

Social Innovation for Development & Sustainability

SPEAKERS BIO



Thierry Agagliate

Currently Executive director at InZone, Thierry has 27 years' experience leading innovative humanitarian and development programs worldwide in a broad range of domains (e.g., Human Rights, Health, Protection, Migration, Justice, Education etc.). He has occupied regional and central senior management positions in multiple countries for international NGOs, including Head of Innovation, among other roles. As a pioneer in the digital transformation of development programs for the last 18 years, both in the domains of Child Protection and Primary Health Care, Thierry joined InZone in 2020, a visionary program of the University of Geneva, delivering hybrid higher education programmes in refugee's camps.



John Brogan

John Brogan is a WASH Advisor at Helvetas since June 2020, bringing 20 years of experience in international cooperation. After completing a Bachelor of Science in human physiology, he worked as a Community Health Volunteer in the Peace Corps (Mauritania), and has supported civil society water sector initiatives based in West Africa, South Asia and the Middle East. His thematic focus within WASH includes health care facilities, schools and prisons, nutrition, disaster risk management and innovation.



Emily Elsner

Emily is a consultant and expert on impact measurement, entrepreneurship and non-profit organisations. She holds a PhD in Human Geography from Lancaster University, UK, where she focused on the relationship between honey bees and beekeepers. Prior to this, Emily studied biology and nature conservation. She is co-founder of a charity, Capacity, which supports refugee and migrant entrepreneurs and job seekers in Zurich, Switzerland, and has worked with foundations to deliver impact measurement and strategic support on global education programmes, sustainable supply chains and nature conservation topics. She founded a consultancy on NGO management and impact measurement in 2015, and has been a trainer on social enterprise and impact measurement for Innosuisse, the Swiss Innovation Agency, since 2017. She currently works at ETH Zürich, co-shaping a project-based educational project for the university. More about Emily: www.elsnerrc.com; <https://www.linkedin.com/in/emily-elsner-adams-b22833b2/>



Christa Herrmann

Christa Herrmann is an entrepreneur, social innovator and geographer. Her work is regeneration: bringing human activities back into harmony with nature. She specialises in systems transformation, regenerative leadership and social entrepreneurship, with a sweet spot for team dynamics, networks and building resilience in times of uncertainty. She co-founded the NGO Terrabiom and the postdisciplinary collective Terravibe, supporting (aspiring) entrepreneurs to land their entrepreneurial ideas into sustainable entrepreneurial practices and careers as a coach, and accompanies individuals and organisations on their

path to regeneration as an independent facilitator. Christa is a dedicated life-long learner. She holds degrees in Geography & Sustainability (UniBe), Sports Management (NZIS Wellington), and Human Movement sciences (UZH / ETHZ), along with additional qualifications in coaching, bodyworks and movement therapy and system change.



Ivan Istomin

Ivan Istomin, PhD, has over 10 years of teaching experience in the areas of STEM subjects. For a decade, he elaborated study curricula, and organized teams of trainers in Switzerland, UAE, and Russia, for international science olympiads IJSO and IBO teams. Ivan has co-founded and is currently the COO of Roumai Medical that develops innovative solutions to treat cardiovascular diseases for the patients from all over the world. In these contexts and beyond, the power of effective and sustainable networking and community-building is an

essential skill to bring innovation projects further.



Michael Krohn

Professor Michael Krohn holds a position as co-head of the "Center for Sustainability" at the Zurich University of the Arts. Furthermore, he is lecturing, researching and publishing on many design topics. Professor Krohn has a practical background in Industrial Design and Design Engineering. His academic interests are drawn by research, education and innovation. Combining experiences from the design practice with academic development led to different positions at the Zurich University of the Arts since 1992. After developing the

Media Lab, research in Design and later as Head of the Industrial Design programme, he

received the opportunity to structure the Design Education for future challenges. Integrating research in the curricula, use of digital media, and finally develop a completely new Master of Arts in Design programme were the next important steps. As member of the CUMULUS Executive Board II, III and VII, Michael Krohn gathered global experiences and built his network in the world of design.



Antoine Lavanchy

Antoine Lavanchy is a 33-year-old Swiss professional and new father with a strong background in economics, marketing and innovation. After completing a Bachelor's degree in Economics at the University of Fribourg and the Free University of Berlin, he gained valuable experience in marketing and innovation in international organization, including the Terre des hommes (Tdh) Foundation. Seeking to further deepen his knowledge, Antoine pursued a Master's degree in Standardization, Social Regulation and Sustainability at the University of Geneva. During this studies, he joined the Open Geneva Association and connected with innovation accelerators and fellow innovators. Since 2020, Antoine has been working with Tdh, occupying different positions in innovation. As of 2022, he took the role of Innovation Lead for the entire organization, enhancing the organization's capacity to generate, develop and implement innovative ideas, fostering a culture of learning and creativity, and building a strong network of partners and donors to support our innovation efforts. His skills and expertise consist of innovation management, strategic thinking, communication, fundraising, and human-centered approaches.



