

Carlos Monteagudo

Roddenberry Fellowship 2025 Application ID #110509

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Applicant Details

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Eligibility

The following questions are designed to help candidates quickly gauge their eligibility:

I reside in, and my organization's work is based exclusively within the 50 states in the US, or its territories. Yes
I am in the key decision-making role in my organization: executive director, chief executive officer, etc. Yes
My organization's approach to this work is new and I can speak to how it fits into the broader landscape of efforts seeking to solve the issue my organization is addressing. Yes
I have the capacity to engage fully in the fellowship at ~5 hours a month, and I am able to attend the two required in-person retreats on February 24 - 28, 2025 and September 23-28, 2025: Yes
My proposal for this Fellowship does not involve advocacy, lobbying and/or any attempt to influence legislation or the outcome of any specific public election. Yes
My operating budget is less than \$2 million. Yes
My organization has been in operation for five years or fewer. Yes

Identity/Demographics

As we continue to prioritize supporting a diverse group of fellows and cultivating an inclusive network, we respectfully request demographic information. No personal data will be made public and any information collected will solely be used to ensure that future cohorts reflect the diversity of the communities most impacted by the current realities in this country.

Gender	Male
Race/ethnicity	Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
Sexual orientation	Straight/Heterosexual
Do you identify as Transgender?	No
Generation	The Baby Boomer Generation (1946-1964)
Please list any accessibility needs or accommodations:	None

Project Overview

Organization Name A New Global WE

Please share your organization website URL. (If your initiative or organization does not have a website, simply write, 'no website.') www.anewglobalwe.com, www.youtube.com/@anewglobalwe

Project Summary A New Global WE supports organizations seeking to host fully participatory, large-scale dialogues for social transformation.

Primary Issue Area CLIMATE, THE ENVIRONMENT, AND ENERGY

Issue

The most critical issues society faces are often the most intractable. These issues are complex, multifaceted, and multidimensional, necessitating solutions and approaches shaped by the diverse lived experiences of those involved. Widespread direct stakeholder engagement often proves best for discovering and implementing these solutions.

Over the past three decades, our organization's co-founders have developed and successfully deployed structured, self-directed dialogue practices. These practices, conducted primarily in-person and more recently via Zoom, consistently enable groups to foster safe, creative dialogue spaces, thus facilitating the emergence of collective wisdom.

However, scaling presents a primary challenge. Our process works efficiently for groups of 30-80 individuals. But for larger groups, even the most well-designed dialogue process can become cumbersome and lengthy. Using Zoom's breakout groups has been beneficial, but the reporting back is vastly unsatisfactory.

Engaging groups of 100 or 1,000 in dialogue is difficult, and engaging groups of 10,000 or more has been unfeasible. How can we ensure every voice is heard within a reasonable timeframe, while maximizing meaningful stakeholder engagement for 10X or more impact?

The recent advent of Large Language Models presents an unprecedented opportunity. It enables us to transform dialogues, which are traditionally conducted in "series," into "parallel" processes without significant loss of detail or impact. Our goal is to combine this emerging AI technology with our refined structured dialogue processes to facilitate fully participatory dialogues at scales previously unattainable. We believe this development could represent a catalytic disruption for social change initiatives and potentially even direct democracy.

Issue zoom-in

Direct stakeholder engagement is a well-established cornerstone in transformative social change work. The highest degree of engagement, particularly from those most impacted, fosters broad-based buy-in and aids in developing long-term, effective, sustainable solutions. However, implementing this efficiently poses a perennial challenge.

Common solutions tend towards "representative" stakeholder engagement for practical reasons. However, this approach has limitations, including key-man risks - corruption, undue influence through lobbying, inadequate representation - and lack of genuine engagement and ownership by the majority of constituents.

Even when highly motivated stakeholders are assembled, practical concerns arise: How can engagement exceed tokenism? How can constituents participate in meaningful conversations, meet effectively, maintain their interest, ensure all voices are heard, and record the outcomes? The time and resource investments are an enormous challenge.

Thus, a critical opportunity underlying any field of social transformation is accesseing practical, inclusive, efficient and scalable processes for direct stakeholder engagement and subsequent action.

Initiative

In response to the significant challenge of facilitating inclusive, meaningful dialogues at large scale, we are developing the GenerativeDialogue.AI platform.

1. Utilizing an interface reminiscent of Zoom, we will create and test a system that can virtually gather participants in a manner that is infinitely expandable. This allows us to accommodate various community sizes, from local gatherings to large global assemblies.

2. Unlike conventional Zoom meetings, our dialogues are precisely structured to actively engage every participant regularly. Our goal is to foster an environment promoting deep sharing and active listening to cultivate mutual

understanding. We leverage the strategic use of breakout rooms and pointed questions in small dialogue groupings, thereby ensuring every participant has meaningful opportunities to voice their unique perspectives.

3. Every breakout room in our system is enhanced by an AI companion. This AI companion functions as a transcriber, summarizer, and observer of the dialogues in each room. It tracks discussions, summarizing them in real-time. Upon the group's reconvening, the AI swiftly presents a comprehensive synthesis of all the dialogues, reflecting the diverse voices and viewpoints, and providing instant insights into global themes and statistics.

