



## Sasakawa USA Emerging Experts on Women, Peace and Security

**Trip dates: 24 – 29 July, 2023**

The [Sasakawa USA Emerging Experts Delegation \(SEED\)](#) engages emerging U.S. policy experts and opinion leaders to enhance their understanding within their area of expertise in the context of Japan and U.S.-Japan relations. Each SEED program is developed around a selected issue and brings together a delegation of experts who work in that field. The program offers pre-trip briefings to introduce Japan and U.S.-Japan relations; a week-long trip to Japan including meetings with Japanese policymakers and experts, and activities to experience Japanese culture and society; and post-trip opportunities for publication, presentation, and networking.

The 2023 SEED program focuses on the issue of Women, Peace and Security (WPS) within a U.S.-Japan context. The program will explore the historical, societal, cultural, and political challenges and opportunities for the development of WPS within the U.S.-Japan alliance. The United States and Japan are closely aligned on a broad range of issues, yet WPS remains an area with potential to develop greater understanding and meaningful collaboration. As a policymaking framework, WPS presents a golden opportunity for the United States and Japan to reinforce their shared commitment to democratic values while simultaneously striving toward greater alignment on their national security strategies—a task of vital importance to maintaining peace and stability in the greater Indo-Pacific region.

Substantial progress has been made in the United States to develop a WPS congressional caucus and to incorporate WPS into our strategic planning. Japan, too, is making strides on integrating WPS into its policymaking. Last October, [U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton spoke at the Sasakawa Peace Foundation in Tokyo](#) to underscore the importance of including women in peacemaking and conflict prevention, mediation, and resolution processes. Since her visit, Japan has established its own parliamentary caucus focused on advancing the country's engagement on WPS. WPS has also been mentioned in key strategic documents like Japan's updated [Free and Open Indo-Pacific \(FOIP\) plan](#), which Prime Minister Kishida introduced during his visit to India in March 2023. With this context in mind, Sasakawa USA will bring an eight-member delegation of American WPS experts from various backgrounds to meet with Japanese politicians, government officials, academics, civil society leaders, and journalists to exchange insights on how the United States and Japan can work together to mutually advance the WPS agenda.

### **PROGRAM CONTACT**

Ms. Isabelle Burke, Associate Program Officer [iburke@spfusa.org](mailto:iburke@spfusa.org)

### **About Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA**

Sasakawa USA is a non-partisan 501(c)(3) organization located in Washington, DC dedicated to deepening the understanding of and strengthening the relationship between the United States and Japan for the benefit of a free and open international community. Its activities primarily focus on security and diplomacy, through exchanges, dialogue, analysis, publications, and networking.

## Delegation Members

*Alphabetical by last name*



### **CDR Andre Agraviador**

*Senior Military Advisor, The Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues, Department of State*

Andre Agraviador is a U.S. Navy Foreign Area Officer seconded to the U.S. State Department since January 2022. He currently serves as the principal Senior Military Advisor to the Ambassador-at-Large at the Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues (S/GWI) and is a Women, Peace and Security Advisor where he works to incorporate a gendered perspective into national and international security.



### **Ms. Erin Cooper**

*Acting Director for International Humanitarian Policy, Department of Defense*

Erin Cooper is a Women, Peace and Security Project Specialist with Our Secure Future who concurrently serves as a Women, Peace and Security Policy Analyst for the U.S. Department of Defense within the Office in the International Humanitarian Policy (IHP) Directorate in the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Stability and Humanitarian Affairs (SHA).

She graduated from the University of Denver for a Master's in International Studies with specializations in Security and Human Rights focusing on human trafficking, human security and the relationship between security policy and international development. At the University of Denver she served as the Deputy Director for the 2019-2020 academic year for the Human Trafficking Center. She graduated Magna Cum Laude from the University of Pittsburgh for her Bachelor's degree where she double majored in History and Political Science with a concentration in American Legal History. She has previously interned for the U.S. Mission to Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) with the Department of State, One Earth Future with Our Secure Future, and the International Rescue Committee. Prior to the University of Denver, she served as an Education Volunteer with the Peace Corps in rural Thailand, worked as an operations manager in a retail store, and is a certified yoga instructor.



