



Report on the Kettering Foundation's

Global Outreach:

The Year in Review—2022



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Foreword

Rethinking Kettering's International Network

In June 2021, Kettering established a team, headed by Guillermo Correa and supported by Jaco Roets, Ruby Quantson Davis, and Tendai Murisa, to reflect on the opportunities and challenges concerning the international network that has grown around the Kettering Foundation's work. Together, they asked some pertinent questions: What does the international network currently look like? What are the opportunities for cocreation and collaborative learning and action? How can we rethink the foundation's international work?



The exercise was driven through reflective conversations with interested international alumni. These regional conversations were the start of a process to identify easy wins and current examples of cocreation, including mapping out a future network. Four regional conversations were held via Zoom, taking into account the different time zones: Americas and the Caribbean, Europe, Middle East and North Africa, and Asia/Pacific.

The main objective of these meetings was to explore ways of weaving a more purposeful international network, including strengthened feedback loops between the foundation and the international members.

These conversations gave alumni an opportunity to share the issues that they are currently facing in their various contexts. They focused on exploring how the network can be organized to enhance the capacity of working together outside of formal Kettering Foundation events.

The guiding questions for these regional conversations were:

What are ways of strengthening the international network?

What can you offer/bring to the international network?

What are the pressing issues in your region/country? Which ones can we collaborate on as a network?

How do we mutually strengthen the relationship between the international network and the Kettering Foundation?

How do we deepen the work we do together?

The international team reported excitement among those they spoke to about the potential for enhancing the capacity of the network for sharing best practices, learning from each other, drawing from expertise spread across the regions for local reflections, collaborative work, and ongoing solidarity across issues. Many felt that the first step should be to leverage technology to establish interactive ways of continuous engagement and sharing of information. In all conversations, there was a call to map out various interests and current work of network members. This would then form the basis for collaborative work, which would include a broad range of areas such as learning platforms, developing toolkits for citizen engagement (e.g., youth engagement), and research, among other experiments. There could also be thematic working groups within and across regions that people could join as needed.

In this vein, some "low-hanging fruit" was identified for immediate implementation, including the development of newsletters in regions that are ready and have the capacity for this. Other ideas included revitalizing social media pages for ongoing communication, information sharing, and space to ask questions. These interventions present opportunities for more regular engagement. Some participants also pointed to existing micronetworks, with the potential and vision to connect members within and even beyond their current regions.

What do members bring to the international network?

This question was intended to focus on the value and resources within the network. It is a shift from dependence towards cocreation, ensuring shared ownership and long-term sustainability. The resources identified include:

Commitment and passion to be in the network

Thematic and region-focused expertise

Capacity to share experiences and practices

Incorporating lessons from other networks

Organizing and mobilizing the network

Research/knowledge generation

Willingness to actively share various writings, tools, and practices

Organizational and network capability/capacity, which can be deployed to enhance the work of the KF network

Availability to provide technical support within initiatives established by network members

What are the pressing issues from across all regions?

The concerns gathered from all the regions also made clear several global cross-cutting issues:

- Youth marginalization
- Corruption
- Loss of interest in elections
- Shrinking civic space
- Threats to democracy
- Distrust
- Authoritarianism
- Populist leaders

How do we explore ways of mutually strengthening the relationship between the international network and the Kettering Foundation?

We could consider leveraging the international network to broaden our own reach and influence. The participants suggested a number of possible initiatives that the network could host:

- Quarterly structured (regional/thematic) meetings with a clear agenda
- Collaboration within the international network around the different kinds of research that they do
- Joint publication of the work done by the international network, e.g., a network journal
- Exchanges among people in the network
- Ongoing self-managed conversations that are enabled by leveraging technology
- Connecting the work of the foundation with the work of the network through shared reflective sessions, sense-making, and identifying cross-cutting themes, concerns, and ideas

One important lesson is that there is a tension between creating a self-governing network and strengthening the relationship of the network with the foundation.

