

## ***Organizing Team***

The Democracy Camp is the result of the Transatlantic Migrant Democracy Dialogue (TMDD) held in December 2016 in Nashville, Tennessee (USA), as part of the annual National Immigrant Integration Conference of the National Partnership for New Americans. This dialogue brought together nine leading immigrant organizers from the US and Europe to discuss shared challenges of local immigrant communities, opportunities for collaboration, and strategies for building powerful movements and campaigns. The leadership team has identified intensive, action-oriented training for local immigrant and minority organizers as a key step to building power and impact in the coming years, and is committed to supporting collaborative efforts between the US and Europe.

### ***European Immigrant Leaders***



**Zrinka Bralo**  
**Chief Executive, Migrants Organise UK**  
**United Kingdom**

Zrinka Bralo was a journalist in Bosnia before the conflict began, including five years at the National Radio in Sarajevo. After war broke out, she coordinated international media coverage from Sarajevo, working with some of the world's leading war correspondents. As the conflict escalated, Zrinka sought asylum in the United Kingdom, but she was at first refused and fought deportation for three years. She finally won the right to stay in the country and to this day she is a fierce advocate for asylum-seekers in the United Kingdom. She set up the National Coalition of

Anti-Deportation Campaigns in London (now [Right to Remain](#)) and supported 100 families and individuals against unjust deportation.

Since 2001, Zrinka has been the Chief Executive of [Migrants Organise](#). Formerly known as the Migrant and Refugee Communities Forum, Migrants Organise is a platform where refugees and migrants organize for power, dignity and justice. Zrinka has led numerous successful campaigns on behalf of refugees and migrants. She served as a Commissioner on the [Independent Asylum Commission](#), the most comprehensive review of the UK protection system and still leads the process of implementation of its 180 recommendations. She took part in campaign to end detention of children for immigration purposes in 2010. In September 2015, in response to the recent refugee crisis she has lead civil society response in the UK and is a founding chair of the [National Refugee Welcome Board](#).

In 2011 Zrinka launched the [Women on the Move Awards](#) for outstanding grass roots leaders. She is a founding trustee of [Most Mira](#) (The Bridge of Peace) charity that delivers arts based programs for ethnically segregated young people in rural Northern Bosnia where some of the worst atrocities were committed during the 1992-1995 Bosnian war.



**Yonus Muhammadi**  
**President, Greek Forum of Refugees**  
**Greece**

Yonus Muhammadi is a leading defender of refugee rights in Greece, where he secured asylum after fleeing Taliban abuses in his home country of Afghanistan. Muhammadi has long been targeted for his work, including being jailed by the Taliban in Afghanistan for his human rights research and advocacy, and brutally beaten in Athens by unidentified assailants as he taught Greek to migrant children.

As president of the [Greek Forum of Refugees](#)(GFR), Muhammadi ensures that the needs and rights of recently arrived asylum seekers, migrants, and refugees are at the heart of high-level debates in Greece and elsewhere in Europe. He was among the first to identify the alarming extent of [xenophobic violence in Greece](#) and to press for accountability for perpetrators of such acts. He is also committed to defending women's rights and serves as an ambassador for White Ribbon, one of the world's largest male-led campaigns to end violence against women

In his role as President of the GFR, Muhammadi conducts outreach and advocacy to inform refugees of their rights and obligations in Greece, ensure access to medical services, and remedy [inadequate reception conditions](#), [hurdles to integration](#), and [appalling detention conditions](#). GFR successfully lobbied the Greek Ministry of Education in 2010 to allow undocumented children to attend school, and last year, pushed the Greek government to create a shelter for hundreds of Afghan families.

This September, Yonus was named the 2016 Recipient of the Alison Des Forges Award for Extraordinary Activism by Human Rights Watch.



**Teresa Buckawska**  
**Integration Team Coordinator, Immigrant Council of Ireland**  
**Treasurer, European Network of Migrant Women**  
**Ireland**

Teresa Buczkowska born in Poland and moved to Ireland in 2005. Teresa holds an MA in Ethnography and Social Anthropology from Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland. She works as the Integration Team Coordinator at the [Immigrant Council of Ireland](#) (ICI), which she joined in 2013. Teresa and her team have been working with a range of like-minded organizations and partners to promote greater cultural, social, economic and political integration of people of migrant background living in Ireland. Delivering diverse anti-racism programs is a cornerstone of their work. While working for the ICI Teresa completed a study of the experience of racism in the taxi industry and co-authored a report on racism and racially motivated anti-social behavior in social housing.

Previously an active member of the network, Teresa joined the ENoMW board in May 2016, and is responsible in the network for financial strategic management and governance.



