2025

Aspen Global Leadership Network Highlights Report

✦ **Igniting Leadership for a World in Transition**



ASPEN GLOBAL LEADERSHIP NETWORK

aspen institute

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Dearest Friends, Partners, and Supporters,

Elmer Johnson, former President of the Aspen Institute, once said: "We focus on leaders not because they are any more important than other human beings, they are not, but because the human condition depends so profoundly on how well leaders perform their roles and responsibilities."

I return to these words often. They provide a compass for our work as the Aspen Global Leadership Network. Ensuring that those entrusted with leadership in this extraordinary moment are ready for it — grounded in values, sharpened by inquiry, held in community, and working in service of a better world.

This is a moment that asks a great deal of leaders. It asks for imagination in the face of uncertainty, courage in the face of complexity, and the willingness to keep believing that what we do matters. That the world is not pre-ordained. That it is, and always has been, shaped by people who refused to stop dreaming and acting.

This conviction is at the heart of everything the Aspen Institute was built to do. In 1949, as the world grappled with unprecedented challenges, a group of visionaries gathered here to ask how humanity might find its way forward. They understood then what resonates even more powerfully today: that in moments of uncertainty, we need spaces for deep reflection, human connection, and bold action. The AGLN carries that founding belief into the present, offering leaders a rare kind of space to step back from daily demands and reconnect with what brought them to their work in the first place. To sharpen their thinking alongside people who take the long view seriously. To remember that they are not alone in this.

In 2025, we saw what becomes possible when that space is tended well. Fellows showing up to one another across difference and distance. New communities forming, in technology, in the arts, among senior leaders at new inflection points in their lives, each finding in Fellowship a renewed sense of purpose and possibility.
In the pages that follow, you'll find more on how we are strengthening and growing this community for this moment, as well as more on the people and experiences at the heart of that work.

These are days that call for leadership marked by imagination, humility, and audacity. We remain committed to creating the conditions for that leadership to flourish and we are grateful, deeply, for your partnership in that work.

In Fellowship,



Dar Vanderbeck

Vice President, Aspen Global Leadership Network, Aspen Institute

02

2025 in Focus

Fellows in **62 Countries**







264

New Fellows in the community

52

Gatherings in **15 Countries**

4,121

Total Fellows as of December 2025

Growing and Strengthening the Community

AGLN has $9M in committed funding to launch and revitalize programs including

1. **Eisner Arts & Culture Fellowship**
2. **Technology Leadership Initiative**
3. **Middle East Leadership Initiative (after seven years of dormancy)**
4. **Leadership In Conflict Immersive Experiences**
5. **Act III: Leadership & Legacy Laureate Program**

Direct Support to Fellows

29 Fellows received funding to support their work, given in partnership with the McNulty Foundation.

$450K $450K McNulty Prize awards to three Aspen Fellows, including two AGLN Fellows Layla Zaidane and Krithi Karanth. Each awardee received $150,000 to invest in their innovative solutions to address healing as part of economic development, bridge political divides, and restore biodiversity

$120K As part of the McNulty Catalyst Fund, $120K was awarded to six recipients (4 AGLN Fellows) working in the United States, South Africa, the Philippines, and Guatemala

$54K $54,000 in scholarship funds were awarded to 13 Fellows to attend the 2025 Resnick Aspen Action Forum

$15K 15 Fellows were awarded over $15K in Scholarship Funds to attend the Leadership in Conflict Immersive Experience in Kigali, Rwanda

AGLN Internal Fellowships (Managed by the Aspen Institute)

est. 2013
China Fellowship
161 Fellows

est. 2019
Civil Society Fellowship
77 Fellows

est. 2016
Finance Leaders Fellowship
175 Fellows

est. 2015
Health Innovators Fellowship
121 Fellows

est. 1997
Henry Crown Fellowship
564 Fellows

est. 2025
Michael D. Eisner Arts & Culture Fellowship
Inaugural Class to be launched in 2026

est. 2009
Middle East Leadership Initiative
116 Fellows

est. 2025
Technology Leadership Initiative
Inaugural Class to be launched in 2026