Next Step: A Kettering Convening

We worked with the international network team to convene other members of the network. This meeting took place just months into the foundation's leadership transition when on April 4, 2022, we welcomed Sharon L. Davies as our new president and CEO.





The convening took place in July as part of Kettering's Deliberative Democracy Exchange (DDEx). This was the first hybrid DDEx since the start of the pandemic, and the first time that many in the international network had come together since 2019. Meetings were held on the foundation's campus. The members of the international network who were invited included civil society professionals from all of the major global regions, though the group was kept intentionally small to allow for physical distancing. (A full list of participants is included in the appendix.)

The weeklong series of meetings provided Davies with an introduction to the international network and allowed members of the network to begin a process of brainstorming opportunities to reimagine how those in the network might work with the foundation. This working session explored ways to grow, deepen, and strengthen the network, as well as to begin to chart a course for how it might best respond to the challenges that democracy faces around the world.

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Global Outreach in 2022

Following the July convening, a team composed of Kettering president Sharon Davies, vice president and director of international programs Maxine Thomas, and senior program officer for international programs Paloma Dallas embarked on a series of international trips to meet with members of the network and take further stock of their work and the global state of democracy.

What are the most critical challenges facing democracy around the world? How can we gain greater insight into the problems here in the United States by learning from our international colleagues? These were some of the questions that the team explored when they traveled with Kettering board members Edwin Dorn and Roberto Saba in Brazil and Argentina in August 2022. They expanded their inquiries in November and early December when they traveled to Japan to meet with another member of the international network and some potential partners.

This international travel was an opportunity to raise the visibility of the Kettering Foundation in the democracy space, gain new perspectives from different vantage points, and further explore the untapped potential of the international network.

What follows in this report is an encapsulation of the efforts of the foundation in 2022 and how it endeavored to learn from and alongside the international network. It also captures how we have begun to reimagine the possibilities for international work in advance of a foundationwide strategic planning process that is taking place in 2023.



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Travel to Brazil



When the Kettering Foundation team of Davies, Thomas, and Dorn arrived in São Paulo, Brazil, the country was less than two months from an extremely divisive election in which then-current president Jair Bolsonaro was running against former president Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva, who had previously been convicted of corruption charges before the supreme court annulled the conviction. Bolsonaro, behind in the polls, had begun claiming—without evidence—that Brazil's voting systems were vulnerable to manipulation and raising other concerns about fraud—also without evidence—leading many to draw parallels to former US president Donald Trump and his 2020 election campaign.



José Miguel Vivanco, former executive director of the Americas division at Human Rights Watch, has called Bolsonaro an "apologist for Brazil's abusive military dictatorship," under which some 20,000 people were tortured and more than 400 killed or "disappeared," in that their bodies were never found.¹ In 2019, Bolsonaro reestablished the annual celebration of the 1964 military coup that ushered in 20 years of military rule, and he has praised some of the region's other former dictators, including Stroessner of Paraguay and Pinochet of Chile.²

This was just some of the backdrop to the Kettering team's visit in which they met with Telma Gimenez, a longtime member of the international network and a senior professor at Brazil's State University of Londrina. The team also spent time with contacts and colleagues of Kettering board member Ed Dorn, as well as other potential partners and allies.

Following the Kettering team's return to the United States, Bolsonaro performed better in the election than had been expected and neither candidate received more than 50 percent of the votes, triggering a run-off election for the end of October. Lula won the run-off election, but by a slim margin. On January 1, he was sworn in as president, and a week later, on January 9, Bolsonaro supporters stormed government buildings in the capital city of Brasília in an action that had striking similarities to the January 6, 2021, attack on the US Capitol.

¹ "Brazil: Bolsonaro Threatens Democratic Rule," Human Rights Watch, September 15, 2021, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/09/15/brazil-bolsonaro-threatens-democratic-rule>.

² "Brazil: Bolsonaro Celebrates Brutal Dictatorship," Human Rights Watch, March 27, 2019, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/03/27/brazil-bolsonaro-celebrates-brutal-dictatorship>.