**Ian Elly Ssali Kiggundu**  
**Legal Representative, Rete G2 Seconde Generazioni**  
**Italy**

Ian Elly Ssali Kiggundu was born in Rome (Italy) to an Ugandan family. He studies Jurisprudence in Roma Tre University and is currently completing his law studies, while also furthering his music education. He studies piano with M. Stefano Nerozzi and attended the yearlong (2015/2016) master class course with pianist M. Irene Veneziano in Novara, Italy. Alongside his studies, Ian has worked as a legal assistant and is currently teaching English to young and adults. Ian joined Rete G2 Seconde Generazioni in 2007 and has since become the organization's legal representative. Rete G2 is a network of Italian-born youth who have been campaigning for birthright citizenship and voting rights, including through the nation-wide citizenship advocacy **L'Italia sono Anch'io**. Rete G2 is a voluntary network with representatives all across Italy and with significant media and policy visibility, including appearances before the Italian Parliament. The organization has drawn praise from the President of the Italian Republic Giorgio Napolitano, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the European Integration Forum. Ian has often represented Rete G2 at conferences and public discussion forums, most recently in a talk on "Race, racism and xenophobia in a global context" at New York University's La Pietra Campus.



**Melis Arı-Gürhanlı**  
**Former Project Coordinator, iCount Project**  
**Finland**

Melis Arı-Gürhanlı was the project coordinator of award winning [iCount project](#) (2013-2015), which worked to raise awareness of the Finnish political process among immigrant populations and to activate the political participation of immigrants. The project was supported by the EU Integration Fund and managed by [Moniheli- Network of Multicultural Associations](#), a network of 90 member organizations active in immigrant integration. Following the project's close, Moniheli's work on immigrants' political participation has continued via the "Our Election" national campaign, an advocacy effort designed to increase the participation of immigrant populations in Finland's upcoming municipal elections.

Raised in two different countries herself, Melis believes that participation in societal decision making is an essential part of immigrant integration. She is currently incorporating methods of participation in Moniheli's new [Katto-project, a project](#) she is leading and that aims to prevent homelessness among immigrants. Melis is also active in advocating the rights of bi-cultural and bi-lingual families in Finland through chairmanship of the multicultural organization [Familia ry](#).



**Ayse Özbabacan**  
**Department of Integration, City of Stuttgart**  
**Germany**

Ayse Özbabacan works for the Department for Integration Policy of the City of Stuttgart, where she supports the City in implementing the goals of the Stuttgart Pact for Integration, the Stuttgart Integration Policy concept. She is also the coordinator of the European Cities Network CLIP (Cities for Local Integration Policies of Migrants). For the last year and a half, she has been working on the extension of the network and on supporting the CLIP scientific research group to conduct migration-specific case studies in Stuttgart. This includes presenting successful integration work on the local, national and European levels. Ms. Özbabacan is multilingual, speaking German, English, French, Dutch, Kurdish, and Turkish. She has degrees in European studies and law and a Masters degree in European culture from the University of Groningen in the Netherlands.

### ***US Immigrant Leaders:***



**Petra Falcon**  
**Executive Director, Promise Arizona**

Petra Falcon is the Executive Director of Promise Arizona (PAZ), a membership organization whose mission is to recruit, train and support a new generation of leaders from across the state to build a new Arizona, one that allows all residents to achieve their full potential.

Petra is a veteran organizer, activist and community leader with a long record of developing powerful grass roots strategies. Falcon grew up in the Grand Canyon State as a fourth-generation Mexican-American Arizonan. From her earliest experience she learned the value of access to education and opportunity, and the social inequities and violence that result from the systemic denial of such opportunities. During her organizing career, Petra spent 10 years organizing in border communities in southern Arizona, working with immigrants and farm workers. She has devoted her life to ensuring and expanding access to opportunities for the underserved, having achieved significant victories over her 25 years organizing within faith, Latino, and immigrant communities in Arizona and the Southwest. Her work has included traditional grassroots organizing, institutional capacity building, faith community engagement and electoral organizing.



**Stephanie Teatro**  
**Co-Executive Director, Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition**

Stephanie Teatro, is the Co-Executive Director of NIIC 2016 co-host the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC), a statewide, immigrant and refugee-led collaboration whose mission is to empower immigrants and refugees throughout Tennessee to develop a unified voice, defend their rights, and create an atmosphere in which they are recognized as positive contributors to the state. Stephanie is a member of Nashville Mayor Barry's New Americans Advisory Council, an executive committee member of the national Fair Immigration Reform Movement and the Movement of Immigrants in America and a board member of the National Partnership for New Americans. She co-authored the 2016 national report, *Countering the Backlash: Strategies for Responding to Anti-Refugee and Xenophobic Activity from the New South*, detailing TIRRC's work to counter anti-refugee policy and Islamophobia in Tennessee. Stephanie is an immigrant to the U.S. from Canada.