4. Our process is iterative and structured, generating a "wisdom field", surfacing emerging themes and insights. These then serve as the basis for further exploration and dialogue.

Our initiative extends support to a diverse array of groups, from local community organizations to global NGOs. Our ultimate goal is to facilitate constructive, inclusive, and transformative dialogues to help any community address their most complex challenges.

Creative

Our platform enables fully participatory dialogues at an unprecedented scale, bridging physical, cultural, and linguistic gaps. Unlike traditional methods, our approach allows groups of any size to meet simultaneously, with every voice contributing to the emergence of shared meaning—a true definition of dialogue. This platform can crowdsource collective wisdom, much like Google crowdsources search results.

Imagine the transformative potential: an entire city like Chicago engaging in a dialogue on preventing gun violence, hosted by the mayor after a tragic mass shooting. Or UN-sponsored, massive, simultaneous regional dialogues on climate change. These scenarios highlight our unique capability to foster meaningful, large-scale conversations that can generate actionable insights and solutions.

By democratizing dialogue and leveraging cutting-edge technology, our platform offers a novel way to crowdsource collective wisdom and exponentially impact public consciousness, driving significant social change.

Your Engagement

My life's work is rooted in my childhood experiences as a Cuban immigrant, which involved navigating two cultures while maintaining a balance between my original identity and assimilation into US life. This exposure kindled my interest in psychiatry and the inner life, leading eventually to my work as a Kellogg National Leadership Fellow. During my fellowship, I focused my learning plan on understanding the conditions fostering better connections between one's inner spiritual life and outer actions, which I came to understand as critical for highly impactful and transformative social change initiatives and leadership. This exploration led to my co-founding two nonprofits, SEED (www.seedimpact.org) and SolarNation, incorporating insights and tools from the fellowship as their mission's foundation and strategies. Over the years, working with groups and with dialogue, I've honed in on the challenge of scalability, which has led to this present initiative, A New Global WE.

Impact & Support

Impact to Date

After my Kellogg Fellowship, in 2000 I partnered with another Kellogg fellow, Melinda Lackey, to co-found a nonprofit, SEED. We used the lessons we both learned during the fellowship to help other nonprofits engaged in social-change work, to learn the skills to better organize communities across differences to increase their effectiveness and impact. In this work, I began to develop the dialogue tools and methods that became integral to all my subsequent work. SEED's impact continues and has a far reach (www.seedimpact.org).

Learning from this effort, in 2013 I founded another nonprofit, SolarNation. Our aim was to harness the capacity of diverse groups, powerfully organizing around commonly held core values, to engage communities to self-organize and self-finance community solar projects as a means of combating climate change. This project, funded in part by the DOE, was on the brink of being piloted in three major cities when the Covid shutdowns occurred, effectively stalling, and eventually ceasing the projects. Our methodology, which relied heavily on on-the-ground, face-to-face meetings, became impossible.

My current work with my colleague, Danny Martin, started during Covid. Our aim is to build and expand on the dialogue tools we both had previously used, translating them into a more scalable online offering. Our goal is to elevate structured dialogue to a new level, leveraging society's newfound comfort with online conferencing via Zoom. The unexpected emergence of AI in November 2022 led us to pivot, as we immediately recognized the profound significance of this technological breakthrough to our work.

Support & Other Funding

The most impactful support to date came from the Kellogg National Leadership Fellowship from 1997 to 2000. This experience and the enduring fellowship with colleagues propelled me to a higher level of thinking and creativity than I previously ever imagined possible. It deepened my understanding of social transformation, transformative leadership, and community organizing, ultimately leading to a theory of transformation that underpins my work and this current project.

Furthermore, foundational support (Fetzer, Rockefeller, Fund for the City of NY, NY Women's Foundation, Daphne Fund, DOE, others), seed money (Illinois Department of Health), philanthropy (Disney, Delaney, Kaplan, Stewart), board service, mentorships, teachers, volunteers, have all been instrumental in informing and advancing the work of SEED, SolarNation, and now A New Global We. I am eternally indebted and privileged.

Zoom's AI Companion has supported our early exploration into this work. However, we need to take this further to test our thesis and vision.

Project Size

What is your initiative, project, or organization's annual operating budget (annual expenses) in US dollars? Less than \$100,000 USD

How many full time, paid staff are on your team (including yourself)? 0

Vision

Big Picture

Our vision is to develop and refine a minimum viable product through iterative testing and feedback from our supportive communities. We aim to measure the value and user satisfaction derived from scalable, structured dialogues. Our goal is to determine if organizations find this tool useful in furthering their missions or resolving issues, and to identify potential feature enhancements.

In this initial phase, we plan to partner with SoundWaters (www.soundwaters.org) to support their efforts in hosting large-scale dialogues among environmental education initiatives nationwide. Over the next year, we will test the impact of this methodology, developing the system and establishing it as a highly effective community-building catalyst.

Eventually, we hope our technology becomes widely adopted by social change initiatives due to its perceived value and effectiveness. While high-profile use could accelerate adoption, we realistically expect organic growth among organizations recognizing the unprecedented opportunity for scaled direct engagement to solve real-world problems.