Visits to Understand the Local Context and Identify Potential Partners

The Memorial of Resistance of São Paulo

The museum is a memorial to the many Brazilian citizens who resisted repression by the Brazilian military dictatorship that came to power in a 1964 coup and ruled the country until 1985. It serves to educate the public about the importance of human rights and works to ensure that people do not forget the shocking human rights violations that were committed. It preserves the memories and pays tribute to all who fought and still fight against oppression.

The São Paulo Museum of Art

Themes of oppression were also present in the artwork exhibited in this museum. Two examples: a sculpture of a small Black boy trying to become White by pouring white paint over himself and a video in which three Black men shared what to do if you are stopped by the police—their comments seemingly innocuous until you focused on what was being said. These pieces, in particular, drove home the powerful role that art can play, and Kettering has begun a preliminary exploration into the role of art in a democracy.

Meeting with David Hodge, the Consul General at the US Consulate

This was a preliminary conversation about opportunities for the Kettering Foundation to collaborate with the consulate in our international programs. This meeting was followed by a meeting at the US Embassy in Buenos Aires the next week.

Open Society Foundations in Rio de Janeiro

In meeting with Pedro Abramovay, executive director of Latin America and the Caribbean at the Open Society Foundations, Kettering discovered a welcoming potential partner for collaboration in this work. This meeting was a follow-up to meetings with Open Society in DC and a way to get a deeper understanding of the stresses on democracy in Latin America.





Presentations

August 16: University of São Paulo's Institute of Advanced Studies on Diversity, Mental Health, and Affirmative Action in Universities seminar, remarks by Sharon Davies and Ed Dorn

The seminar was live streamed by 500 people. Davies spoke about the legal history of race-conscious admissions policies in US higher education, and Dorn spoke about the relationship between democracy, diversity, and the struggle for human rights in the United States. There were clear parallels between presentations about Brazil and the United States as each country continues to face enormous education, wealth, and opportunity gaps between their White and Black citizens.

Network Conversations

On August 19, Thomas, Davies, and Telma Gimenez held a meeting by Zoom with former Kettering international fellows and other research exchange participants from Brazil,³ and Paloma Dallas and Sarah Dahm in Kettering's Dayton offices. Participants described their relationship to Kettering and the work they were currently doing. They also discussed the democratic challenges they were seeing in Brazil.

One participant said, "When we were at Kettering, democracy was already in trouble, but we could never have imagined how much worse it would get." Another participant said that things that were "once hidden" in Brazil are now out in the open. He gave the country's colonial legacy as an example, saying that addressing today's problems would require reckoning with the long "backstory." For example, he said that if we want to protect the Amazon, we need to listen and learn from the indigenous people of Brazil. "They know how to protect the Amazon."

³ The Brazilian participants in the conversation included Ana Claudia Souza, Andressa Molinari, Elaine Mateus, Fábio Cavazotti, Leonardo Correa, Marcelo Frazão, Michele El Kadri, Rafael dos Santos, Roger O'Hara, Rosângela Pezente, Telma Gimenez, and Priscila Fonseca.

Deep Divides

Many spoke about the deep political divisions in Brazil today and how challenging it is for people to talk to one another. A participant said, "Today people are only talking to like-minded others. We need more spaces for dialogue. We need to do the work of bringing everyone in."

Participants described this as a challenge across the political spectrum. One participant said, "I have been involved with a leftist political group, and it is difficult for them to open up and listen to other ways of seeing things. They tend to attack opponents instead of listening to other points of view." Another participant said that in her city of Londrina there is a lot of support for President Jair Bolsonaro, and she finds it difficult to talk to people.

Beyond Talk

Another theme was that to encourage dialogue across political divides, sometimes efforts have to extend beyond talk. One participant said that she saw potential in "doing things together." She said, "If we start to do things with people, it helps foster collaboration. . . . We need people who can do things together so we can believe that it is still possible." Others talked about doing something together as a first step, to build a space that fosters the ability to listen to one another. A participant said, "An important tool is acting." One participant found that especially true in rural communities. In those communities, "you connect as humans, not via conversation, like in São Paulo, like in the city."



