

PATH Staff

Robert De León, Administrative Manager

Robert De León is the former Executive Assistant for LLEGÓ, The National Latina/o Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Organization, where he served as a liaison to the board of directors and the community. As Administrative Manager at The Praxis Project, he brings his administrative background and attention to detail. He also volunteers as silent auction chair for Mary's Center for Maternal and Infant Care, a local D.C. center providing maternal and infant care to a multicultural population residing in every ward of the city, with a focus on families who work in jobs where health insurance is not available.

Ditra Edwards, Director of Training

Ditra has centered her life's work on the intention of working with communities of color to fight for justice. A skilled trainer, facilitator, community organizer, fundraiser and strategist, Ditra brings a high-level integrity and effectiveness to all of her work. Ditra has served as a consultant in partnership with the Hill-Snowdon Foundation, The Center for Applied Research and Technical Assistance, Inc. (CARTA), The Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing (FCYO) and The Praxis Project. As a consultant, Ditra brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in organizational and leadership development, community strategy and relationship building. From 1999 to 2005, Ditra Edwards was on the staff of LISTEN, Inc., serving as executive director from 2002 to 2005.

Josué Guillén, Technology Manager

Josué began his career in social justice work at the Center for Third World Organizing's organizer training program, which led him to jobs with SEIU (locals 1877 in San Jose and 14 in San Francisco), PUEBLO in Oakland, and the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (after merging with the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union in 1995, ACTWU became UNITE). Josué spent two years with the Institute for Global Communications, where he ran the LaborNet website, helped unions take advantage of technological advances and helped the staff form a union with SEIU Local 790. Additionally, he was a founding member of PODER, a community organization working on environmental and economic justice issues in San Francisco's Mission District. Josué is a current board member of the Institute for Mass Communications and a funding board member of the North Star Fund.

Salimah Salaam Muhammad, Finance Director

Salimah Salaam has extensive experience in non-profit and corporate management. She has over 20 years experience in financial management, organizational development and community-based training in financial planning, investments and community-based fundraising. She is a Washington, D.C. native with a love of mathematics and numbers. She completed her masters' degree as vice president of student government at the University of the District of Columbia, and is the first black woman to complete Howard University's banking program.

Sangita Nayak, Policy Communications Director

Prior to Praxis, Sangita Nayak coordinated communications for 9to5 National Association of Working Women's work on decent pay, decent benefits, and fairness and equity on the job. Sangita has also directed organizing on public health issues and corporate accountability, and worked with an international coalition campaigning against tobacco transnationals as well as ACE, an organization committed to environmental justice in Roxbury, Massachusetts. She has worked on campaigns from winning resolutions at the World Health Organization to teaching high school students workplace rights in Milwaukee. Ms. Magazine named her as one of the "women to watch" in 2000.

Makani Themba-Nixon, Executive Director

Makani Themba-Nixon is executive director of The Praxis Project, as well as national program director of PATH. Makani was previously director of the Transnational Racial Justice Initiative (TRJI), an international project to build capacity among advocates to more effectively address structural racism and leverage tools and best practices from around the world. Prior to that she directed the GrassRoots Innovative Policy Program (GRIPP), a national project to build capacity among local organizing groups to more effectively engage in media and policy advocacy addressing institutional racism in welfare and public education. Makani has published numerous articles and case studies on race, media, policy advocacy and public health. Her latest book is Talking the Walk: A Communications Guide to Racial Justice.

Juan Carlos Vega, Information Specialist

Juan Carlos Vega was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico. He attended Michigan State University in East Lansing, where his interests in information and library systems began. He completed his Master of Information Sciences from the University of Maryland in 2001 and was a tutor for the Latino Student Fund. That same year, serving as the information resources manager for the National Latino Council on Alcohol and Tobacco Prevention (LCAT), he began his commitment to health justice information resources and dissemination. Currently, Juan Carlos is a member of SALIS (Substance Abuse Librarians and Information Specialists Association) and REFORMA, the National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish-Speaking, where he performs outreach and support activities.

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Leslie Hunter-Gadsden contributed significantly to this report by gathering case studies and conducting interviews with grantees and others. Sangita Nayak contributed some writing and editing to this report and Amy Sonnie did the lion's share of proofreading. An additional thank you goes to Joe Marx for his late stage feedback that greatly improved the text.

As always, The Praxis Project Board of Directors provided tremendous leadership and wisdom throughout this process. We are fortunate to be guided by such an inspired and inspiring group of folk:

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