.”

The Kennedy School teaches policy design and delivery concepts that are crucial in making sound leadership decisions, Sherman points out. The principles that students learn in their course are summarized as “Recognize the Problem, Help Solve It,” which is a model initially developed during the 2018 Spring Exercise—which this year focused on responding to COVID-19—can help in understanding the complexity of crises, in making decisions on the basis of evidence, and in communicating clearly. But in addition to the core interpersonal and technical skills that leaders need to do their jobs, and that the Kennedy School teaches its students, context matters a great deal.

“The context for this crisis is perhaps one of the most immensely difficult that any leader anywhere in the world has had to deal with,” Sherman says. “It’s, quite frankly, more difficult than the 2008–2009 financial crisis. It is even more difficult than the aftermath of 9/11.” It is also more challenging, in Sherman’s opinion, than the Ebola crisis, which unfolded while she was serving at the State Department. “This is going on for a very long time,” Sherman says. “And the uncertainty of what’s ahead—the unknowingness of what’s ahead—requires tremendous humility on the part of leaders.”

Like Sherman, JULIET KAYYEM has handled crises in practice. Kayyem, the Belfer Senior Lecturer in International Security, has been an active voice on crisis response during the pandemic. Along with her colleague DUTCHE LEONARD, the George F. Baker, Jr. Professor of Public Management, Kayyem has frequently contributed to a series of sessions over the spring and summer for mayors and city leaders managing the pandemic’s fallout. The sessions were a collaboration between the BLOOMBERG HARVARD CITY LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE and Bloomberg Philanthropies’ Coronavirus Local Response Initiative and were hosted by J-loss de Jong, the faculty director of the initiative and a senior lecturer in public policy and management. Each Zoom session attracted hundreds of mayors and other urban leaders. In the first of these videoconferences, Kayyem drew on her experience as an assistant secretary at the Department of Homeland Security in the Obama administration. During her tenure, she was involved with the federal government’s response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Kayyem observes that in crisis situations, leaders must clearly communicate the information and data they have, even if that information is limited. “It’s just honest,” she says. “That’s all you have got: numbers and hope.”

Three essential tasks for responding to crises

Although the COVID-19 response sessions themselves were open to city leaders only, the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative has posted takeaways and insights on its website. These tools for crisis management and crisis communications target local leaders, but they are valuable for anyone in a leadership position. Among the takeaways are three leadership tasks crucial to responding to a crisis (drawing on the work of Leonard, Kayyem, and de Jong, as well as ARNOLD HOWITT and DAVID GILES from the Kennedy School’s Program on Crisis Leadership):

• Assess where you are in the cycle of the crisis with as much accuracy as possible. This will inform how you allocate your attention and activities and organize the work.

• Establish a problem-solving process for a novel threat. Routine emergency management processes will not be sufficient for responding to this crisis, which will require rapid integration of new (and incomplete) information, learning on the fly, and nimble reactions to emergent issues.

• Understand the political aspects and identify risks to be managed so as to keep order, secure and retain support, and create the conditions for effective collaboration under extreme circumstances.

Like the military model “Be–Know–Do,” these three tasks emphasize using available knowledge and evidence and drawing on a problem-solving skill set to address a crisis, even when much uncertainty is present.

Although few surefire answers can be found to the questions that emerge in unprecedented crises like the coronavirus pandemic, leaders can take some basic actions to arm themselves with the best knowledge possible—using lessons from the adaptive leadership model and from problem-driven iterative adaptation, from practical crisis management experience and expertise, from decision science and more. From pillars of the community to mayors to heads of state, leaders should listen to expert opinion, communicate clearly, and mobilize people to act. Kennedy School experts show that even under conditions of uncertainty, leaders can use a wealth of tools and skills to make wise, informed decisions.

“What people are looking for right now are competent, thoughtful decision makers. And when you change your mind in the face of evidence, that’s exactly how you’re seen.”

JULIA MINSON
A movement greater than this tragic moment

The killing of George Floyd has reverberated across the country. Protests erupted from coast to coast. The United States, already struggling with a pandemic, an economic collapse, and political polarization, seems to be at a defining moment.

We asked Harvard Kennedy School faculty members for their analysis of the crisis and their thoughts on a pathway out of it.
America Aflame: Why Now, and What Next?
Cornell William Brooks is the Hauser Professor of the Practice of Nonprofit Organizations; Professor of the Practice of Public Leadership and Social Justice, and a former president and CEO of the NAACP.

MILLIONS HAVE WATCHED the pornographically violent video of George Floyd dying under the knee of a Minneapolis police officer, Derek Chauvin. Traumatized and outraged, Americans have taken to the streets in mostly peaceful protests, punctuated by both civilian and police violence. With protesters, police, and military in our streets, many ask two questions that are both historical and moral: Why now? What next?

Why has the police homicide of Floyd sparked national protest and even civil unrest? And why now? Floyd’s homicide is neither unique nor even rare. The sixth leading cause of death of young Black men is police homicide. Young Black men are 21 times more likely to be killed by the police than their white counterparts. Indeed, one in a thousand Black men will die at the hands of the police. Black men are wildly overrepresented among the approximately 900 to 1,000 people who are killed by the police each year. Given these statistics, why did this alleged murder spark such unrest now? The video.

Videos of police homicides and hashtags of Black men (and boys alleged to be men)—Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Walter Scott, Laquan McDonald, Alton Sterling, Philando Castile, and Freddie Gray, to name a tragically prominent few—are as morally disturbing as they are frequent. This video may differ from others in that not only was Floyd’s death caught on camera, but he died in a close-up of violence. He was killed under a police officer’s knee, not shot at a distance like Scott, Rice, McDonald, and Castile. The videotaped homicide, with a soundtrack of Floyd’s pleas for help, takes place over nearly nine minutes. It creates an uneasy intimacy with violence, visceral revulsion, and outrage. America’s reaction to the Floyd video is similar to African Americans’ reaction to Jet magazine’s publication of the photograph of the disfigured Emmett Till, a Black child tortured and murdered by white racists in 1955.

The moral revulsion elicited by the Floyd video has precipitated mass resistance to long-standing police brutality. Given the history of police misconduct, and having been involved in protests, legislation, and investigations related to most of the major police homicides of the past five years, I contend that this moment is distinctive, not unique, tragic, but provoking hope. Emmett Till’s death and photograph on the eve of the 1955 Montgomery boycott inspired the modern civil rights movement, federal legislation, investigations, and prosecutions. Floyd’s death and video may yet inspire a movement far greater than this tragic moment. This, of course, is largely in our hands.

This Is a Real Fight. Are You Ready?
Marshall Ganz is the Rita E. Hauser Senior Lecturer in Leadership, Organizing, and Civil Society

These protests are real. They reveal our failure to free ourselves of the racism, violence, and lawlessness—a legacy of slavery—embedded in our institutions. We don’t need more “conversations” about race. We need action—action that takes on the institution of policing itself: purpose, strategy, hiring, training, accountability, culture, and leadership. But the deep, persistent, crippling inequalities of wealth, health, education, housing, and all the rest are not a policing problem, although they often seem to be treated that way. Make no mistake about it: This is a real fight. Are you ready?
DEMOCRACY LITERALLY MEANS PEOPLE (demos) POWER (kratos). Democracy is a way of organizing our lives together so that we have power over the important decisions that affect us.

It has enabled some of us to create a government that gives us the home-mortgage-interest deduction, delivers the mail, makes sure the streets and parks are in good shape, runs nice suburban schools, and protects us from theft and other crimes.