AGLN External Fellowships

est. 2002
Africa Leadership Initiative - East Africa
70 Fellows

est. 2003
Africa Leadership Initiative - South Africa
298 Fellows

est. 2006
Africa Leadership Initiative - West Africa
163 Fellows

est. 2005
Central America Leadership Initiative
405 Fellows

est. 2006
KamalnayanBajaj Fellowship
190 Fellows

est. 2004
Liberty Fellowship
351 Fellows

est. 2007
Pahara Fellowship
1226

Impact Stories: Fellows in Action

Recognizing Bold Leadership: 2025 John P. McNulty Prize

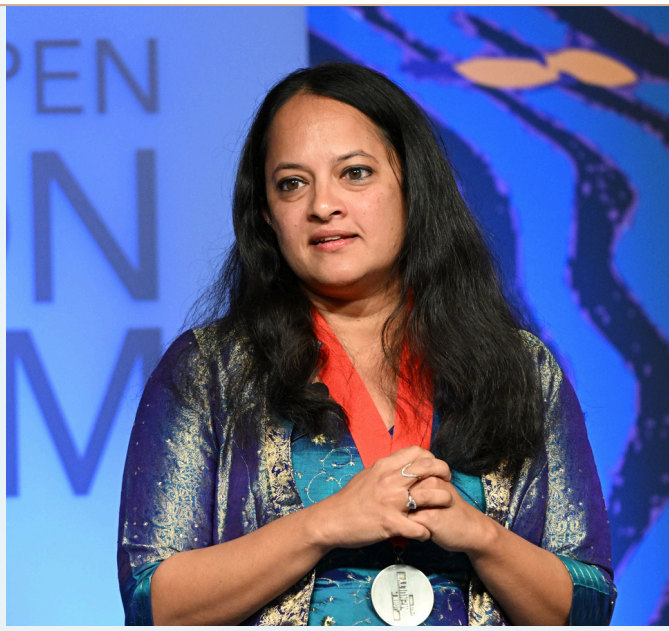
Each year, the McNulty Prize — awarded by the McNulty Foundation and the Aspen Institute — recognizes leaders within the Aspen Global Leadership Network who have moved from inspiration to impact, building organizations that deliver measurable, lasting results.

2025 winners included **Krithi Karanth** (Kamalnayan Bajaj Fellowship) and **Layla Zaidane** (Civil Society Fellowship), who represent two very different challenges, human-wildlife conflict and political polarization, but share a common thread: both built scalable systems that prove the problems we accept as inevitable are, in fact, solvable.

WHERE CONFLICT MEETS COEXISTENCE

A New Future for People and Wildlife

Krithi Karanth
Centre for Wildlife Studies
Kamalnayan Bajaj Fellowship



India is home to 1.4 billion people living alongside the world's highest density of large mammals—an exception on a planet where these animals have vanished from most landscapes. But that coexistence comes at a steep cost for both sides. When elephants trample a farmer's field, six months of income disappears overnight for families earning as little as $1,000 a year. The animals, in turn, face retaliatory harm from communities struggling to protect their livelihoods.

As CEO of the Centre for Wildlife Studies, **Krithi Karanth** built a response that addresses both the immediate crisis and the long-term cultural shift required for lasting coexistence. Her team created a toll-free emergency hotline for wildlife encounters and a streamlined compensation claims system, processing nearly 29,000 claims to date. They partner with farmers to shift toward crops that don't attract elephants and train frontline staff to respond to conflict. In their efforts to inspire future generations to celebrate wildlife rather than fear it, they've reached 1,200 schools and 55,000 children. In less than seven years, their programs have expanded from two parks to over 100, serving 7,500 villages and reaching several million people.

"I don't want to live on a planet without tigers and elephants and bears and wolves and leopards. Once gone, you cannot bring them back."

BUILDING A NONPARTISAN NETWORK

Turning Polarization into Progress Through Young Lawmakers

Layla Zaidane
Future Caucus
Civil Society Fellowship & Ascend Fellowship

American politics is gridlocked. **Layla Zaidane** noticed something others missed: while Washington remained paralyzed by partisanship, young lawmakers were already inclined to work across party lines and constituents simply wanted results.

Through Future Caucus, Layla has built the largest nonpartisan network of young lawmakers in the United States, connecting over 1,900 millennial and Gen Z elected officials across 36 state legislatures and Congress. The model is straightforward: state chapters co-chaired by a young Democrat and a young Republican bring together colleagues, build relationships, and identify problems to solve collaboratively. The results are striking. In 2024, 100% of Future Caucus candidates won reelection. In North Dakota, millennials and Gen Z made up 25% of the legislature but drove 40% of the bipartisan legislation signed into law.

