



**Safe Passage Board of Directors**  
*September, 2025*



**Santiago Bolaños Torrebiarte, Co-Chair – Guatemala & México City**

Santiago is Guatemalan—based in Mexico City—he is the co-founder and CEO of [Kolibrie Energy](#), a renewable energy feedstock trading company that sources used cooking oil and other waste oils to transform them into renewable energy. Kolibrie Energy operates in Mexico, Central America, Colombia, and Ecuador. Santiago graduated with a degree in Economics and Latin American Studies from Emory University.

Santiago first got to know Safe Passage when he was young through a school field trip, the experience was so impactful that years later he sought to re-engage. He currently serves on the board of Grupo Coban, a 100-year-old Guatemalan footwear company and of the Fundacion Miguel Torrebiarte, a foundation focused on combating malnutrition and promoting education in Guatemala.



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**Sofía Arimany, Co-Chair – Guatemala & New York, NY**

Sofía is currently pursuing an MBA at Columbia Business School. She most recently served as Director and Head of Business Development at Duco, an advisory firm focusing on the intersection of geopolitics, trust & safety, and technology. Duco empowers leading companies to operate safely, securely, and responsibly by mobilizing the world's leading experts to help solve complex challenges. With over 8 years of diverse experience spanning business development, operations, project management, and fundraising across the private, academic, and non-profit sectors, Sofía is deeply committed to advancing human rights, promoting internet governance, and enhancing media literacy and education.

Prior to her role at Duco, Sofía was the Program Coordinator of Stanford's Arts Intensive program. She currently serves on the board of FUNDEGUA, an applied research center dedicated to sustainable and culturally appropriate development in Guatemala. Sofía invests in Latin American entrepreneurs and is a skilled mentor with a passion for empowering women and minorities in policy, education, and national security. Sofía graduated from Stanford University with a BA in Psychology and minors in Art Practice and Film & Media Studies. Sofía is Guatemalan and Puerto Rican and grew up in Guatemala City.



**Ana Cristina Rozas-Botrán, Vice-Chair – Guatemala**

Cristina has a bachelor's degree in interior design with M.A in environmental design from the Miami Art Institute. She focused on project management, business administration, art history, design, and contemporary art.

Cristina has been working as an art advisor at the Rozas-Botrán Foundation since 2020. She is an art consultant and part of the curating committee of Arte en Mayo, Rozas-Botrán Foundation. From 2012 to 2017, she was the director of communication at this institution, where she created and directed the “Pop Up” gallery, the FRB

Magazine, and was in charge of the first expo Arte Urbano and Zines in Guatemala, Central America, and Panama, that collects the history of visual art of recent production in these countries. She has specialized in the areas of communication and promotion of the foundation's artists. Recently, she has ventured into the promotion of conceptual art by artists from the region.



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**Matthew Bucher, Treasurer – Hamel, Minnesota**

Matt is a Partner in BDO's Assurance practice with over 15 years of experience in public accounting. He has served a number of Fortune 500 multinational audit clients, as well as many smaller audit clients, within various industries including retail & consumer products, agricultural Co-ops, industrial products, automotive and manufacturing, and technology. Through this experience, Matt has been responsible for the coordination of audit work across a number of different geographies and is actively involved in addressing complex accounting, reporting and audit matters. Matt has led teams of various sizes, some as large as over 40 team members.

Matt also serves clients in a non-audit capacity related to identifying different ways BDO can help and provide insight into the client's business for it to grow, adapt and stay efficient. Matt also has significant experience with Board and executive level communications and also has extensive SEC reporting and internal controls experience.

In recent years (2017 - 2020), Matt performed an international tour in Bratislava, Slovakia, serving several Fortune 500 multinational clients in their respective shared service centers. In this role, Matt performed significant coordination with local teams located across Europe and Asia. In 2020, Matt and his family moved back to the US and now reside in the western suburbs of Minneapolis. Matt graduated from the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University with a Bachelor of Science in Business and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) and holds a CPA license in the state of Minnesota.