**Rudy López**  
**Former Executive Director, Interfaith Worker Justice**

Rudy López is a Mexican American child of immigrant steelworkers. He has spent the past 20 years as an organizer and campaign manager in the struggle for justice and dignity. He recently left his position as the Executive Director of Interfaith Worker Justice (IWJ), a national nonprofit organization that advances the rights of working people, to move to Los Angeles and join his new bride.

Before leading IWJ, Rudy built a career developing leaders and building power in disenfranchised communities through social justice organizing and electoral work. As the Political Director for the Center for Community Change (2007-2013), he worked with groups all around the country to register, educate and turnout hundreds of thousands of voters in low-income communities and communities of color. Rudy served as Wellstone Action's National Field Director (2005-07) training grassroots leaders on how to manage campaigns and run for political office. He was also the National Field Director of the Chicago-based U.S. Hispanic Leadership Institute (2000-05) and oversaw Latino leadership development programs and voter-registration drives across the nation.

Rudy developed his organizing skills in the neighborhoods of Pilsen and Little Village in Chicago working as a community organizer with Gamaliel affiliate, the Metropolitan Alliance of Congregations (1998-99). Although he has worked on immigration reform for the better part of his career, Rudy decided to focus solely on this deeply personal issue from 2013-14, as a senior organizer for the Fair Immigration Reform Movement (FIRM) based in Washington DC. He was one of the core fasters for Fast4Families and toured the country lifting up the urgency to pass comprehensive immigration reform. Rudy is currently a consultant working on issues to advance comprehensive immigration reform and the integration of immigrant communities along with the intersection of faith and social justice.



**Mehrdad Azemun,**  
**National Campaigns Director at People's Action / People's Action Institute**

Mehrdad is an immigrant from Iran; his family moved to the U.S. in 1978, soon before the Iranian Revolution. Mehrdad has over 15 years of experience running electoral and legislative campaigns with immigrant communities at the state, regional, and national/federal level.

As Director of Organizing for the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights he moved the organization's civic engagement and legislative work to the next level. In 2009-10 and 2013-14, he ran the grassroots efforts for 2 different national campaigns that attempted to win federal immigration reform legislation from Congress and deliver relief from the White House for millions of undocumented immigrants. He currently oversees issue and policy campaign organizing for People's Action, an economic and racial justice organization working in 30 states and at a national level.

Mehrdad's roots are in community organizing; he learned the craft of organizing at Organization of the NorthEast on the north side of Chicago starting in 2000, where he worked with refugee and immigrant leaders.

## ***Partner Organizations:***



**Joshua Hoyt**  
**Executive Director, National Partnership for New Americans**

Joshua Hoyt was a co-founder of the National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA) in 2008, and became its first Executive Director in 2014.

NPNA membership includes 26 of the largest immigrant coalitions in the U.S. NPNA believes that America's success is rooted in our ongoing commitment to welcoming and integrating newcomers into the fabric of our nation, and to upholding equality and opportunity as fundamental American values.

Under Joshua's leadership NPNA has advocated for a national approach to immigrant integration, resulting in the first ever White House Convening on Immigrant and Refugee Integration and nine National Immigrant Integration Conferences. NPNA members have assisted over 92,000 immigrants become U.S. citizens or achieve legal status through D.A.C.A.

Joshua has been a community and immigrant organizer for almost 40 years, including 12 years leading the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights. During this time Illinois became one of the most immigrant friendly states in the US. He is the co-chair of the Illinois Business Immigration Coalition.



**Thomas Huddleston**  
**Programme Director on Migration and Integration, Migration Policy Group**

For the past ten years, Thomas has been using evidence and best practices to advise and support practitioners to design and improve their practices on integration, especially on citizenship and the political participation of immigrants. The Migration Policy Group, a 20-year-old 'think-and-do-tank', has identified best practices across Europe through its research projects (MIPEX, ACIT, DIVPOL), the European Website on Integration and its Handbooks on Integration and Citizenship Campaigns. MPG has conducted trainings and pilots on how to inform and encourage immigrants to become citizens and voters in Belgium, Ireland, Luxembourg and the UK. MPG was also the major campaigning force behind the Starting Line Group that designed and secured the EU's 2000 Racial and Employment Equality Directives that obliged most European countries to adopt their first anti-discrimination laws. Thomas is also a Senior Fellow of Humanity in Action, a transatlantic network of young people of diverse backgrounds working on human and minority rights.