Now expanding through a Policy Innovation Lab and a Young Lawmaker Story Bank, Future Caucus is rebuilding faith that democracy can still deliver.

"It takes more than talk," Layla says. "It takes building the infrastructure to forge new coalitions for the collective good."



BUILDING OPPORTUNITY THROUGH MENTAL HEALTH

Turning Trauma into Opportunity for Conflict-Affected Youth

Iftin Global
Aspen Global Innovators Group Fellow

Born in Mogadishu, **Mohamed Ali Diini** was forced to leave his homeland at age nine because of a civil war. As an adult, he returned to help young Somalis build businesses. But he quickly learned that before young people could succeed, they needed to heal. Iftin's research found that 76% of youth in Somalia carry severe trauma and anxiety, making it nearly impossible to focus, learn, or hold a job. Unhealed trauma at that scale doesn't just affect individuals. It cripples entire economies and tears at social cohesion.

In response, Mohamed and his team at Iftin Global built Somalia's first professional mental health workforce and linked healing directly to economic opportunity—a scalable model designed to create a culture of peace and innovation in post-conflict countries.

To date, Iftin has reached 300,000 individuals through its programs. Participants have seen a 98% improvement in emotional regulation, and 90% are operating viable businesses. With a proven, scalable model, Mohamed is now looking beyond Somalia to conflict-affected communities worldwide.

"My vision is to take our model that centers healing in economic development to the 2 billion other people who are living in conflict zones."



Photo from iftin.org

The 2025 McNulty Prize Catalyst Fund awarded $120,000 in support to six early-stage ventures, four of them led by AGLN Fellows. These leaders are driving outsized social change in Central America, South Africa, and the United States.

Mónica Berger González

Salud Verde | Central America Leadership Initiative

Aiming to solve the lack of Universal Health Coverage for underserved communities in Central America, Monica Berger Gonzalez (Central America Leadership Initiative) and Salud Verde are scaling up traditional herbal medicine. This innovative approach not only seeks to bridge the healthcare gap but also strategically creates vital incentives for the protection of the rich ecosystems where these medicinal plants naturally flourish, generating income opportunities for rural indigenous peoples.



George McGraw

Vessel Collective | Civil Society Fellowship

Access to water and sanitation is a fundamental human right. Yet, more than 2 million people in the U.S. still lack running water or basic plumbing. George McGraw (Civil Society Fellow) and his team at Vessel Collective are bringing together trailblazers from across sectors to drive action and advocate for policy change. Vessel Collective has built a coalition of 15 WASH organizations, spearheading advocacy and ground efforts to boost resource access and unite entities to benefit impacted communities.



Mpadi Makgalo

HEAL SA | Africa Leadership Initiative - South Africa

Youth mental health has been a critical crisis in South Africa for many years before the pandemic. Drawing from her own mental health journey, Mpadi Makgalo (Africa Leadership Initiative - South Africa) established HEAL South Africa with a clear mission: to eliminate the pervasive mental health disparities impacting young people across the nation. Under her leadership, HEAL SA has profoundly impacted young people, education, and communities, offering free mental health services and professional development training.



The Catalyst Fund builds on more than 15 years of impact with the John P. McNulty Prize, which is awarded in partnership with the Aspen Institute and has now recognized over 60 visionary leaders for their courage and lasting impact.



Renata Soto

Mosaic Changemakers | Pahara Fellowship

Renata Soto (Pahara Fellow) founded Mosaic Changemakers to cultivate a community for BIPOC leaders in the US South. Mosaic is building a solidarity network of social change leaders in the region, providing them with the leadership development, tools, and the community they need to build and sustain their efforts.



Renzo Guinto

Planetary Health Philippines | Aspen Global Innovators Fellow

Finding solutions to the urgent health threats of climate change, Renzo Guinto leads Planetary Health Philippines—a community of advocates, scholars, and practitioners working at the intersection of public health and environmental change. Through education, research, policy engagement, and community advocacy, Renzo and his team are addressing the human health impacts of a warming planet.



Dr. Jessica Saniguq Ullrich

IREACH | Ascend Fellow

A Nome Eskimo Community Tribal member, Dr. Jessica Saniguq Ullrich draws on the power of Indigenous connectedness to overcome colonial trauma. Through her research team at Washington State University's IREACH, she collaborates with NEC, a federally recognized Tribe in Alaska, to promote multigenerational healing and wellbeing for Indigenous children and families.