But many of the people who protested in hundreds of cities around the nation this May and June lack power over very basic aspects of their lives and their government. For them, government is the police and prosecutors who run a system in which one in three Black men can expect to be in prison during their lifetimes. As the cases of Eric Garner, George Floyd, and many others demonstrate, that system kills, often with impunity. For these people, government is made up of the social service workers who can deny support and tell them how to run their family lives, the stingy public support systems that fail to provide economic security or even health care, and the dilapidated schools. These people don’t have democracy; they don’t have power.

The protests are an attempt to seize a modicum of power—to punish and perhaps change the police whose practices likely killed George Floyd. Protest and disrupting are the only ways some people can exercise power. They are what people who lack more-effective avenues of influence sometimes do. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, “A riot is the language of the unheard.”

One way to end the protests is, as our president urges, “to dominate” with police and military force to shut these protesters up, to deny them even this form of voice, and to use repression to further exclude the communities they represent from the democratic enterprise.

Another way is to extend democracy—people power—to individuals and communities that do not now have it. There are several ways to do that.

First, create opportunities for residents to exercise real power over the parts of government that affect their lives the most. For example, involve them in deciding how police operate in their neighborhoods and how their schools are run.

Second, strengthen neighborhood initiatives and local government to enable people, especially in communities of color and low-income neighborhoods, to determine the shape of their lives. The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative in Boston offers an inspiring model. So does the practice of participatory budgeting, in which people in city neighborhoods decide how public money is spent.

Third, strengthen the groups that organize and advocate at local and national levels for the interests and lives of people of color. Police unions and chambers of commerce generate power for their members. Democratic power for people of color requires robust organizations as well—churches and civil rights organizations, to be sure, but also newer groups such as the Movement for Black Lives and Black Voters Matter.

The Violence, And the Threat of It, At the Heart of American Democracy

Khalil Gibran Muhammad is a professor of history, race, and public policy at Harvard Kennedy School and the Suzanne Young Murray Professor at Harvard’s Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study. His comments first appeared in Politico.

FROM SOME VANTAGE POINTS, the protests might appear more controlled than what we saw after the deaths of Michael Brown and Eric Garner. This time, officials and the media have clearly defined “peaceful” protesters who have a right to take to the streets, versus rioters, looters, and extremists who don’t. The sheer number of daytime white protesters alongside Black community members has also changed the political calculus, perhaps even limiting overzealous, militarized displays of force.

Yet, given the nationwide scale of protests, there are many more rubber bullets, tear gas canisters, and flash grenades flying toward protesters than in years past. There are also reports across different cities of excessive uses of force, like two New York Police Department SUVS that drove into a crowd of dozens of protesters for blocking traffic. In Atlanta, six officers were charged after pulling over and tasing a Black couple—students at Morehouse and Spelman colleges—who were trying to leave a protest after curfew.

It seems that the police have been more violent and aggressive, particularly when day turns to night, and when protesters include people who have been yellow masked or black faced. But many of the people who protested in hundreds of cities around the nation this May and June lack power over very basic aspects of their lives and their government. For them, government is the police and prosecutors who run a system in which one in three Black men can expect to be in prison during their lifetimes. As the cases of Eric Garner, George Floyd, and many others demonstrate, that system kills, often with impunity. For these people, government is made up of the social service workers who can deny support and tell them how to run their family lives, the stingy public support systems that fail to provide economic security or even health care, and the dilapidated schools. These people don’t have democracy; they don’t have power.

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It seems that the police have been more violent and aggressive, particularly when day turns to night, and especially in response to those who deliberately destroy property. From the White House to governors’ mansions, officials are branding after-hours protesters violent criminals and calling for law and order. “New York was lost to the looters, thugs, Radical Left, and all others forms of Law&Scum,” President Trump tweeted on June 2.

There’s a profound irony in this latest moment of civil unrest. As officials try to protect property and defend people’s right to protest peacefully for victims of police violence, the police risk killing even more people. It doesn’t make much sense, and only demonstrates how much state violence and the threat of it still rests at the heart of American democracy.
THE MOZAMBIQUE SCHOOL LUNCH INITIATIVE FOUNDED BY CARA MYERS MPA/ID 2018 IS HELPING TO FEED CHILDREN AND BUILD LOCAL AGRICULTURE.

BY RALPH RANALLI

CARA MYERS MPA/ID 2018 SAYS THAT A TRUISM from her Harvard Kennedy School education, which she has field-tested in the rural schools and farmsteads of southern Mozambique, is that your solution to a problem could be the right one—and still go wrong. “You can be technically correct, but that doesn’t matter if you don’t have the right institutions and the right management to make something happen,” says Myers, the founder of the Mozambique School Lunch Initiative, a nonprofit that feeds 1,200 children daily with the aim of keeping them both nourished and in school. “That has really been true to my experience.”

Much of her current approach to partnering with rural communities in Mozambique to alleviate childhood malnutrition, she says, comes from courses with Matt Andrews, Edward S. Mason Senior Lecturer in International Development and director of the Building State Capabilities program, including “Getting Things Done: Management in a Development Context” (MLD-102) and “Problem-Driven Interactive Adaptation in Action” (MLD-103M). “I think it’s being able to take more of an ecosystem perspective, and really trying to think about what actually leads to impact, not just an outcome,” she says. “You know: What are you really trying to solve?”

In Mozambique that has meant linking two problems—childhood hunger and farmers’ income—and their solutions in a holistic way to give the program more long-term sustainability with locally sourced food. The initiative has collaborated with farmers on everything from modernizing their methods to irrigation equipment to working collective fields instead of individual plots. “It’s not just the technical knowledge of how much fertilizer you need to apply,” Myers says. “It’s more about how do you get people to work together? How do you sustain change? And that is much more complicated. We’re building capability.”

When the program started, in 2016, southern Mozambique was experiencing a severe drought. “Even if we wanted to buy from local farmers, there was nothing available,” Myers says. Since then, the initiative has built up a supply chain of nearly 50 local farmers with 25 acres under cultivation, raising sweet potatoes, beans, onions, kale, tomatoes, cabbage, and even chickens. The farmers sell a portion of their production to the school lunch program, providing high-quality fresh food and earning money for their families. “Last year we doubled farmer income—that’s transformational change,” Myers says.

The Mozambique School Lunch Initiative won the 2018 Harvard President’s Innovation Challenge Crowd’s Choice Award and was a finalist team in the 2017 New Venture Competition at Harvard Business School in the Social Enterprise track. But when Myers started out, she had no intention of creating a significant program that would still be around four years later. In fact, she says, her road to Mozambique was “a bit random.”

It started when Myers was a sophomore at Middlebury College and decided to take a one-year intensive course in Portuguese for Spanish speakers. She had always loved studying languages, she says, and thought that “this was a great deal to basically become fluent in another language in just two semesters.” As an international politics and economics major, she was interested in

It’s not just the technical knowledge of how much fertilizer you need to apply. It’s more about how do you get people to work together? How do you sustain change?”

CARA MYERS MPA/ID 2018
working for a global organization after graduation; thanks to her facility with Portuguese, she got an opportunity in Mozambique with Samaritan’s Purse, an international relief and development organization.

She worked in Mozambique in 2013 and then went to work for Innovations for Poverty Action in Kenya, meeting the economist and soon-to-be Nobel Prize winner Michael Kramer on a project. Throughout that time, she remained connected with several former colleagues in Mozambique, especially Talvina Ualane and Roberto Mutisse. During the 2015–2016 drought in Mozambique, Ualane and Mutisse alerted her to the severity of the crisis and that they had found a significant need they could serve.