**Alyson Welch, Secretary – Plainfield, VT**

Alyson is an international development professional with more than 10 years of experience in the industry. Since 2011, she has worked in increasingly complex roles for large government contractors, managing projects in Latin America that are financed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), including two years in Mexico as the director of operations for a project focused on preventing crime and violence and providing opportunities for at-risk youth. Alyson served as a project director at DAI, overseeing the implementation of Latin American projects that focus on a variety of governance and environmental issues. She has both a bachelor's and master's degree in psychology and is fluent in Spanish. She is currently the Executive Director of Food 4

Farmers and resides with her family in Plainfield, Vermont.

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**Esther Brol – Guatemala**

Esther is a founding partner of Communication Consulting Group, where she has been a consultant in strategic communication, as well as in the conceptualization and organization of corporate events for more than 25 years.

She has been an advisor to private companies; (Banco Industrial, Copa Airlines, EPA, Guatemalan Association of Insurance Institutions, Guatemalan Chamber of Construction, etc.); public entities (Guatemalan Tourism Institute); diplomatic corps in Guatemala (Embassies of Canada, Spain and the Foreign Commercial Service of the United States Embassy); different programs of cooperation agencies and international financial institutions (USAID, European

Union, Counterpart International, Catholic Relief Services, Save the Children, Inter-American Development Bank, Central American Bank for Economic Integration) and different agencies of the United States government (Department of Agriculture, Department of Commerce), among others.

She has a bachelor's degree in political science from Francisco Marroquín University and a master's degree in reengineering, information and social communication technologies from Galileo University. She also has a diploma of National Strategic Studies. She is currently studying for a master's degree in leadership and senior management at the Miguel Cornejo School of Leaders in Mexico.

She is a Service Best trainer. She has several certifications in the meetings Industry. She is a professional speaker and interpretive announcer. She participated in several emergency procedure courses taught by Corporate Communications of Continental Airlines (now United Airlines) in Houston and Copa Airlines in Panama. She has been a professor at Galileo and Istmo Universities and has offered training through Panamerican Business School and the Guatemalan Management Association.

Currently, she is the president of the Guatemala Convention and Visitors Bureau, a member of the board of directors of the Guatemalan Management Association, as well as a member of the board of directors of Safe Passage. She is a correspondent for the magazine *Rotary in the Heart of the Americas* and was an editorial counselor for the magazine *Gerencia* of the Guatemalan Management Association. She is a founder and an active member of Guatemala La Reforma Rotary Club. She has been the chair of the Public Image Committee of Rotary District 4250 for Guatemala for the last five years. She is the founder and president of the Guatemalan Rotary Academy of Arts and Letters. She lived in Switzerland from 1988 to 1989 (AFS International Intercultural Programs). She speaks Spanish and English and lives in Guatemala City.

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#### **Jeff Katz – Cambridge, MA**

Jeff is a nonprofit consultant specializing in organizational development, fundraising, and transitional leadership. He has served as an executive director to two organizations and interim executive director to 13 different organizations including homeless shelters, community development corporations, a Vietnamese community center, and a school in rural Nicaragua. In addition to serving as an interim executive director, Jeff also helps nonprofits in searches for executive directors and other key positions. Jeff helped Safe Passage with an executive transition in 2013—an experience he describes as life-changing.

In addition to his work as a nonprofit consultant, Jeff has been very active as a child welfare advocate. He was a member of the Obama for President Child Policy team, testified before Congress, and played a role in passing the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997. His op-ed pieces have been published in the *Washington Post*, *Boston Globe*, *Christian Science Monitor*, and he has been interviewed on CNN and National Public Radio. He also served as a child welfare expert at the Neiman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard University.

Jeff attended the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, where he was a Public Service Fellow and received a master's in public administration. Jeff later served as a Fellow at the Kennedy School, where he developed the *Listening to Parents Project*, an influential national study of how prospective adoptive parents are treated by public child welfare agencies. He also holds a master's degree in social work from Boston University.