THE NETWORK EFFECT

How a film kicked off by Aspen Global Leadership Network Fellows reduced homicides in Watts, CA, one of America's most violent communities.

Nothing to See Here: Watts, created by AGLN Fellows in partnership with community leaders

What began with 20 iPhones distributed to residents of Watts became something unprecedented: a community-driven documentary that catalyzed real change. By placing cameras directly in the hands of students, former gang members, police officers, and activists, the project created authentic dialogue that turned longtime rivals into collaborators, contributing to a historic peace pledge resulting in zero gang-related homicides and a 90% reduction in homicides over the following 12 months.

That is the story of Nothing to See Here: Watts. The collaborators behind the project are a group of Aspen Global Leadership Network Fellows working in deep partnership with community leaders.

The story began when Henry Crown Fellow Michael Soenen volunteered for Finance Leaders Fellow Sherine Ebadi's organization, The Healthy Room Project, which paints bedrooms for kids in Watts who don't have beds, desks, or typical household items. On a police ride-along, he witnessed three people shot—one fatally. None of it made the news. On that same trip, he asked a gang member why he'd joined. The answer shattered his assumptions: "My mother put me in the gang when I was eight because they offered free daycare while she was working." Realizing he understood neither the depth of the violence nor its roots, Michael did something unconventional: he bought iPhones and handed them to gang members, police officers, priests, students, and mothers with one instruction: "Film your life." What came back was 200 hours of raw footage—but he knew he was the wrong person to shape its narrative.

What happened next reveals the invisible architecture that makes extraordinary change possible—the network of trust, shared language, and leadership principles cultivated through the Aspen Institute. In 2015, Sherine attended an Executive Leadership Seminar where she met Oscar-winning producer Todd Lieberman. Years later, when Michael shared his idea with Sherine, she called Todd, who was immediately on board. Shortly thereafter, Henry Crown Fellow Suzanne Malveaux joined the project, and the team began its work.

With the team assembled, they faced a fundamental question: How do you create authentic dialogue among people who've been enemies for decades? The answer? The Aspen seminar methodology. They convened the impossible: Bloods, Crips, police officers, mothers whose children were murdered by gangs, women beaten by gang violence, students who walked past brutality to school. Their task: review each other's footage and create a film together. One rule: everyone had to agree on the final cut.

> **"Rather than read Plato, they read each other's lives through film. Rather than do Antigone, they made a rough cut. And rather than do it for the moderators, they did it for their community. And the outcome is just absolutely fantastic."**
>
> **Michael Soenen**
> Concept Creator & Filmmaker

The leadership lessons were profound: Start without knowing the end. Trust builds through vulnerability. As Co-Founder of the Finance Leaders Fellowship and Aspen Institute Trustee Christopher Varelas, a Co-Producer on the film, noted, they embodied Bryan Stevenson's 2016 challenge to the AGLN community: get proximate, change narratives, stay hopeful, do uncomfortable things. After three years of production, they showed the film to gang leaders—the first such gathering in more than 30 years. "It served as a mirror," Michael shared. "They wanted to do better."As screenings with the gangs continued, a new set of street rules emerged—no violence against women or children, no retaliation between gangs—agreed to by gang leadership: a commitment to change the culture. The result: The community, which had experienced 100 homicides during the three years of filming, saw a 90 percent reduction in homicides over the following 12 months, with zero gang-related homicides.

The project succeeded with no budget, permission, platform, or mandate. Just curiosity, courage, the Aspen seminar methodology creating space for authentic dialogue, & a community committed to creating a better future for themselves.

The model is already traveling. Stacey Hadash—another Henry Crown Fellow whose support has been instrumental to this project—has taken the core concept and applied it to one of America's most intractable challenges: recidivism. 10+ iPhones are already in the hands of recently incarcerated individuals who are documenting their reintegration into society as it unfolds. A vivid example of how the Aspen Global Leadership Network compounds—Fellows building on the work of other Fellows.

"This project is the work of the Aspen community," Soenen notes. "A panel at the Aspen Ideas Festival, a screening at the Aspen Action Forum, and the active support of more than 100 Fellows across the country—it is the Aspen Global Leadership Network at its best."

90% Reduction

The community reported zero gang-related homicides and a 90% reduction in homicides over the 12 months following the film's community-wide screenings.