They started serving midday meals to students in three schools. Almost immediately, attendance increased, not only at those schools but among students from another one more than five miles away. It was clear, Myers says, that they had found a significant need they could serve. When the drought finally ended, in 2017, a new opportunity arose: Local farmers wanted to get involved selling crops to the school lunch program. However, most of these smallholders were producing at only a subsistence level and didn’t have the resources to increase production so that they would have a surplus to sell. After group meetings in each of the communities, Myers and her team decided to launch the Seed Support program, whereby local farmer groups would receive agricultural inputs, including seeds, to increase their production. Today, more than half of the school lunch program’s food is procured locally from those groups. Myers says that this part of their model is key to tackling the root causes of child malnutrition in rural Mozambique. Because the lunch program is a reliable buyer, farmers can invest more in their farms and earn more income. That increases the productivity of local agricultural systems and reduces poverty—essential steps for sustainable development.

Myers now employs numerous skills she learned at HKS, including data-driven analysis and working with market dynamics. Her year as a Cheng New World Social Enterprise Fellow at HKS also helped her develop a better understanding of systems-level change and the various stakeholders involved in the process. She stays in regular contact with classmates and mentors, including Michael Woolcock, an adjunct lecturer, and Matt Andrews. Andrews had an early sense that Myers would apply her HKS education in a significant way, he says. “You could see that she was consuming every class and feeding off her classmates, always thinking of the fields in which she would sow her new seeds of knowledge. She also insisted on bringing a practical view on everything into class, and often helped ground the discussions everyone was having in reality.”

Andrews has worked in Mozambique himself. He says he was intrigued—but not surprised—that Myers would focus her efforts there. “It’s far away and a hard place to work, so it was clear that Cara was not looking for easy,” he says. “I know that this is what makes her a great social entrepreneur: She is humble, hardworking, and focused on building real capability in the world. She really was the student that every professor wants the privilege to teach.”

Working in difficult places like Mozambique has become even more complicated because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Myers says the disease has not hit the region hard because the population is largely rural and well dispersed, but there is fear of a spillover from neighboring South Africa, which has been significantly affected.

Since the pandemic began, the Mozambique School Lunch Initiative has had to adapt to new realities on the ground. Schools are temporarily closed, so the program is providing monthly take-home food rations to vulnerable students while continuing to work with local farmers with enhanced safety precautions. Although Myers has been unable to travel physically to Mozambique, she is in constant contact with Ualane and Mutisse.

Since graduating from HKS, Myers has also worked as a consultant for the World Bank, focusing on the constraints on growth in rural Mozambique. “It’s interesting to work from that macro-level perspective as well,” she says, “while still working on the survival of our team and making sure everyone still cooks and is still paid and that they are taking care of the most vulnerable kids.”

Last year we doubled farmer income—that’s transformational change.”

CARA MYERS MPA/ID 2018
Six months after graduating, Melissa Hortman MC/MPA 2018 was elected to a state leadership position. A year later, the pandemic and the killing of George Floyd changed what leadership meant.

BY RALPH RANALLI

“Becoming speaker meant changing from being an advocate to being a leader,” she says. “In our role as legislators, we are advocates for particular policies and causes, but in the higher levels of leadership, you become an executive running an organization and directing the entire institution to be effective.”

Hortman’s fellow DFL lawmakers elected her as speaker in November 2018, after she helped engineer an 11-seat election pickup that gave their party control of the House. Working with DFL Governor Walz, Hortman’s new majority came in hoping to expand health care coverage and benefits for workers, increase education spending, and launch new infrastructure projects. But they couldn’t do it without the cooperation of Minnesota Republicans, who still controlled the state Senate by a one-vote margin.

Each got off to a promising start in 2019, with Hortman and Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka coming together to pass some challenging measures, including the state’s $4 billion two-year budget. A year after the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Hortman says, and all of a sudden legislative collaboration both inside the House and across state government became a matter of protecting lives.

“We began working to achieve a full majority and minority caucus agreement on all COVID-19-related items. It became really important for me to work with the minority leaders in a way we had not before,” she says.

Hortman took two years to earn her degree, attending the fall semesters of 2016 and 2017 and accepting her degree at Commencement in 2018. She says the Mid-Career MBA Program Summer was both a highlight of her time at HKS and a “pivot” bonding experience for her and many of her classmates. That bond was renewed during a group trek to Bhutan. Hortman took with many of her mid-career classmates in December 2017. She says she still has a strong WhatsApp network of more than 140 classmates in the United States and abroad who regularly stay in touch to swap knowledge and experiences.

“I’d say it’s very social, but it’s also about policy,” she says. The group has been invaluable, she says, because “the commonality of experiences is pretty remarkable ... we’ve been tracking government responses on the ground in all these different countries. We’re all living it together.”

Hortman’s personal path to the Kennedy School—and to Harvard for that matter—was anything but a straight line. As a junior in the Anoka-Hennepin School District in her hometown of Brooklyn Park, she told her high school guidance counselor she wanted to attend Harvard College.

“You won’t get in,” the counselor replied. “Why not?” Hortman asked. The counselor replied that the small district didn’t have the type of coursework and extracurricular offerings that wealthier districts had.

So Hortman went to Boston University as a political science and philosophy major. But attending Harvard was still a dream, she says, so she applied to Harvard Law School. She wasn’t accepted, instead earning her law degree at the University of Minnesota. It would be another 22 years before she finally stepped onto the Harvard campus as a matriculated student, a tribute to the perseverance she says she has been an asset in both her educational and political career.

“It took me three tries to get elected too,” she says with a laugh. But it was all worth it, she says. “This is a moment when the electorate really understands and appreciates the value of good governance, when people are reliant in the government to have an effective response, and the value of government is absolutely clear,” she says. “What I am focused on is trying to sustain that moment.”
“We need to make sure that the people can vote and that everybody who’s eligible to vote has that right to vote.”

Massachusetts Congressman Jim McGovern speaking on the need for accessibility to voting during the pandemic at a March Fast Forum.

“Back in those days, we couldn’t get much attention for these stories because of impeachment and politics.”

Washington Post reporter Lena Sun talking about the early days of the pandemic at an April Fast Forum.

“The protests we see now are about the overlapping failures of America.”

Professor Leah Wright Riguex at a June event on race, protests, and democracy hosted by the Ash Center.

“The coronavirus is demonstrating, literally, the foundation of unions—that an injury to one is an injury to all.”

Sara Nelson, international president of the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, at a March Fast Forum.

“I really wanted to merge my interest in policy and public service together, and for me, in elected office, I think I saw that opportunity.”

Cambridge Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui speaking at an IOP Fast Forum in April.

“There’s going to be a big fight for the soul of the conservative movement in the post-Trump era.”

Former House Speaker Paul Ryan at a Fast Forum in April.
Why Do We Still Have the Electoral College?  
Alex Keyssar, Matthew W. Stirling, Jr. Professor of History and Social Policy

A LONG-CLEARED HISTORIAN of U.S. democracy and electoral politics, Alex Keyssar has for years been fascinated by the question that titles his latest book. He has good reason: For more than 200 years the United States has chosen its most powerful public official through a process that is ill understood by many Americans, widely criticized by officeholders and policymakers, and never replicated by another sovereign body in the world. Why Do We Still Have the Electoral College? is a skillful attempt to excavate this question.