Hannah Lea Dykast-Wildhaber

With a rich educational background in design and human-centered approaches, Hannah Lea bring a unique blend of creativity and empathy to her work as a design thinker and educator. She holds degrees from two of the world's most prestigious institutions: Parsons, The New School for Design in New York City, and Zurich University of the Arts. Her expertise extends beyond traditional aesthetics, incorporating advanced training in organizational coaching and change-making. This multidisciplinary approach enables Hannah Lea to

address communication challenges not just visually, but through the lens of human interaction and empathy, fostering impactful and sustainable design solutions. As an educator, her focus is on empowering students to think critically and creatively, equipping them with the tools to innovate and lead in the evolving fields of design and communication. Through a rigorous exploration of design thinking and human-centered design, she aims to cultivate the next generation of designers who can seamlessly blend art with human insight to create meaningful and lasting change. More about Hanna Lea: www.kraftpol.ch.



Joel Lüthi

Joel Lüthi is the Head of Research and Development at the BioVisionCenter, a newly formed unit of the University of Zurich focused on making scalable bioimage analysis more accessible. He is a board member of the think tank Reatch, where he has organized science outreach events and trainings for young scientists for science communication. Since 2019, he has organized storytelling workshops with a focus on story format analysis.



Manuel Merki

Manuel Merki is an entrepreneur and startup advisor at the University of Zurich. With his background in founding four innovative startups, including a notable Social Enterprise, Manuel brings hands-on experience and strategic insights to the course. Although no attempt has yet been financially successful, each venture provided valuable lessons and extended his expertise in navigating the dynamic landscape of entrepreneurship. Manuel's passion lies in leveraging these experiences to guide new entrepreneurs in

creating impactful businesses.



Björn Müller

Björn Müller, PhD, is all about transformative social innovation. With a broad background in the social sciences and humanities, as well as his own reflective practice, Björn inspires innovation actors to systemically (re)think their ideas for systemic impact. His experience in transformative action research, systems design and consulting translates into engaging lectures, presentations and interactive learning approaches in and out of the classroom. Björn co-founded Stride unSchool, a think&do tank on the role of social innovation for

sustainability transformation, and more recently, the systems innovation alliance [Meso](#). As Vice President of Science et Cité, he supports the strategic development of a Swiss national foundation for the dialog between science and society. Currently, Björn acts mainly as Program Director at the public-private social innovation accelerator [Future Urban Society](#).



Rasha Oudeh

Rasha Oudeh, a European entrepreneur with Jordanian roots, is revolutionizing the nutraceutical sector with her innovative strategies and integrity-driven leadership. As the founder and president of CEDEM AG, Rasha has built a global reputation for excellence, reshaping industry standards through her commitment to quality and community engagement. With dreaming big concept, Rasha has transformed CEDEM AG into a leading player in the nutraceuticals market. Rasha's emphasis on quality and ethical business practices has set new

benchmarks in the industry. Her visionary leadership and innovative approach have established CEDEM AG as a model of sustainable business practices, reflecting European values of environmental friendliness and social responsibility.



Nina Walker

Nina Walker holds a Bachelor's degree in International Hospitality Management from the Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne, and an Master's degree in Management with a focus on Business Analytics from HEC at the Université de Lausanne. As Head of Operations at the EPFL spin-off Space4Impact, she played a key role in promoting space tech innovation through startup acceleration and educational initiatives. Since 2023, Nina is working as a scientific associate at the ZHAW School of Management and Law in Zurich. In 2024, she became a doctoral

student at the Chair of Information Systems, Innovation, and Value Creation at FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg. Her research focuses on entrepreneurial ecosystems, particularly within university environments.



Ning Wang

Ning Wang is an ethicist and a political scientist based in Switzerland since 2010. She holds a PhD degree in Biomedical Ethics and Law from the University of Zurich, and two Master's degrees in Applied Ethics and Political Science obtained in Sweden, Norway, and the Netherlands. In between her academic endeavors, she led projects on ethics policy development for international organizations across the government, industry, and NGO sectors. As a strong advocate of

bottom-up forces for social change, she is dedicated to bridging the gap between science and society, with active engagement in influential non-academic institutions. Ning has broad research interests in the ethics assessment and responsible governance of emerging and future technologies. Through empirical studies, she aims to address the ethical, social, legal, and regulatory challenges new and complex technologies pose to society, explore responsive analytical approaches in the understanding and evaluation of them, and propose practical governance tools for the design, development, and use of them.