



Tishman Environment
and Design Center



TISHMAN CENTER · FEBRUARY 1, 2021

Environmental Justice Leadership is Non-Negotiable



**WE ARE IN A
PIVOTAL MOMENT
WHERE THINGS
ONCE
UNIMAGINABLE
ARE NOW
UNDENIABLE.**

Learn more:

- [Environmental Justice Movement Fellowship](#)
- [#EJisNonNegotiable Social Media Campaign](#)
- [Radical Reimaginings for Climate Justice](#)

We can't continue to rely on technocratic approaches that have proven ineffective or that only make superficial change. To build a just world, we need people-centered strategies that challenge the political, social, and economic leaders and systems that produced decades of environmental racism and inaction on climate change. Environmental Justice Movement leaders, specifically the people who are closest to the dangers of climate change, should lead us in identifying solutions.

- [EJM Landscape Assessment Webinar Recording](#)
- [EJM Landscape Assessment Webinar Slide Deck](#)

WE MUST INVEST IN THE LEADERSHIP OF THE FRONTLINES.

We had the chance to interview leaders from the Environmental Justice movement and The New School who are helping to design a new [fellowship program](#). Watch below as leaders speak about why EJ leadership is non-negotiable in this historic moment.

To give life, culture, and art to the incredible individuals featured, we worked with [Loisse Ledres \(Website\)](#), currently based on Taos and Picuris Pueblo land, who created these beautiful illustrations.

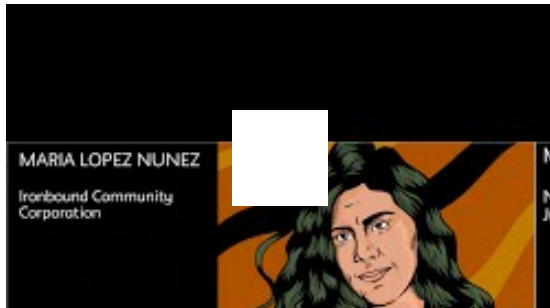
Video edits and blog coordination were done by Anna Yulsman.



Angela Mahecha



Julia Fay Bernal



Melissa Miles and Maria Lopez-Nuñez



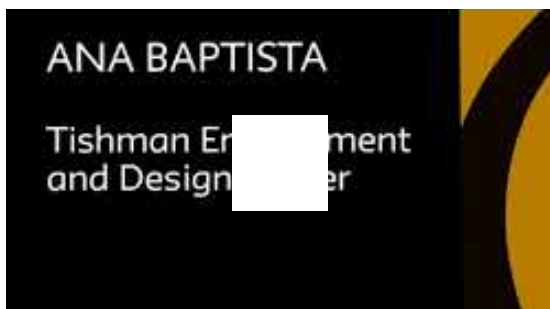
Piper Carter



Gloria Walton



Sujatha Jesudason, PhD



Ana Baptista, PhD

The ***EJ is Non-negotiable*** blog is part of the development of a new leadership program for environmental justice leaders. In coordination with EJ leaders from across the country, the [Tishman Environment and Design Center](#) and [Social Movements + Innovation Lab](#) are launching the Environmental Justice (EJ) Movement Fellowship, which will support the capacity of

leaders nationwide to develop, scale, and implement disruptive strategies to advance systemic solutions to the urgent crises of climate change and inequality.

LEARN MORE

READ MORE ABOUT THE LEADERS...

JULIA BERNAL

Julia Bernal is an enrolled tribal member at Sandia Pueblo, but is also from Taos Pueblo and the Yuchi-Creek Nation. She co-directs Pueblo Action Alliance, a community driven, grassroots Environmental Justice organization that promotes cultural sustainability by addressing environmental and social impacts in indigenous communities. She is one member of a growing Indigenous youth movement holding decision-makers accountable for a legacy of colonial extraction in New Mexico and across Turtle Island, while lifting up and continuing the struggle for Indigenous Sovereignty passed on by elders and ancestors. The organization is indigenous and women-led.

We all have so much to learn

from Free, Prior, and Informed
Consent from Indigenous
communities. [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#)
[Instagram](#) [#Landback](#)
[#Waterback](#)

MELISSA MILES

Melissa Miles is the new Executive Director of the [New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance](#) which centers the voices of Color, low wealth, and indigenous communities throughout New Jersey in their struggles for environmental justice. Although she received an MA in Anthropology from The New School, she is adamant that the best and most relevant solutions to the world's current environmental crises come from communities and not from universities. Her expertise is rooted in her lived experience and her commitment to making sure that people at the frontlines are the protagonists in the struggle for their future. She became active in the EJ struggle when her son got asthma and realized that pollution was the cause. She has been a spokesperson for a number of national and international alliances, such as the [Climate Justice Alliance](#), and was part of a mighty group of EJ leaders that moved the [landmark EJ Cumulative Impacts Law](#), one of the strongest environmental laws in the US, to realization in 2020. The future is bright for Melissa. [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#)