Keyssar does not seek to join the ranks of the countless authors who have already debated the merits and shortcomings of the Electoral College. Instead, he invaluably augments existing scholarly work by writing from the perspective that the persistence of the Electoral College is not self-evident and therefore requires explanation. Keyssar traces four distinct periods of U.S. history—from the Constitutional Convention to the present day—to illuminate the various strategies that have been at the center of national debates around electoral reform. In doing so, he debunks myths about whom the Electoral College has historically benefitted, illuminates the various strategies that have been at the center of national debates around electoral reform. In doing so, he debunks myths about whom the Electoral College has historically benefitted, and emphasizes just how close we’ve come on multiple occasions to substantiating the U.S. election process.

Keyssar’s astute and accessible treatise ultimately considers both the United States’ electoral legacy and the possibilities for a more democratic future.

The Condemnation of Blackness  
Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America

Khalil Gibran Muhammad, professor of history, race, and public policy at Harvard Kennedy School, and Susan J.不斷 Murray Professor at Harvard’s Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study

HISTORIAN KHALIL GIBRAN MUHAMMAD’S seminal work on race in the late 19th century through the first half of the 20th century. “This book tells an unsettling coming-of-age story,” Muhammad writes. “It is a biography of the idea of Black criminality in the making of modern urban America.”


As urgent today as it was in 1980, The Condemnation of Blackness explores the historical discourse about race and crime—especially in northern American cities such as New York. For decades, and to this day—from the 1890 U.S. Census through the first half of the 20th century. “This book tells an unsettling coming-of-age story,” Muhammad writes. “It is a biography of the idea of Black criminality in the making of modern urban America.”

The Condemnation of Blackness is an essential text for anyone who wants to understand the history that has linked ideas of race and criminality in America—particularly in the urban North. Through an in-depth research and analysis of census data and crime statistics, Muhammad helps the reader understand how we got to our current narrative about race and crime, and why it doesn’t have to be this way.

The Hidden Face of Rights  
Toward a Politics of Responsibilities

Kathryn Sikkink, Ryan Family Professor of Human Rights Policy

IN THIS BOOK, Kathryn Sikkink explores the ways in which a framework of rights should accompany human rights. Sikkink is an expert in international norms and institutions, transnational advocacy networks, the impact of human rights law and policies, and transitional justice.

“The discourse of human rights often omits the language of political and ethical responsibilities, and that absence constrains the effectiveness of rights movements,” she argues. “We who believe in human rights need to begin talking and thinking explicitly about the politics and ethics of responsibility.”

In this concise yet wide-ranging book—which includes many examples from her work and experiences at Harvard Kennedy School—Sikkink considers areas of responsibility that include climate change, digital privacy and misinformation, voting, freedom of speech, and sexual assault. She notes that one barrier to taking action for positive change is the free-rider problem. When public goods or services are shared, people sometimes assume that others are taking responsibility, so they don’t have to, even though they benefit from the results. “One barrier to getting people to assume responsibilities for issues like a clean environment is the classic problem of collective action and large numbers,” Sikkink writes. “People hope that others will take action and they can free ride.”

To spur individual and shared action, Sikkink says, people have to be motivated to be responsible. “To encourage people to assume responsibilities,” she writes, “we need to think of how to mobilize the full range of human emotions and motivations, including altruism and a sense of satisfaction one gets from performing civic responsibilities, and not just the pursuit of narrow self-interest.”

In this sense, she believes, a framework of responsibilities can work hand in hand with a human rights framework.

On Trade Justice  
A Philosophical Plea for a Global New Deal

Mathias Roise, Lucas N. Littauer Professor of Philosophy and Public Administration; faculty director, Carr Center for Human Rights Policy

COMMERCIAL INTERESTS HAVE BEEN PLYING international trade routes for millennia, moving goods abroad everything from ancient reed rafts to today’s cargo jets and container ships. But as an area for philosophical study and thought, international trade has traditionally been a road less traveled.

Now Mathias Roise and Gabriel Wollner MPP 2012, a professor of political philosophy at the University of Bayreuth in Germany, have tackled this complex and challenging subject in On Trade Justice: A Philosophical Plea for a Global New Deal, blending contemporary analytical philosophy with an examination of current global trade frameworks and historical perspective. Their book explores both philosophical ideas about global justice and the application of morality to practical questions about international trade. The problem of exploitation in its many forms figures prominently in the authors’ thinking and analysis.

“Trade justice is about precluding various types of exploitation... to the extent they happen as part of the basic framework of rules for the trade regime,” the authors write. “States exploit bargaining power in negotiations, bilaterally, or within the WTO. Under-advantage taking occurs between individuals, for instance, when in employment markets one party benefits inappropriately from another’s weakness. It occurs between firms and individuals if firms disregard safety standards and use bargaining power to shortchange workers on wages.”

The book also delves deeply into the moral and ethical obligations of business, acknowledging the primacy of modern corporations as drivers of international trade norms. Issues explored include wage injustice, collusion with authoritarian regimes, relocation decisions, and obligations arising from interaction with suppliers and subcontractors.

Among other remedies, the authors make a case for the World Trade Organization to redefine itself as an agent of justice, embracing a leadership role and promoting a human rights and development-oriented mandate.

About the Authors


Khalil Gibran Muhammad received the National Humanities Medal from President Barack Obama in 2016. His books include The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America (1998), which won the National Book Award, and The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America (2010)—was republished in 2019. In a significant work of scholarship, Muhammad excavates the question of how the making of modern urban America constrains the effectiveness of rights movements.

Kathryn Sikkink has been a leading voice in human rights scholarship for nearly three decades. Her 1990s work laid the foundation for academic study of the international human rights movement. Since 1999, she has directed the Human Rights Clinic at Columbia University and taught at Columbia, Harvard, and Oxford.

Mathias Roise is an associate professor of philosophy at Harvard University and director of the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy. He is the author of Right and Reason: A Global New Deal and When Rights Conflict: A Challenge to the Global System of Human Rights.

1983
Kristin Faust MCRP writes, “In November of 2009, I was named executive director of the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) by Governor J.B. Pritzker and the IHDA board. As the state’s housing finance agency, IHDA is the leading voice for the creation and preservation of affordable housing in Illinois. We finance both home ownership and quality affordable rental housing. It’s housing policy and housing finance all day long, and I couldn’t be happier. There is so much to do to provide everyone the opportunity for a decent, affordable place to call home!”


1984
Judith Bunnell MPP reports that more than 35 members of the MPP/MPA Class of 1984 participated in a “Virtual Cocktail Party (pants optional)” to check in and see how everyone is doing with the COVID-19 situation and in their personal and professional lives. Attendees included people from coast to coast, Canada, and Mexico, and they received a special message from classmate Matt Teusler MPP, U.S. ambassador in Kabul. “We plan to keep these going on a semi-regular basis!”

Dana Rowan MCRP, after recently serving as chair of the Trustees of Boston Architectural College (BAC), is now teaching a graduate-level real estate course in “Leadership and Entrepreneurism” in the newly established master’s of real estate development program at the BAC. This year the BAC is celebrating its 150th anniversary in architectural education. In addition, Dana has also become a member of the Harvard Alumni Real Estate Board, which was one of the last Harvard alumni organizations to convene a meeting at the Cambridge campus, before COVID-19 meeting restrictions were imposed on all campus activities.

1985
Kalyan Kumar Chakravarty MC/MPA has been contributing to the sectors of developmental administration, education, culture, forestry, tourism, science, technology, museums, archaeology, and the arts. “A.A.S. professor, CUTFM, Bhubaneswar, member, Governing Board, BRDJ, Delhi, advisor, KCC, Kolkata, state, national governments. Policy field research on indigenous heritage as part of sustainable livelihood resource management, biocultural diversity linkages. Published on culture arts development nexus, art history. Writing on Historiography of Indian art, Vision 2020: Perspective for Sustainable Development. At Kolkata with wife Minati and daughter Sayantini. PhD program at ESADE.”