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#### **Christian von Oppen – Berlin, Germany**

Christian holds a degree in economics from Humboldt University in Berlin (2001) and is a certified foundation manager. After completing his studies, he worked for the Munich Re Group in the area of private equity for 7 years. Christian has been an independent entrepreneur in the creative industry since 2007 and founded various photo art and design labels as managing partner of designers group GmbH. As part of a sabbatical, he came to Guatemala for three months in 2006 and volunteered for Safe Passage. Back in Germany, he joined the German



support organization Camino Seguro e.V., which he now heads as a board member for more than 10 years.

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### **Camila Leal Witt – New York, NY & Guatemala**

Camila Leal is an Interior Designer and Head of Product Innovation at Kalea. She is responsible for strategic product selection and supplier innovation, leading initiatives that align sourcing, design, and market trends to strengthen product offering. Prior to this, she was a Vice President at BlackRock's Financial Markets Advisory (FMA) group, where she served as engagement manager to projects providing tailored advisory services to financial institutions and official sector clients on their most critical and complex financial issues — from unwinding a portfolio of assets, helping overhaul risk

management ecosystems in response to regulatory feedback, advising on portfolio acquisitions/dispositions, and developing strategies around balance sheet optimization.

Additionally, Camila was a national quarter-finalist on the CEDA Policy Debate Team, launched a photography collection that donated one-third of profits to cleaning Guatemalan lake pollution, and holds a certificate in Interior Design from the Parsons School of Design. She also holds a graduate certificate in Business and Political Economy and a double minor in Psychology and Studio Art from New York University's Leonard N. Stern School of Business.

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### **Matthew Verghese – San Francisco, CA**

Matthew Verghese is a Product Management Leader with over a decade of experience building products at leading tech companies like Twitch (an Amazon subsidiary), LinkedIn (a Microsoft subsidiary), and venture-backed startups. He has helped build consumer products loved by hundreds of millions of people around the world. Prior to his tech career, Matthew worked in Private Equity at Warburg Pincus, and Investment Banking at Evercore Partners. Matthew visited Guatemala and Safe Passage in college and fell in love with the organization's mission, and how education

can help families achieve a better future for themselves. Matthew holds an MBA from The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, and dual degrees in Finance and Electrical Engineering from the Jerome Fisher Program in Management & Technology program at the University of Pennsylvania.

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### **Carla Campbell – Philadelphia, PA**

Carla lives outside of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA. She is a retired pediatrician from The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

and public health professor, and currently teaches environmental health at Drexel University's Dornsife School of Public Health (Philadelphia) as an affiliate professor. Her passion is preventing childhood lead poisoning and ensuring children's environmental health. She is married to Dr. Ron Ross and the mother of two daughters, and two grandkids. She trained in medicine and then did a two-year fellowship in occupational and environmental medicine at Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York City.

Carla first volunteered at Safe Passage in 2008 when she traveled to Guatemala City with members of her church's youth group as a Support Team member. There, she met Jenny Hartsell, executive director of Shared Beat, a medical group affiliated with Safe Passage. She has come down to Guatemala almost every summer starting in 2009 with the Shared Beat medical team. The group creates mobile clinics for school physical exams in certain rural schools around Antigua and visits Safe Passage to examine the students there. Carla also has served as "madrina" to 3-4 Safe Passage students throughout the years and had the pleasure of visiting with them during Shared Beat trips to Guatemala City.

Other interests include working with several groups around racial justice work, being on the Covid Task Force, and other committees and groups from her Unitarian church. She enjoys reading, walking, biking, and traveling around Latin America in her spare time.