75 Years of Leadership for a Changing World

In 1949, as the world grappled with unprecedented challenges, a group of visionaries gathered in Aspen, Colorado, with a deceptively simple conviction: that in moments of profound uncertainty, society needs spaces for deep reflection, human connection, and bold action. What began as an intimate gathering has grown into one of the most influential leadership institutions in the world and 75 years later, that founding conviction has only grown more urgent.

The Aspen Institute now spans programs, policy initiatives, and networks that reach across continents and sectors. The challenges are more complex, the pace of change faster, the stakes higher. But the Institute's founding insight remains powerful: values-based leadership is the most essential force for lasting, positive change.

The AGLN: Rooted in Aspen's Legacy, Built for This Moment

The Aspen Global Leadership Network is a direct expression of that legacy. Rooted in the same seminar tradition that ignited the Institute 75 years ago, the AGLN cultivates leaders who move beyond personal success to drive systemic impact.

- 4,000 Fellows across 62+ countries
- One of the largest and most diverse communities of values-driven leaders globally
- 16+ Fellowship programs igniting high-integrity leadership across sectors and geographies

Why Values-Based Leadership Has Never Mattered More

Today, we stand at a similar inflection point in human history, where technological advancement outpaces our ethical frameworks and global challenges demand unprecedented cooperation and innovation. As Artificial Intelligence reshapes human capability, climate change requires global action, democratic values face renewed challenges, economic inequality grows, and polarization drives us apart, the need for humanistic leadership has never been more vital.







Program Highlights

2025 Resnick Aspen Action Forum

Inspiration, Community, Action | The Largest Annual Gathering of AGLN Fellows

In July 2025, Fellows across the AGLN community gathered for our largest Action Forum yet, bringing together over 500 leaders and nearly 100 young people from more than 30 countries to reflect on what it means to lead with purpose in uncertain times.

The week overflowed with moments of connection and inspiration. **Ambassador Martin Kimani** (Africa Leadership Initiative - East Africa), (Ret) **U.S. Lieutenant General Eric Wesley**, and **Dr. Bernice A. King** shared moving insights on courage and finding one's moral north under pressure. Fellows engaged in candid conversations on ideological humility and intellectual flexibility, while the premiere of the documentary Nothing To See Here: Watts highlighted how storytelling can ignite transformation.

From Impact Sessions on healthcare, conflict, finance, AI, human rights, and more, to seminar sessions the 2025 Action Forum carried a spirit of community and collaboration that will live far beyond the Aspen Meadows Campus.













Action Forum, Continued
Impact Sessions and Action Roundtables

The AGLN expanded how Fellows and community members engage at the Resnick Aspen Action Forum, designing new offerings to meet leaders at every point in their journey and spark collaborative action beyond the Action Forum itself.

- **50 Lead Voices across 15 Fellowship Programs**: Fellows bringing their expertise and lived experience to the table to stress test new ideas and solve problems
- **13 Action Roundtables**: Fellow-led sessions surfacing pressing questions and inspiring ongoing, collaborative action
- **10 Impact Drop-In Sessions:** A new format for real-time conversation around Fellows' most proximate issues

Roundtable Highlights Included:

Capital for Care: Shifting Investment to Drive Community Health

Led by **Ruth Katz** (Aspen Health Medicine and Society Program), **Bahiya Robinson** (Finance Leaders Fellowship), **Kathryn Finney** (Finance Leaders Fellowship) & **David Rosenthal** (Health Innovators Fellowship)

This roundtable challenged participants to rethink how we finance community-rooted health solutions, exploring new models to direct capital toward the care infrastructure that communities need most.

Sacred Questions, Secular Spaces: Spirituality in Leadership

Led by **Elaine Pagels** (Aspen Institute Trustee), **Chris Varelas** (Aspen Institute Moderator, Trustee, and Co-Founder, Finance Leadership Fellowship, **Yonah Schiller** (AGLN Partner & Founder, Common Era) & **Richard Phillips** (Aspen Institute Moderator)

This session explored a provocative question: what if your most powerful leadership resource isn't strategy, but spirit? Participants examined the role of spirituality, meaning, and inner life in shaping bold, values-driven leadership.

The 2025 Action Forum reminded us of the power that emerges when values-driven leaders come together to tackle our world's most pressing challenges. To every Fellow, speaker, and partner who made this gathering possible—and to the Resnick family, whose vision continues to inspire transformative leadership—we extend our deepest gratitude.