2020: Perspective for Sustainable Development. At Kolkata with wife Minati and daughter Sayantini. PhD program at ESADE.”

Karen Wulz MCRP writes, “My consulting practice, Strategic Community Solutions LLC, continues to keep me engaged in exciting projects that help communities become more successful and sustainable. Building public involvement and consensus is ever-changing but very fulfilling. I was recognized as a Texas Planning Legend in 2017—the first baby boomer to receive this award. My husband and I love traveling and made it to Antarctica, our last continent, in 2019!”

2020
Nadine Hack MC/MPA, CEO of beCause Global Consulting (because.net), recently spoke at several conferences, including “Role & Responsibility of Media in Deeply Divided Societies”, “Future of Planet: Inspiring What Could Be”, and “How Do We Measure Impact & Movement.” She co-hosted the fifth time the FIFA/UEFA Women Football Leadership Program. She was one of 40 participants at the RFF Human Rights global conference “Business & Human Rights” with Nobel Peace Laureate Kailash Satyarthi, whom she featured in “Speak Truth To Power” (2020).

Listen to the podcast where leaders in public policy, media, and international affairs confront the world’s most pressing problems. ken@policycast
Shifting the Disability Narrative

Sara Minkara 2014

“I NEVER THOUGHT IN A MILLION YEARS that I would start an organization,” says Sara Minkara 2014. “I was planning on doing a PhD in economic development.”

Today, she leads Empowerment Through Integration (ETI), an organization with a lofty goal: to achieve an inclusive society by recognizing and eliminating the stigma around disability.

Minkara, who is blind, experienced the difference between an inclusive society and one where pity was the dominant narrative. Minkara was raised in the seaside town of Hingham, Massachusetts. “I went to public schools, and had very supportive teachers and a very supportive community,” she says. “There were of course obstacles to inclusion—there is no perfect place—but at least the United States had laws and infrastructure in place to allow me to get what I needed.”

This was not what she observed during her annual summer trips to Lebanon, that brought together blind and sighted children. “The purpose wasn’t for sighted kids to pity the blind kids, but to see how they could come together to learn that everyone has something to contribute,” Minkara says. The camp was a powerful experience—but she thought it was a one-time thing. “I went back to Wellesley and continued my studies,” she says. It was her thesis advisor who noted, “Why are you applying to PhD programs? Your eyes light up when you talk about the camp.” So she switched gears and applied to Harvard Kennedy School to get the skills to start the organization that became Empowerment Through Integration.

Her vision for ETI evolved during her time at the Kennedy School. “Originally, I was looking at the inclusion mission in a very surface-level way—that we’re going to teach kids in summer camps,” she says. “My time at HKS made me realize that the issues of disability and inclusion are deeper. Because systemic ableism is embedded across society, you can’t just empower youth with disabilities—they’re out in a non-inclusive world, one that doesn’t value them. We want society to include people with disabilities because if you don’t, you lose out on their value.”

Minkara seeks to instill the perspective that inclusion leads to value for all people. Through customizable content and activities, ETI helps clients achieve diversity and inclusion goals. In addition, ETI advances a value-and-inclusion-based narrative to help children with visual impairments gain the skills and confidence to thrive, while helping their peers and caregivers better understand and value youth with disabilities.

“To lead, you have to be able to inspire and mobilize others to be leaders in their own way,” says Minkara. For empowering more than 5,500 people through her nonprofit, Minkara is the recipient of the 2020 HKS Emerging Global Leader Award.
of public policy experts on issues including deindustrialization, transparency and anti-corruption, human rights, animal welfare, and circular economy. Aho would love to connect with alumni and students who wish to contribute to the alliance as policy experts, volunteers, investors, or donors.

Chuck Riback MPP writes, “I had the opportunity to host classmate and New Orleans Mayor Nolen Bramson MPP on my “Chuck Riback’s Conversations” podcast. We discussed how one leads a city out of the coronavirus, and what’s like to see the place you love go through it. As always, Nolen’s intelligence and warmth shined. More importantly, Nolen made clear in “words, tone & action” why, during this pandemic period, government’s role is becoming understood and appreciated. Listen here: chibrock@mayor-nolen-bramson-from-pastor-zero-to-new-york-s-city-epicenter.”

Marti Trudeau MC/MPA completed a doctor of social work degree through the University of Southern California Suzanne Dekmar-Pek School of Social Work. Through her doctoral work she developed a training program for the hybrid health services position of direct care community worker, which combines the roles of direct care worker and community health worker in order to better address the social determinants of health in the home care setting. She is living in Philadelphia.

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Beth Arman MPP writes, “I finished my dissertation! I now have a PhD in public policy from University of Maryland Baltimore County. I’ve moved back to the West Coast. I live in Oakland, California, and work as a senior dean for Diablo Valley College.”

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Michael Daniel MPP writes, “I left the federal government in 2012 after 25 years and now run a cybersecurity nonprofit called the Cyber Threat Alliance. I live in Arlington, Virginia, and work as a senior dean for Diablo Valley College.”

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Believing in the Mission of Harvard Kennedy School

Jerome Holmes MC/MPA 2000

The judicial rulings in which U.S. Circuit Judge Jerome Holmes MC/MPA 2000 participates establish the law not only for the litigants before the court but for future generations. Holmes is one of just 12 full-time judges on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit. Federal appeals coming from the six Western States of Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Kansas. Nominated in 2006 by President George W. Bush, Holmes is also the first American to serve on the 10th Circuit.

This concern for future generations is one of the reasons Holmes has given to the HKS Fund every year since graduating from Harvard Kennedy School. “I believe in the Kennedy School’s mission,” says Holmes. “I think it’s important to create an environment that nurtures future leaders who will impact the world.” For his consistent giving over 20 years, Holmes is this year’s recipient of the HKS Outstanding Alumni Award.

Holmes does not always want to be a lawyer (he wasn’t even sure he wanted to practice law until after his first year of law school at Georgetown University), but he did always want to do something for the public good. As the son of public sector employees, Holmes says, “I have been animated in terms of career choices most of my life by the desire to be involved in public service.” He clerked for a federal trial judge in the Western District of Oklahoma, and then later clerked for a judge on the very appellate court he would join 15 years later.

Moving between the private and public sectors is a hallmark of his career. Following his clerkships, he joined a large Washington, D.C., law firm, then later relocated back to Oklahoma to serve as an assistant U.S. attorney. “I had what would have been considered a successful career as a federal prosecutor, but I knew there’d be another chapter of public service in my life—what I didn’t know was what that chapter would look like,” Holmes says. That’s when he decided to come to HKS. “I thought it would be good to expose myself to a lot of different ideas, to be in a milieu that appreciated public service, and to be able to think ‘big picture’ about leadership and how one achieves public goals.”

The Kennedy School did not disappoint him. “I wanted to stretch myself and to put myself in situations where I was not comfortable. For me, coming to the Kennedy School satisfied my desire to continue to grow and continue to position myself to have an impact. And this is what I find most gratifying about the job I have now—I make decisions that I know matter.”

Of his generosity to the Kennedy School, he says, “I’ve given regularly, but I haven’t given an incredible amount of money. Having pursued a career in government service, I have not been in a financially position to do so. But the Kennedy School’s mission is worth supporting, and I have been pleased to consistently give whatever I could afford to the HKS Fund, which supports the needs of current students. Even if you are a graduate of the Kennedy School who is pursuing a career path that isn’t financially lucrative one, that doesn’t mean you cannot support the Kennedy School’s mission. And that’s what I’ve tried to do.”