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**René J. Nazario – Atlanta, GA**

René is originally from Puerto Rico and for the last 2 decades has been VisualK's CEO, an enterprise software company that he founded. His team sells and implements Asset, Human and Enterprise Resources applications in North, Central and South America and the Caribbean. His company works with customers like Bayer, Jamaica Public Service, Invenergy, Grand Bay and others. He graduated with a degree in Mechanical Engineering from University of Puerto Rico and has a Masters in Engineering from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. His first introduction to Safe Passage was through a week-long Support Team visit in 2017. René was impressed with the organization and the impact that it has on the community and the kids. Since then he has been involved with the Safe Passage Oportunidades Program to support students preparing for the job market.

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**Sara Bellenda – London, United Kingdom**

Sara Bellenda is a seasoned investor with over 20 years' experience with blue-chip investment platforms such as JP Morgan and Fidelity Management & Research. Over the years she has held roles as research analyst and portfolio manager focusing on global real estate

equities, infrastructure and climate change. She is passionate about sustainability and has volunteered on projects with charities focused on education in the UK to encourage non-privileged children to aim high and to accelerate fund raising. Sara holds a MBA in Hospitality Management from Cornell/ESSEC business school and is fluent in Italian, English and French.

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**Marcos Zedan – New York, NY**

Marcos Zedan was born and raised in Guatemala City. Currently, he serves as a Strategy and Operations Principal at Via Transportation, where he helps expand access to public transit for those who need it most. With extensive experience in private equity, operations, and consulting, Marcos brings a wealth of knowledge in strategic planning, organizational transformation, and leadership. He holds an MBA from Columbia Business School and a BA in Economics from Boston University. Marcos is based in New York City.

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**Donald Francis – Guatemala**

Dr. Don Francis is the General Director of the American School of Guatemala, with over 25 years of experience leading schools around the world. He has a Doctorate in Educational Leadership from Washington State University and a master's degree from Eastern Washington University. Before his current role, Dr. Francis served as Head of School at InterAmerican Academy in Ecuador and Director of Awsaj Academy in Qatar. He is passionate about building a culture of learning for every student and has led numerous facility and accreditation projects. He and his wife, Andrea, have six children and two grandsons.

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**Ariana Spiliotes – Switzerland**

Ariana Spiliotes is a strategy and governance specialist with over a decade of experience in international development, global health, and management consulting. As a Manager at Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, she supports strategic analysis to inform CEO and Board decisions. Previously, she advised global health foundations and public agencies at McKinsey & Company and worked in Honduras

as Technical Director on a large-scale USAID governance program. She brings expertise in donor landscapes, governance, and strategy design and delivery.

Her commitment to global development—and particularly Latin America—began in 2009 at age 16, when she volunteered with Safe Passage in Guatemala City. Since then, she has pursued professional and personal opportunities to drive impact in the region and globally.

She holds an MBA from UC Berkeley Haas School of Business and an undergraduate degree in Political Science and Spanish from Williams College.



### **Sara Danish – Guatemala**

Originally from New York, Sara spent 18 years in Washington, DC before moving to Guatemala City in 2022—a journey that mirrors her career-long commitment to building bridges across borders and communities. She joined the Safe Passage / Camino Seguro Board of Directors in September 2025.

Sara brings over 15 years of experience designing, managing, and evaluating international development programs across Latin America, the Caribbean, and beyond. She has led initiatives for community violence prevention, climate resilience, municipal governance, and community empowerment, often in partnership with USAID and local organizations. Along the way, she has worn many hats: proposal writer, grants manager, field researcher, mentor, facilitator, and occasional start-up fire-fighter for multimillion-dollar projects.

Whether working with grassroots organizations in Guatemala, advising USAID teams on practical monitoring and evaluation approaches, Sara thrives on connecting big-picture strategy with the lived experiences of vulnerable communities.

Outside of her professional life, Sara is fueled by curiosity, a passion for learning from others and diverse cultures and worldviews—qualities that make her especially excited to contribute to Safe Passage’s mission of education, dignity, and opportunity for children and their families in Guatemala City. She is also a pro bono pizza taster.