Leadership In Conflict Immersive Experience in Kigali, Rwanda
What Rwanda Taught Us About Moral Courage

In November 2025, Aspen Fellows from 14 countries, China, Colombia, El Salvador, Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Palestine, Rwanda, South Africa, Somalia, Uganda, the UAE, and the US, gathered in Kigali, Rwanda, to explore what courageous leadership looks like in times of conflict. Many participants carried a lived experience of holding conflict and hope in tension, bringing profound depth and urgency to the conversations that unfolded.

The immersive journey was developed in partnership with the McNulty Foundation and curated by McNulty Laureate **Hope Azeda** (Africa Leadership Initiative–East Africa), along with **Heather Sonn** (Africa Leadership Initiative–South Africa Fellow), **Mariam Luyombo** (Africa Leadership Initiative–East Africa Fellow and Board Chair), and AGLN Scholar-In-Residence **Austin Choi-Fitzpatrick**. Using Rwanda's history as a living "seminar text," the event examined the role of hate, leadership failure, and international inaction that contributed to the 1994 genocide alongside the story of post-conflict healing when the nation collectively chose bridge-building over division.

100%

100% of participants stated that this experience has inspired them to take action in their work and/or leadership

90%

90% of participants felt more equipped to lead in the face of conflicting, polarizing, or uncertain times







"The Rwanda experience clarified something in me: a hunger for true global citizenship, deeper connection, deeper conversations. To be a global citizen is to return—again and again—to dialogue as a form of world-building and peace-building."

-Jennifer Jin Ma (China Fellowship)

Act III: Leadership and Legacy Laureates

Beyond the Summit: Leadership, Impact, and What Comes Next

As AGLN Fellows move deeper into their lives and careers, those who have already made an outsized impact in the world, transforming markets and industries, achieving technological and scientific breakthroughs, and shaping policy and public discourse, often find themselves at another inflection point. They are asking new questions about how to channel their purpose, experience, and resources toward enduring impact at scale.

To meet Fellows in this unique moment in their journey, the AGLN, in partnership with the Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth, launched Act III: Leadership and Legacy Laureates: a two-seminar cohort experience for Fellows ready to reimagine their impact, leadership, and legacy. Part of the Global Inclusive Growth Partnership, a collaborative platform enabling private sector leaders to build impact-focused partnerships, in 2025, Act III brought together 14 distinguished leaders whose work spans continents and sectors, shaping industries, informing policy, and empowering millions worldwide.

The program enabled Laureates to revisit and recommit to their values and stretch themselves in daring and courageous ways, using their talent and resources to forge pathways to address the most pressing and systemic issues of our time.

Mehrdad Baghai
Co-founder and Co-CEO, Future Secure AI | Henry Crown Fellowship Program

Beth Brooke
Former Global Vice Chair, Public Policy, EY | Henry Crown Fellowship Program

Sylvia Mathews Burwell
Distinguished Fellow in Residence, Sine Institute; Former President, American University | Henry Crown Fellowship Program

Sylvia Gereda
CEO, Tecnología y Comunicaciones Masivas S.A. | Central America Leadership Initiative

Martin Kimani
President & CEO, The Africa Center; Former UN Permanent Representative, Kenya | Africa Leadership Initiative – East Africa

Vivek Murthy
19th and 21st Surgeon General of the United States

Maria Ressa
Co-founder & CEO, Rappler; Nobel Peace Prize-winning journalist, Professor, Columbia University's School of International & Public Affairs

Isabel Saint Malo de Alvarado
Former Vice President and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Panama | Central America Leadership Initiative

Shamina Singh
Founder & President, Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth & Executive Vice President, Sustainability at Mastercard | Henry Crown Fellowship Program

Alan Storey
Methodist Minister and Social Justice Leader | Africa Leadership Initiative – South Africa

Sally Susman
EVP, Chief Corporate Affairs Officer, Pfizer

Dylan Taylor
Chairman & CEO, Voyager Technologies | Henry Crown Fellowship Program

Tim Westergren
Founder & CEO, HelloCreator; Founder, Pandora | Henry Crown Fellowship Program

Belinda Wong
Former Chairman & CEO, Starbucks Coffee China | China Fellowship Program

"This Act III journey brought me 'home' to my roots, values, and quiet truth—my mask easing open, my tempo finally my own, my soul and spirit liberated, honoring both the pain and the happiness—as I begin, wholeheartedly, the 'small work in the great work,' held by our shared hopes for humanity and guided only by what I truly love."
- Belinda Wong (Act III Laureate & China Fellow)

New Entry Points to Fellowship:
Salon Dialogues

The AGLN expanded opportunities to be in fellowship through salon-style conversations. These intimate convenings brought Fellows and other leaders together around pressing questions, using the Aspen Institute's tradition of dialogue to spark new thinking, unlikely partnerships, and shared purpose.