COVID-19 and the Post-Truth Era

“I think in the public, in these sorts of situations, absolutely needs the truth or else there’s just no trust in the leadership. But they can’t let that truth paralyze them and let them collapse into despair. The art of being back and forth with that is part of what I think makes for good adaptive leadership, and adaptive leadership is the kind of leadership that I find most persuasive.”

Chris Robichaud

Michelle Therrill/MC/MPA 2000 was recently named head of strategy and transformation for the Wells Fargo Foundation, one of the largest corporate foundations in the United States. She was also recognized by Ebony magazine as a Power 100 honoree, as the organization celebrates its 75th anniversary.

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Michelle Therrill/MC/MPA 2000

WIEIEN CONFERENCE CALLS

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Michelle Therrill/MC/MPA 2000 was named head of strategy and transformation for the Wells Fargo Foundation, one of the largest corporate foundations in the United States. She was also recognized by Ebony magazine as a Power 100 honoree, as the organization celebrates its 75th anniversary.

As an independent bipartisan arm of the U.S. Department of Education, the board oversees the “Nation’s Report Card,” also known as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). After two promotions, Michelle now serves as the assistant director for assessment development, spearheading projects to update the knowledge and skills NAEP assesses and reports on for the nation, states, and several large urban districts, with a primary focus on students in grades 4, 8, and 12. In 2019, Michelle earned a master’s in mathematical statistics.

Stephen Frost MPP ’08 first joined Frost Financial, a diversity and inclusion consultancy helping a range of organizations around the globe. With the current COVID-19 emergency, he is leading the team and helping clients virtually to embed inclusion in their decision making. For example, only when we consider diversity in design thinking will we produce equitable health outcomes, de-biased algorithms, and better customer service generally. He would be delighted to hear from alumni, especially on how they are keeping inclusion on the agenda in their organizations at this time.

2005

Sylvia Clute MPA is co-author of an article in the current Richmond Public Interest Law Review. The article, “Unitive Justice and Re-Entry Culture Change,” pg. 203, is co-authored by Paul Taylor and Weldon Bunn, former inmates who transformed their prison culture using techniques that are similar to Clute’s Unitive Justice theory. The article is a comparison of their two approaches to culture change. The issue also includes transcripts of panels Clute, Taylor, and Bunn participated in, on pp. 35 and 37. “Symposium 2019: Redrorative Justice is available at: scholarworks.richmond.edu/pilr/vol23/iss2/2

Alice Farmer MPA 2004 writes, “I’m sorry to miss everyone at Reunion this year! I am a refugee lawyer with UNHCR, currently living in D.C. Hope all are well”

Patrick McCormick MC/MPA 2004 writes, “In April I started a new role as CIO for the City of Cambridge. City staff have been working remotely to address COVID-19 challenges, including promoting safety measures, enabling a remote workforce, hosting public meetings online, and aiding residents and small businesses. I’m thrilled to join such a dedicated team of public servants. The move follows nearly three years with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as CIO Capital program manager. The Executive Office of Tech Services and Security was established in 2017 as a new secretariat with a mandate to modernize IT across state government and it was exciting to be part of that enormous organizational change.”

2006 15th Reunion

Angela Jos-Hyun Kang MC/MPA is founder and executive president of Global Competitiveness Empowerment Forum (GCEF), based in Seoul, Republic of Korea. Since January 2020, Angela has been participating in global policy recommendation procedures as co-head of the South Korean Delegation and the elected chair of the Digital Inclusion Working Group of Women 20 (W20), the gender equality policy engagement group of the G20. She is also an Integrity & Compliance Taskforce Group member of Business 20 (B20), the business policy engagement group of the G20.

Adiel Mahmoud MPP 2007: joined FSG right after graduating from the Kennedy School. As a managing director, he leads the firm’s D.C. office, and advises companies and foundations on creating social change. Most recently, he has been designing responses to COVID-19 with pharmaceutical and other companies, as well as beginning to plan for recovery approaches from the pandemic. He and his wife live in Rockville, Maryland, and he has recently been in touch with Jackie O’Neill MPP, Alex Deever Izolt/MPP, Drag Aizenberg MPP, and Shaun Gonzales MPP 2005.

2008

Joel Willard MC/MPA 2008 writes, “Harvard College is abruptly emptied of students around March 14. My organization here, the FDR Foundation, has been supporting low-income students with out-of-pocket expenses the University can’t cover from transportation gaps to internet access, and now summer jobs for students who must support their families. Simultaneously we’re working with scholars and officials around the world to combat COVID-19 related disinfection campaigns. If these activities are of interest or overlap with your own, I would love to hear from you.”

2009

Thomas Eads MC/MPA is now science advisor to the director of regulatory informatics, at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Center for Tobacco Products (CTP). As a pioneer in regulatory informatics, Thomas is leading projects in advanced text analytics (concept detection), text mining-based document retrieval, and knowledge discovery, machine learning-boosted de-biased algorithms, and better customer service generally. He would be delighted to hear from alumni, especially on how they are keeping inclusion on the agenda in their organizations at this time.

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The Network Effect
Theodora Skeadas MPP 2016

IT IS A GOOD THING Theodora Skeadas MPP 2016 is an organizer at heart. From running political campaigns in Massachusetts to working as a consultant for the U.S. government on cybersecurity and geopolitical issues, Skeadas has established herself as someone who gets things done. It is no surprise, then, that Skeadas has significantly advanced the work of not one, but three HKS alumni groups. For her extraordinary contributions to the HKS community, she is the 2020 recipient of the Julius E. Babbitt Memorial Alumni Volunteer Award.

Her first interaction with the HKS alumni network came before she had even graduated, while working on a human trafficking detection project during her summer internship. Through Courtney Walsh MPP 2013, who was working at an anti-human trafficking organization, she became involved with WyD, the Harvard Women in Defense, Diplomacy, and Development Shared Interest Group, a network of HKS alumnae working to achieve sustainable peace. Skeadas became membership chair while still at HKS, started a Boston chapter after graduating, and eventually became president.

She says that WyD helps alumnae learn from each other. “From the alumnae working at an NGO in Nairobi to one working at a think tank in D.C.—we’re really tackling the same issues. I feel very connected globally. If I go anywhere, I can reach out to alumni.”

The network helps alumnae grow their professional experience and skills so they can have more impact in their fields.”

A resident of Cambridge, Massachusetts, Skeadas also became involved with the HKS New England Alumni Association through a connection she had with one of its board members, Christina Marin MPP 2014. She soon was the network’s treasurer and, in June 2019, was unanimously voted president. “It’s been a lot of fun,” she says. “We organize a ton of events, including ones that teach technical skills and ones for content knowledge.”

As co-chair of the HKS Women’s Network (HKSWN), another geographically dispersed network of which she became co-chair in 2019, she has built on her experience as a city ambassador to Casablanca, Morocco, for the Harvard Alumni Association (HAA)—she graduated from the College in 2012. Skeadas has helped HKSWN build out its board and transform to a chapter model, as with the Middle East Alumni Association (HKSWN), another geographically dispersed network of which she became co-chair in 2019.

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A UNIQUELY POWERFUL WASHINGTON WONK. A hero of our retirement system. A pension rock star. One of the world’s 30 top financial players. A legend. An inspiration.

Mark Iwry has received plaudits like these from a variety of publications and people, along with awards for leadership and achievement from organizations that typically don’t agree on much—workers’ rights groups, the payroll industry, the financial services industry, the IRS, the small business community, investment advisers, pension professionals, and others. To his acclaim, HKS is adding its Alumni Public Service Award to honor his work to strengthen the economic security of working families.