**Ms. Sahana Dharmapuri**

*Director, Our Secure Future*

Sahana Dharmapuri is the Director of the Our Secure Future program at the One Earth Future Foundation. From 2006-2016 she was an independent gender advisor on gender, peace, and security issues to USAID, NATO, The Swedish Armed Forces, the United States Institute for Peace, International Peace Institute, and other international development organizations. Most recently, Ms. Dharmapuri was a writer-residence at the Carey Institute for Global Good (Winter 2016) where she completed her first book, *Women, Peace & Security: 10 Things You Should Know*. She was appointed a Fellow at the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government (2011-2013) and she was an Investing in Women in Development Fellow at the United States Agency for International Development (2003-2005). She has published widely on women, peace and security issues including by CNN, Christian Science Monitor, The Fletcher Security Review, Hedaya and The Center for Global Counter-Terrorism, Women's E-News, Human Rights Quarterly, The Global Responsibility to Protect Journal, The Global Observatory, The Alliance for Peacebuilding Online Journal, the Louisiana Literature Review, The US Naval War College's Women, Peace and Security monograph series, and Parameters: The Senior Professional Journal of the US Army.



**Dr. Jennifer Hawkins**

*Senior WPS Advisor, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)*

Jennifer Hawkins is a global strategist and leading public policy expert on marginalized persons and vulnerable populations around the world. She is an academically and professionally trained social scientist who has partnered with governments, multilateral organizations, social service, health agencies, non-profit organizations, and notable human rights and civil society leaders. Currently, she leads the U.S. Agency's for International Development implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security, which reaffirms women and girls' equal participation and protection in global peace and security issues.

Jennifer is a frequently called upon keynote speaker, expert, and adjunct professor on peacebuilding, conflict, women, peace, and security, gender equality, and vulnerable populations throughout her global travel. Jennifer holds a Bachelors in Science from Syracuse University, an Masters in Social Work, with a concentration in children and policy, from Howard University, and a Doctorate in Social Work from the University of Southern California, where her dissertation focused on harnessing technology for social good.



**Ms. Monica Herrera**

*WPS Curriculum Developer, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM)*

Monica Herrera is the Women, Peace & Security (WPS) Curriculum Developer at U.S. Indo-Pacific Command where she leads efforts to mainstream gender perspectives into training and education and supports command-wide WPS implementation. She is a certified Gender Advisor (GENAD) and subject matter expert on Gender in Military Operations. She is also a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Air Force Reserves, where she serves as an information operations officer.

Monica previously served 12 years on active duty, most recently as a Foreign Area Officer at Pacific Air Forces. At this assignment, she also served for three years as the WPS Program Director for the command. Monica was also a Mansfield Fellow in Japan from 2015-2016 where she worked at placements within the Government of Japan, including at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Education, and the National Institute for Defense Studies. During this time, she contributed to Japan's first National Action Plan on WPS and authored policy research focused on bilateral defense cooperation on WPS.

Monica started her career as a Behavioral Scientist. She has held assignments teaching in the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership at the United States Air Force Academy and conducting research on human performance optimization at the Air Force Research Laboratory. Monica is also a Senior Fellow at the Mansfield Foundation. She holds an M.A. in Sociology from Rutgers University and a B.S. in Behavioral Science with Japanese minor from the United States Air Force Academy.



**Ms. Kayla McGill**

*WPS Policy Advisor, The Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues, Department of State*

Kayla McGill is a Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Policy Advisor in the Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues (S/GWI) at the U.S. Department of State where she works to incorporate a gendered perspective into international and national security issues with a focus on political participation, countering violent extremism, and creating tangible change through partnerships. She is currently the lead coordinator for the 2023 U.S. Co-Chairship of the WPS-Focal Points Network and WPS Centers of Excellence.

Prior to working at S/GWI, she was the Program Director for Women In International Security (WIIS) where she managed programming and staff, organized conferences and events, conducted research on gender and international security issues, and worked closely with the WIIS President, Board, and members. Kayla also previously worked at the WomanStats Project as a Coder and Researcher where she analyzed qualitative and quantitative data, conducted and presented research at conference and events, and represented the Project at U.S. government consultations and multilateral fora such as the United Nations. Kayla is a trained analytical researcher with a particular interest and expertise in the nexus between societal and cultural norms and conflict. She speaks French, has lived in China, Germany, the UK, and France, and has traveled abroad extensively. She received her Masters of International Affairs from the Bush School of Government and Public Service where she focused on Diplomacy, Intelligence, and WPS.