MARIA LOPEZ NUÑEZ

Polluters quake when Maria sets them in as a target, because what she may consider a day's work, others see as a winning streak. As the Organizing and Advocacy Deputy Director for [Ironbound Community Corporation](#) in Newark, NJ, Maria has had her hand in a number of EJ, social, housing, and racial justice struggles. These notable wins include the launch of [Compassionate NJ](#) during COVID and the [Right to Counsel](#) in 2019, which provides free legal assistance to low-income tenants. As a steering committee member of [Newark Communities for Accountable Policing](#), she took the struggle to implement the strongest community police oversight program in the nation to the Supreme Court. With the help of movement sisters, like Melissa Miles and others, Maria wielded her political savvy to pass precedent-setting [Bill S232](#) that requires the New Jersey DEP to deny permits based on the cumulative impacts of pollution in order to protect overburdened communities. Maria is just rolling up her sleeves. [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [Instagram](#)

PIPER CARTER

Out of Detroit, Piper Carter is an Arts and Culture Organizer in entertainment, education, environmental, food justice, and maker space communities. She is Host of the [**Piper Carter Podcast on Detroit is Different**](#) where she discusses social justice and hip hop. She is an image maker, fashion photographer, and has been featured four times on Tyra Banks' VH-1 show, "The Shot." Piper was the first Black Woman to shoot for publications such as French Vogue, British Elle, New York Times, Spin, & Essence Magazines. Piper is co-Founder of [**We Found Hip Hop**](#) and the creator of [Dilla Youth Day](#). She is also Creator and Editor-In-Chief for [thestudioarena.com](#). She is a volunteer for [East Michigan Environmental Action Council \(EMEAC\)](#), cohort member of [Detroit Equity Action Lab](#) and is always the first person to show up, turn up, and turn out a crowd. Piper intimately understands the deep connection of relationships, healing, culture, and art to the heart and pulse of the movement. [Twitter](#) [Instagram](#) [Facebook](#)

GLORIA WALTON

Described as one of the country's most exciting "next generation" political leaders, Gloria Walton is committed to creating equitable climate solutions that center the people closest to the problem. Gloria is an award-winning organizer, writer, and the President and CEO of **The Solutions Project**. Most recently, she has been turning philanthropy inside out with her bold actions to move grassroots to the center of the [Bezo's Earth Fund climate funding strategy](#) in coordination with the Climate Justice leaders. There is more to come for sure from Gloria. She is solutions oriented, passionate, brilliant, and is putting money where her mouth is by moving millions to EJ and the whole grassroots movement. [Twitter](#) [Instagram](#) [Facebook](#)

ANGELA MAHECHA

Angela Mahecha is a Climate Justice leader originally from Colombia. Prior to leading the EJM Fellowship, Angela was the Executive Director of the **Climate Justice Alliance**, where she centered the national influence of 74 frontline urban and rural alliances, movement-support organizations, and base-building grassroots groups to move forward a Just Transition and Just Recovery within the climate movement.

She has served as a leader of multiple social movement organizations including: It Takes Roots, the Rising Majority, La Via Campesina North America, US Food Sovereignty Alliance, the Rural Coalition, Friends of People Affected by Dams from Brazil, People's Climate March, the Green New Deal National Network, and United Frontline Table. As a natural weaver, she facilitates relationships between sectors such as greens, philanthropy, and now academia, with those on the frontlines of the ecological crisis. In her advisory roles with the Fund to Build Grassroots Power, the Mosaic Fund, the Building Equity and Alignment for Impact Fund, and other philanthropic partners, she has been able to move millions to the grassroots.

SUJATHA JESUDASON, PHD

Dr. Sujatha Jesudason is a Professor of Professional Practice in Management. For more than 25 years, Dr. Jesudason has worked as an activist, organizer, and scholar in a range of social justice movements and is a leading voice in movement building with a focus on race, gender, innovation, and human genetics. A serial start-up leader, she was the Executive Director of CoreAlign, a reproductive justice organization teaching innovation for social change to

founded in 2012. Dr. Jesudason is Principle at the [Social Movements + Innovation Lab](#). Social Movements + Innovation provides space and tools for social justice leaders to explore and experiment with new and innovative ways to address some of society's most entrenched problems of inequality and repression. She is a co-founder of the Environmental Justice Movement Fellowship

ANA BAPTISTA, PHD

Dr. Baptista is an Assistant Professor of Professional Practice in the Environmental Policy and Sustainability Management Program. She is also an Associate Director of the [Tishman Environment and Design Center](#). She has nearly two decades of work within the EJ movement and her research and professional practice focuses on environmental justice policies and community based strategies for tackling environmental injustice. Dr. Baptista's research extends to a wide range of issues; zero waste and anti-incineration, climate justice, urban air pollution mitigation policies, and the impacts of the global goods movement. She is a co-founder of the Environmental Justice Movement Fellowship. [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [Instagram](#)

We asked our interviewees to shout out some of their partners. Please check out these organizations dedicated to disrupting the status quo and creating a just future.

[CEED](#)

[Coalition for Healthy Ports](#)

[East Michigan Environmental Action Council](#)

[Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives](#)

[Ironbound Community Corporation](#)

[LVEJO](#)

[New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance](#)

[Seeding Sovereignty](#)

[Tewa Women United](#)

[Three Sisters Collective](#)



#EJisNonNegotiable #First100Days #ClimateAction
#BuildBackFossilFree