Iwry (pronounced “Envy”) has always wanted to channel his idealism into achieving public good “in the tradition of my forefathers, ‘tikkun olam’—repairing the world,” says Iwry, who is a Biblical archaeologist and scholar.

After graduating from HKS and Harvard Law School, Iwry, on Neustadt’s advice, joined the Washington law firm Covington & Burling to gain experience at the intersection of the private and public sectors. After becoming a partner, he was invited by the Treasury Department during the Bush administration to play a lead role in designing, in his words, “the most important policy reform of our generation.”

Then, as a speech, and IRS, at Iwry’s request in 2004, confirmed that 401(k)s can automatically enroll employees at high and increasing contribution levels. As auto-enrollment spread to about one-third of the larger 401(k)s, Iwry—then a co-founder of the Brookings Institution’s Retirement Security Project—was instrumental in drafting and advocating the 2006 Pension Protection Act, which gave auto-enrollment a further boost.

Now used in more than 70 percent of larger 401(k)s, auto-enrollment has extended participation to millions of women, lower-income, African American, and Latinx workers. Auto-enrollment—including auto-contribution-increases and the resulting auto-investment in diversified funds—is widely considered the most transformative 401(k) reform of the last 40 years.

Iwry has always wanted to channel his idealism into achieving public good.

Toward Universal Saving

Iwry has also had a profound influence on the way Americans save for retirement. As 401(k) retirement saving plans have increasingly displaced traditional defined benefit pensions, his vision has been to “restore the pension to the private pension system” by seeking to transplant to the 401(k) the most valuable attributes of traditional pensions: cost certainty, security through employer funding, institutional professional investment, risk pooling, and lifetime income.

At Treasury in 1998, Iwry formulated and directed a strategy to expand private-sector 401(k) participation by defining, approving, and promoting 403(b) “automatic enrollment.” As behavioral economists such as then-HKS Professor Brigitte Madrian later confirmed, automatically enrolling employees in a savings plan unless they choose to opt out harnesses inertia to promote saving. Treasury and IRS rulings approved auto-enrollment with automatic (i.e., default) investment in a balanced fund of diversified stocks and bonds. Per Iwry’s recommendation, President Clinton highlighted the guidance in a speech, and IRS, at Iwry’s request in 2004, confirmed that 403(b)s can automatically enroll employees at high and increasing contribution levels. As auto-enrollment spread to about one-third of the larger 403(b)s, Iwry—then a co-founder of the Brookings Institution’s Retirement Security Project—was instrumental in drafting and advocating the 2006 Pension Protection Act, which gave auto-enrollment a further boost.

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Building on auto-enrollment’s success, Iwry reached out to a senior fellow at the conservative Heritage Foundation to co-author a sweeping solution to the greatest unfinished business of our private pension system: covering the one-third of the workforce lacking access to a workplace plan. Their 2006 “auto-IRA” proposal to automatically enroll some 40 million uncovered workers in private-sector IRAs has been endorsed by experts, praised in the media, and introduced as bipartisan legislation in Congress, but has yet to be enacted.

However, the states are providing proof of concept. Since 2002, Iwry has launched and developed a state-level pilot of the nationwide auto-IRA initiative to expand private-sector retirement coverage. Seven states thus far have adopted and are implementing his auto-IRA legislation, which California’s treasurer described as “the most significant expansion of retirement security since . . . Social Security in 1935.”

Iwry has also authored many other initiatives and reforms: the saver’s tax credit (encouraging 401(k) and IRA saving by some 8 million lower-income households annually), the SIMPLE-IRA plan (covering 3 million workers); a “start-up” tax credit for small businesses adopting retirement plans; the “myIRA” (combining Roth IRAs and U.S. savings bonds), automatic rollovers, direct deposit saving of tax refunds in IRAs and savings bonds, and the “QLAC” (qualified long-term care). Their 2006 “auto-IRA” proposal to automatically enroll some 40 million uncovered workers in private-sector IRAs has been endorsed by experts, praised in the media, and introduced as bipartisan legislation in Congress, but has yet to be enacted.
Malikia Kaur MPP has a new book out titled Faith, Gender, and Activism in the Punjab Conflict: The Wheat Fields Still Whisper (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020). In her law and policy work, Malikia became increasingly fascinated by the layers of stories that begin where legal cases and human rights reports end. This creative nonfiction book explores and engages with the everyday and unfinished histories of the conflict in Indian Punjab through stories of human rights defenders who challenged the violence that paralyzed most others in a position to intervene.

Greg Macias moved last November from New York City to downtown Denver, and enjoying the wilderness, rivers, and lands, and to advocate for healthy air and water for its growing, vibrant, and diverse communities. Greg is living in downtown Denver, and enjoying the recreation, reflection, and peace the beauty of the region provides.

Pietro Rabassi writes, “Dear HKS mates, after having spent our holidays in my home region in northern Italy at the border with Austria and Slovenia, we came back to Berlin (Germany) at the end of Feb. 2020. I was suggested by my doctor to take a COVID-19 test because of some symptoms; it was negative. At the same time, in another kindergarten group than our daughter's a teacher has been found positive. At the same time, in another kindergarten group than our daughter’s a teacher has been found COVID-19 positive. We were quarantined until March 23, and our nanny too. It is a real challenge for me and my wife to work from home with two children under three at home with no child care. Hopefully the situation will improve soon! I look forward to your stories!”

Alison Shapira MC/MPA writes, “This spring at HKS, I had the pleasure of teaching “The Arts of Communication” (DP-RCU3M) through Zoom. My company, Global Public Speaking, is now helping people in transition, and guide their teams through uncertainty, in their virtual meetings, pitches, and presentations. I would love to be a resource to my classmates who need help in this area, starting with these free tools: bit.ly/FreeVirtualResources. Be well and stay safe, everyone!”

Erica Harrison Arnold MPP, in the fall of 2010, was named the executive director of legal compliance for Henry County School District (Georgia), which serves approximately 43,000 students and 6,000 employees. She served in a prior role as director of performance analytics and research in the same school system through The Broad Center Residency Program. Previously, Erica was an associate attorney at Alston & Bird LLP from 2012 to 2012.

Jay Bhattacharya MPA writes, “As a member of the Presidential Leadership Scholars alumni, I was fortunate to be invited to participate in conversation with President Bush and President Clinton at the Presidential Leadership Program 2019 graduation, celebrating the fifth group of scholars working to make a difference.”

Jennifer Hollett MC/MPA is the new executive director of The Walrus in Toronto. The Walrus believes in the idea of a better Canada, and that a healthy society relies on informed citizens. As a registered charity, The Walrus (thewalrus.ca) publishes independent, fact-based journalism and produces ideas-focused events. Prior to this role, Jennifer was the head of news and government at Twitter Canada. You can find her on Twitter @jaybhattacharya.

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Innovation and Relevance in a Digital World

Adamas Belva Syah Devara MPA 2016

ADAMAS BELVA SYAH DEVARA MPA 2016 started Ruangguru.com during his time at Harvard Kennedy School. Since its founding, Ruangguru, which means “teacher’s room” in Indonesian, has grown to become the largest educational technology enterprise in Southeast Asia, operating in Indonesia, Vietnam, and Thailand and employing 4,000 people across the region.

Ruangguru connects 15 million K-12 students with 300,000 teachers, allowing students to obtain high-quality tutoring on web and mobile platforms that make it easy to interact with others. In addition, Ruangguru has expanded to provide professional courses and corporate training to adults.