Art as a Guide Through Uncertainty
In Partnership with Aspen Institute's Socrates Program

In partnership with the Socrates Program, the AGLN brought together Fellows, Socrates alumni, and friends on a Los Angeles rooftop to break bread and confront one of the most profound questions of our technological age: as artificial intelligence makes it increasingly possible to digitally preserve, or even replicate, the self after death, just because we can, should we?

Pairing thought-provoking texts with guided dialogue in the Aspen Institute seminar tradition, participants explored the tension between honoring the dead and resurrecting them, between preserving memory and distorting identity. From ancient myths of eternal life to today's promises of uploading consciousness, the conversation examined what happens to our humanity if death loses its finality and ultimately, what it means to be human as the boundaries between life, death, and data continue to blur.

Storytelling, Hope, and the Business of Culture
In Partnership with Common Era

A cross-sector mosaic of 14 media and entertainment leaders gathered at the Academy Museum in Los Angeles for an intimate half-day salon co-hosted by the AGLN and Common Era. Using the Aspen Institute's classic text-based dialogue methodology, participants explored a question at the heart of today's cultural moment: how can hopeful storytelling thrive in a marketplace built on conflict?

At a time when cynicism and division dominate public discourse, emerging research shows that audiences, particularly younger generations, are craving something different: stories rooted in optimism, vulnerability, and complexity that help them imagine better futures. Drawing on Jewish philosophy and contemporary storytelling traditions, the group reflected on how joy, nuance, and meaning can serve as creative advantages rather than commercial risks, unlocking fresh insights on their roles as leaders navigating a complex cultural moment and the power of storytelling to shape what comes next.

Image from the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures



AGLN Connect

A New Way for Fellows to Find Each Other

As the AGLN community continues to grow so does the need for easy ways to connect.

For years, Fellows have voiced a clear desire: better tools to find one another by location, interest, and shared purpose and to share opportunities, discover events, and stay engaged across the network.

Announced at the 2025 Resnick Aspen Action Forum and now available to all Fellows, AGLN Connect is the network's new digital home. The app serves as a central hub for the Fellow community, easing and strengthening how Fellows connect with one another, their fellowship programs, the broader AGLN, and the Aspen Institute. Whether exchanging ideas with a Fellow across the globe, sharing a collaboration opportunity, finding upcoming gatherings, or celebrating a milestone, the platform puts the full power of the network at Fellows' fingertips.

AGLN Connect is an investment in the connective tissue that makes collective impact possible—the everyday exchanges, introductions, and collaborations that happen between convenings and sustain the network's strength over time.

1,100+ Fellows Joined Across 16 Fellowships Since Launch



In 2025, the AGLN launched two new programs, each responding to a distinct inflection point in global leadership.

Michael D. Eisner Arts and Culture Fellowship

Arts and culture shape how societies understand themselves—influencing public discourse, challenging assumptions, and building empathy across divides. Yet leaders in the creative sector rarely have access to the kind of structured leadership development that equips them to translate cultural influence into broader societal impact. As the global landscape grows more fractured, the need for leaders who can harness the unifying power of arts and storytelling has never been greater.

A pilot initiative created in partnership between the AGLN and the Aspen Institute's Arts Program, with founding support from the Eisner Foundation, this two-year fellowship brings together two cohorts of 20–22 intergenerational leaders from across the global arts ecosystem, including artists, creators, producers, financiers, curators, and cultural visionaries. Designed for leaders who have achieved success in their fields and are ready to leverage their unique positions as a force for good, the fellowship offers participants entry into a community of more than 4,000 Fellows who have participated in one of the AGLN's 16+ cohort-based leadership programs worldwide.