Davies asked, "What might the work look like if we want to impact our world and respond sufficiently to the threats we are facing today? These threats are much different than what they were 40 years ago, when Kettering first set the current agenda."

Thomas added, "We aren't just coming and asking you to do something for us. We are asking how, together, we might do this. This is the opening of a conversation that we hope will spread and widen. We have thoughts, but we don't have answers. . . . What are the challenges we are working on together, and how will we arrange ourselves as partners to address them?"

One suggestion was to make the work more accessible to non-English speakers, noting that one challenge with attending Kettering events in the past has been the requirement that people speak enough English to engage. "Globally, English makes sense but locally we also need to reach those who are non-English speakers," said the participant. Another participant suggested thinking about the network as global but with lots of local cells. The local cells would do their own, locally driven work but be connected to other nodes around the world. It would help people not feel isolated, said the participant. This would require that people share regularly what is happening in their own context. They would need, as one participant called it, "well-oiled" communication channels. Davies encouraged the group to continue sharing their ideas with Kettering. "We are very grateful for your thinking with us."

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Travel to Argentina





On August 21, the Kettering Foundation team arrived in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where they were joined by Dallas and 15 members from the international network. This included members of the original network team and other colleagues from the Americas and around the globe. A week of meetings, fact-finding opportunities, and speaking events was organized by the Argentine Network for International Cooperation (RACI), an organization made up of Argentine civil society organizations. This gathering was spearheaded by Guillermo Correa, RACI's executive director, who founded the organization shortly after his time as a Kettering international fellow in 2006. He worked closely in his planning with Kettering board member and Argentine native, Roberto Saba. (A complete list of the international network participants is included in the appendix.)

The gathering was an experiment in many ways. It was the first time in decades the Kettering Foundation had hosted a meeting or series of meetings in another country. It was also a departure from standard Kettering meetings in that the objectives were much more open-ended. As with the Zoom call with our Brazilian colleagues, the overarching question here was how those in the network might work with Kettering to imagine a new kind of collaborative relationship that would, as Thomas put it, be greater than the sum of its parts. How could

the network be a global force for supporting democracy around the world, especially in a time of democratic backsliding and autocratic creep?

Correa and Saba described the week's events in terms of both "internal work" and "external exposure." The internal work was predicated on a recognition that the world is facing major challenges: Russia's war in Ukraine, challenges to democracy in multiple countries, and inequities that were both newly exposed and exacerbated by the pandemic. At the same time, the Kettering Foundation itself is in a moment of transition. All of this offered an opportunity for the foundation and the international network to think about how, together, we might face these global challenges. The remainder of the week was about exposure to the Argentine context and an introduction to civil society and democracy-building organizations and efforts in Buenos Aires.

At the time of the Kettering team's arrival in Argentina, inflation had hit 70 percent. The country's vice-president, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, was facing up to 12 years in prison on corruption charges; protests erupted outside her home, only blocks from the team's hotel. Days after our team left Argentina, there was an assassination attempt on her life. Yet all of this was just a very small piece of the democratic terrain explored in Buenos Aires.

Visits to Understand the Local Context and Identify Potential Partners

Government of the City of Buenos Aires

In the beautiful glass-walled building that houses city government, the group heard from Hernán Charosky about open government and citizen participation programs in Buenos Aires. Charosky, who had previously attended a multinational symposium at Kettering, is coordinator of the Dialogue Team and Collaborative Public Policies. "It is great to have exchanges with people who have the same concerns we have," said Charosky. The minister of government, Jorge Macri, spoke as well, saying, "There are a lot of creative ideas that can come from citizens. When we are able to work in a horizontal way, there is a lot of value added. . . . Our children, our grandchildren will expect a better government. We need to start building that today." Roberto Saba noted that "after we recovered democracy in 1983, we were very enthusiastic. But then frustration set in." He described working with the Citizen Power Foundation when he went to Kettering for the first time 30 years ago. He said that he thinks about the butterfly effect when he sees where the movement has led us.