**Dr. Jessica Smith**

*Research and Policy Director, Georgetown Institute of Women, Peace & Security*

Jessica Smith is the Director of Research at the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security (GIWPS). The Institute was founded in 2013 by Secretary Hillary Clinton and Ambassador Melanne Verveer to strengthen the evidence-based case for why women matter in issues of peace and security. Today, GIWPS is a leading light on innovative approaches to advancing the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda, providing essential analysis, expertise, and leadership to support more impactful policy and practice.

As the Director of Research, Dr. Smith works closely with Ambassador Verveer to develop and execute cutting-edge research projects that are responsive to contemporary policy challenges. The Institute's research aims to document and amplify the difference women make when they are meaningfully included in decision-making roles across peace and security efforts, including how women's leadership from the grassroots to the political level leads to more sustainable, prosperous futures for all.

Dr. Smith completed her Ph.D. at the Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution at George Mason University. She has over a decade of experience working on gender-related issues with women in diverse contexts, including Bosnia-Herzegovina, Indonesia, Jordan, and the United States. Her doctoral research focused on women's experiences of vulnerability and agency in conflict-affected contexts, specifically how the principles of the WPS Agenda translate and become meaningful to local actors.

In addition to serving as the Director of Research, Dr. Smith is an Associate Professor at Georgetown University and also teaches graduate courses at George Washington University.

Outside of academia, she has worked in various capacities for the International Rescue Committee, Catholic Charities, the United Nations, USAID, and the US Institute of Peace.



**Dr. Carolyn Washington (Invited)**

*Women, Peace & Security Manager, Department of Homeland Security*

Carolyn Washington is a retired Army Colonel who spent half of her 30-year active-duty career as a Military Police Officer and the other half as a European Foreign Area Officer. Her key assignments included Brigade Operations Officer, 8th Military Police Brigade-Korea; Battalion Command, Law Enforcement Command, Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri; Chief of the Office of Defense Cooperation, Slovak Republic Ministry of Defense; Chief of Training and Exercises, NATO 3d Turkish Corps, Istanbul, Turkey; Attachè assignments at the U.S. Embassies in Belgrade, Serbia and Oslo, Norway; and Chief, Southern Division, Africa Command, Stuttgart, Germany.

Dr. Washington has extensive experience working on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. As the former chair of the Women, Peace and Security Working Group at Africa Command, she was responsible for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 within security cooperation activities, military exercises and operations. At the U.S. Army War College, she developed and taught the first-ever Women, Peace and Security course. She was also a Visiting Scholar at the Centre for Women, Peace and Security, London School of Economics.

Dr. Washington holds a PhD in Global Gender Studies from SUNY Buffalo. She also received a Master of Strategic Studies from the Army War College, an MA in National Security Affairs from the Naval Post Graduate School, and a Certificate in Strategic Leadership from the American Military University. She is currently the Women, Peace and Security Manager at the Department of Homeland Security.

## Accompanying Staff



### **Ms. Shanti Shoji**

*Director of Programs, Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA*

[sshoji@spfusa.org](mailto:sshoji@spfusa.org)

Shanti Shoji serves as the director of programs at Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA (Sasakawa USA), overseeing the development and management of grants and programs.

Shanti has spent her entire career in U.S.-Japan relations, which includes six years in Japan and 16 years in Washington, DC, covering issues ranging from grassroots diplomacy to foreign policy. Most recently in her work at Sasakawa USA, she launched the Sasakawa USA Women's Advancement Network (SWAN) as well as activities that focus on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) within the framework of the U.S.-Japan alliance. Prior to joining Sasakawa USA Shanti taught English in Japan on the JET Program and co-founded the educational non-profit Kizuna Across Cultures. She currently serves as a board member for Kizuna Across Cultures and American Friends of The International House of Japan. Ms. Shoji earned her master's degree in international communication from American University's School of International Service and received bachelor's degrees in Japanese language and international studies from the University of Oregon.



### **Isabelle Burke**

*Associate Program Officer, Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA*

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Isabelle Burke joined Sasakawa USA in June 2021 and serves as an Associate Program Officer supporting the In-Depth Research Trip, the Policy Briefing Series, USJETAA grant programming, and the Sasakawa USA Women's Advancement Network.