The affordable subscription cost dovetails with wider adoption of smartphones and internet connections to distribute high-quality education, especially in rural areas. Ruangguru, which has received several rounds of venture funding, comprehensively tracks the learning behaviors and quiz results of its students; it is leveraging this data using artificial intelligence to recommend the most optimal path to complete mastery for every student, taking into account population-level data and probabilistic estimates of each student’s mastery of every topic.

Devara, who has a social media presence with more than 350,000 followers, was selected by the president of Indonesia to serve as a special advisor. In this capacity, he helps ministries become more innovative and relevant in today’s digital world.

Superheroes give wings to children’s imaginations and the confidence to take action. However, unlike other superheroes who come and save the day, Dabung Girl helps children find solutions on their own. The target age group is 6–14 years. The first comic book is out with stories on gender and environment. Saurabh is now working on a child protection theme.

Frank Kuzminski MC/MPA is honored to have been selected by the U.S. Army as a Goodpaster Scholar in the Advanced Strategic Planning and Policy Program (ASP2) to pursue doctoral studies. Beginning this fall, Frank will be a PhD student at the University of Washington, where he will focus his research on space security policy and U.S. collective defense commitments in the space domain.

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Give Back.

Make your gift today. Invest in the future of HKS.

hks.harvard.edu/donate
ON MAY 28, 2020 THE HKS COMMUNITY gathered virtually to celebrate the Harvard Kennedy School’s Class of 2020, their significant achievements, and their dedication to serve in all corners of the globe. We honored this new class of leaders and the many sacrifices they made this year to preserve the well-being of our community.

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala delivered the 2020 HKS graduation address. Okonjo-Iweala, chair of GAVI, the global vaccine alliance; special advisor to the World Health Organization on the COVID-19 response; and former finance minister of Nigeria delivered the graduation address via video, challenging members of the Class of 2020 to “be bold, be courageous, be selfless.”

Graduates successfully established a solid foundation at HKS and are now lifelong members of the community. We hope the experience at HKS is a source of pride and support for all our new alumni—congratulations!

VIEW MORE ONLINE: www.hks.harvard.edu/honoring-class-2020

Thank you Dr. Okonjo-Iweala for your inspiring leadership and change to the HKS. A class that always honors the call to serve. We will go out and lead ourselves in the service of others. #HKSgrad

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala

Virtual celebration of HKSgrad with my cohort at @Harvard_School Allnuity Class of 2020. We moved into the world to make change so proud to be a part of others! #HKSgrad

Greta Mcentire

Congratulations, Harvard @Harvard_School Graduates! All of us at the Baker Center admire your energy and passion, and we look forward to following your progress in your next chapter. #HKSgrad

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Michele Paller MPhD, MPH 2020 Jenx manger, being on the medical frontlines, and seeing the impact that a doctor can have on a single patient. Dr. Paller, who will return to the final two years of her surgical residency after graduating from HKS, also knew the big... Show more...

michelle_paller

Today I fulfilled a dream I’ve had since I was a little girl to graduate from Harvard. Thank you to my amazing family and friends for getting me here. I could not have done it without you. #Harvard

glamgrad

It has been a privilege to be part of the class of 2020 at Harvard Kennedy School with these impressive peers! The challenges ahead are just bigger than expected, but we are ready to face them! Thank you to all the family members, mentors! Your love a gift to the world!

Show more...

michelepaller

Oledeh, kabah... family Harvard grad, cng - hope dreams come true, so happy gr8 stty @Harveyedu. I start with you mean a family is here we were yesterday. (Mngoing dreams facing COVID (especially).)

Oledeh.bah

Today, I graduate from Harvard Kennedy School of Government with my dual Master’s and Master in Public Policy, respectively. This accomplishment would not be possible without the continued support of my family, friends, Harvard community. Show more...

nefis_bah

VIEW MORE ONLINE:
www.hks.harvard.edu/honoring-class-2020
A conversation with Christy Jackowitz, senior associate dean for alumni relations and resource development, to discuss fundraising at the Kennedy School during this challenging time.

**WAYS AND MEANS**

**FUNDRAISING AT HKS IN THE COVID-19 ERA**

When COVID-19 emerged, raising funds presented new challenges. During those initial weeks in the early spring, we made a conscious decision to pause our general fundraising as our supporters were directing more funding to frontline services. Many of them did, and we could not be prouder of their efforts to identify and support society’s greatest needs. However, we also saw the need for improved public policy and leadership during those early months, so we slowly began reaching out to our supporters towards the end of the spring semester.

Year-in and year-out, Kennedy School alumni and friends provide crucial financial support for our mission—last year, for example, gifts from alumni and friends composed 48 percent of the School’s operating revenue. The challenge was significant, especially since this pandemic had such a negative impact on personal finances globally. In addition, there was a sharp drop in executive education enrollment, an ongoing risk to degree program enrollment, and a reduction in gifts as supporters focused on frontline responders.

**HOW HAS COVID-19 AFFECTED FUNDRAISING AT HKS?**

The HKS Fund is our go-to resource to address unpredicted situations, and we are still in very unpredictable times. These funds are designated for the dean’s highest priorities, including financial aid. They offer flexibility and are fully available to have an immediate impact.

**WHERE CAN ALUMNI GIVE NOW TO HAVE THE MOST IMPACT?**

We are committed to helping these students—and it is why unrestricted flexible support is so important. It allows us to be nimble in the face of these unexpected challenges.

**ARE YOU HOPEFUL THAT THERE IS LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL?**

It has been incredible to see so many alumni and friends make the Kennedy School one of their philanthropic priorities during this time. This is a community effort. That’s why we also run smaller campaigns where we ask alumni and friends to support the School with smaller gifts. When we say that they add up, they really do. The accumulation of gifts under $10,000 last year alone equaled full financial aid packages for 17 students this coming term. These are 17 students who will now be attending the Kennedy School because of people who know that their contribution is part of something bigger.

**WHERE ARE YOU FUNDING TO MAKE UP FOR THE REVENUE LOSS?**

It is a common misconception that Harvard can directly access its endowment funds for an emergency. These funds are largely restricted to very specific uses and not accessible for addressing unexpected needs or new opportunities for growth. Last spring, we relied on flexible funding when we had to pivot our activities online in an incredibly short time.

**WAS THE SCHOOL RAISING FUNDS SPECIFICALLY FOR COVID-19-RELATED PURPOSES?**

Yes, in some cases we continue to fund innovative and relevant programs to provide real-world learning opportunities to our students. For example, the faculty were quick to adapt their teaching to include finding solutions to this ongoing crisis. We also pivoted our first-year MPP students’ Spring Exercise this year to focus on the response to the pandemic. Students worked virtually with each other to develop policy recommendations related to public schools being reopened, migrant workers in New Delhi, international travel, and the spread of the virus in developing countries.

As we looked to helping the world beyond our campus, the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative, originally designed to provide an environment where mayors and city officials could learn to best address common challenges, has become a real-time resource. Every week since the beginning of the pandemic this group of hundreds of public leaders from around the world has focused on crisis response—including lessons from former U.S. Presidents Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama, as well as Bill Gates and Nancy Pelosi.

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**MAKING SURE THE KENNEDY SCHOOL has the resources to help our communities and train future public leaders remains a high priority during the COVID-19 crisis. We sat down with Christy Jackowitz, senior associate dean for alumni relations and resource development, to discuss fundraising at the Kennedy School during this challenging time.**

Natalie Montaner

PORTRAIT BY MARTHA STEWART

CHRISTY JACKOWITZ

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—PHOTO BY MARTHA STEWART
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👍👍 cool! will do!