The Technology Leadership Initiative

Technology is reshaping nearly every dimension of human life—from how we work and communicate to how we govern, learn, and make decisions. Yet the pace of innovation has far outstripped the development of ethical frameworks and leadership norms to guide it. As AI and emerging technologies grow more powerful, the gap between what technology can do and what it should do continues to widen, making principled leadership in the sector not just valuable but essential.

Co-founded by a group of AGLN Fellows, the Technology Leadership Initiative (TLI) was created to address that gap. Announced at the 2025 Resnick Aspen Action Forum, this two-year program convenes 20 senior leaders from across the global technology ecosystem—from policy shapers to industry pioneers—to explore power, responsibility, and the ethical implications of frontier technologies. TLI builds space for the kind of human-centered leadership and global collaboration our digital age demands, while advancing a new narrative for principled leadership in the sector.





Together, these programs reflect the AGLN's ability to move with urgency toward the leadership challenges that define our time—expanding the network's reach into two sectors where values-based leadership has never been more critical.

Looking Ahead to 2026

Charting a Shared Path Forward
Leadership in 2026

The AGLN enters 2026 with both momentum and clarity of purpose. This moment calls for leadership that is not only far-reaching, but deeply grounded in excellence—leadership that meets Fellows where they are, strengthens the impact of each program, and grows with intention and fidelity to enduring values.

In the year ahead, three interconnected priorities will guide this work:

- **Elevate the Fellowship Experience:** At the heart of the AGLN is the Fellowship experience. There will be continued focus on strengthening the depth and quality of each Fellowship program, advancing approaches to understand and communicate real-world impact, and fostering a culture of shared learning so that innovation in one Fellowship can inform and elevate others.

- **Proactive Growth Strategy by Engaging Critical Sectors and Regions:** The year will mark an important milestone with the selection of the first cohorts of the Technology Leadership Initiative and the Michael D. Eisner Arts and Culture Fellowship, intentionally extending fellowship experiences into sectors shaping the future of society. Alongside these efforts, the Network will continue to explore thoughtful expansion in regions and fields where this approach to leadership can contribute meaningfully.

- **Activate the Fellow Community for Peer-to-Peer Support and Impact:** A Fellowship marks a beginning, not an endpoint. The AGLN will continue to gather Fellows across the community through gatherings such as the Resnick Aspen Action Forum, immersive experiences, and global events that invite reflection and collaboration. At the same time, new pathways will support deeper peer connection and engagement across a global community of the Aspen Institute's nearly 9,000 Fellows—reinforcing the relationships that extend and multiply individual impact.

Together, these priorities reflect a commitment not only to respond to a changing world, but to help shape it—through leadership defined by rigor, humility, and a sense of shared responsibility.

This work is strengthened by partnership. As the Network deepens its impact and extends its reach, there is an opportunity for partners to contribute to what comes next—supporting leaders and the connective tissue that enables them to act with purpose. The invitation is to join in cultivating leadership that advances a more just, connected, and morally courageous world.

With Gratitude

To Our Partners in Leadership
Thank You

The work reflected in these pages is made possible through the generosity and commitment of those who stand alongside it.

The Aspen Global Leadership Network has long been shaped by partnership, not as an aspiration, but as a guiding principle. Leadership of this kind is never the work of any one individual or institution. It is sustained by a community of Fellows, founding partners, and supporters whose shared commitment gives the Network its strength and reach.

Looking ahead, the need for principled, values-driven leadership continues to grow, as does the opportunity to contribute to meaningful and lasting progress. Whether through deepening engagement, exploring new avenues of collaboration, or joining this effort for the first time, each partnership helps ensure that emerging leaders are supported with the relationships, insight, and courage to lead with purpose.

To our donors, sponsors, and supporters: thank you for making this work possible. The road ahead is full of promise, and we are grateful to be walking it with you.

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The Aspen Global Leadership Network (AGLN) is a growing, worldwide community of more than 4,000 high-integrity, entrepreneurial leaders from over 60 countries who share a commitment to enlightened leadership and to using their creativity, energy, and resources to tackle the foremost societal challenges of our times. Because of their demonstrated accomplishments and abilities, they have been selected to join one of 16+ geographic or sector-specific AGLN Fellowships around the world.

The Aspen Institute is a global nonprofit organization whose purpose is to ignite human potential to build understanding and create new possibilities for a better world. Founded in 1949, the Institute drives change through dialogue, leadership, and action to help solve society's greatest challenges. It is headquartered in Washington, DC, and has a campus in Aspen, Colorado, as well as an international network of partners



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