The Argentine Israeli Mutual Association (AMIA)

AMIA is a 100-year-old organization supporting Argentina's Jewish community. The visit was an introduction to the organization and a discussion of their efforts to rebuild after a bombing in 1994, which was the deadliest antisemitic attack outside Israel since the Holocaust.

The Latin American Justice and Gender Team (ELA)

Natalia Gherardi, the executive director of the Latin American Justice and Gender Team, gave a dynamic presentation about the multigenerational women's movement in Argentina that led to the #NiUnaMenos ("Not one less," meaning no more women dying due to gender-based violence) and green scarf protests and actions, which led, among other things, to the legalization of abortion in Argentina in 2020. Gherardi described a tweet sent by journalist Marcela Ojeda, who had been covering a series of murders of young women. In exasperation, she sent a tweet: "Aren't we going to raise our voices? They are killing us." This tweet, she said, kicked off a movement. "Women who had been working on gender equality for 20 years could

never have dreamed of this," Gherardi said. The movement first rallied against "femicide," but then it grew. The challenge today, she said, is to understand that there are no women's problems and rights. There are only human rights that impact women in particular ways. If this is not made clear, these issues will always be sidelined as "gender" agenda.

Ex ESMA, Space for Memory and Human Rights

This space was created to remember the human rights abuses committed during the Argentine dictatorship between 1976 and 1983 in which at least 30,000 people were murdered or "disappeared." During that time, the building served as both a school for aspiring navy officers and a clandestine center for detention, torture, and extermination. Some 5,000 people were detained at this site alone. As in Brazil, many of those responsible for torture and killings are still alive, and efforts are still underway to hold those responsible to account. The space is a chilling reminder of the horrors that people are capable of inflicting on one another, as well as how relatively recent the return to democracy was.



Meet and Greet

An evening gathering gave the Kettering Foundation group time with a larger group of former international fellows, former exchange participants from Buenos Aires, and others from the local human rights and civil society sector. Davies gave thanks to all who attended and offered informal remarks about the work of the foundation and global threats to democracy.



Fundación Navarro Viola

In the offices of the Fundación Navarro Viola, the group heard a presentation about the work of Amnesty International Argentina, particularly about the challenges faced by indigenous peoples and efforts to protect LGBTQ rights. "Argentina has had some leadership in same sex marriage, abortion rights . . . but we are experiencing a backlash against it all," said Mariela Bielski, the executive director of Amnesty International Argentina. The human rights movement in general, she said, is experiencing a backlash around the world. "The indigenous movements in Argentina are powerful. Taking to the streets is part of Argentine DNA." Still, she noted, these movements don't always translate into rights.



US Embassy in Buenos Aires

There was a meeting with Abigail Dressel, Deputy Chief of Mission; Luke Schtele, Cultural Affairs Officer; Ricardo Wildman, Public Engagement Specialist for Policy; and Betsaida Torres Matos, Exchanges and Alumni Coordinator.



Presentations

August 24: Navarro Viola Foundation panel discussion, "The Work of the Kettering Foundation: Challenges Ahead"

Acting as emcee, Guillermo Correa opened the event, which was also live streamed: "It is a dream to have all of you here in Buenos Aires." The experiment, he said, "is to learn from each other and to think together about the central challenges we are facing today in democracy. We bring you together," he said, "as citizens of the world."

Thomas talked about the Kettering Foundation, its international work, and the opportunity to rethink this work, especially given the challenges that democracy is facing around world. She was followed by a panel of speakers that included Ruby Quantson Davis, Tendai Murisa, and Jenny Zapata, all members of Kettering's international network and participants in the week's events. Davies provided closing remarks. (Transcripts of all of their remarks are included in the appendix.)

Ruby Quantson Davis

"I am a product of networks; networks that promote knowledge sharing, networks that engage communities, and networks that advocate for change. Networks such as the Kettering Foundation international group," said Quantson Davis, who is originally from Ghana and now living in Cambridge, England. "I would like to acknowledge all who have contributed space, knowledge, and skills to inform who I am."

She later closed by saying, "It is important to note that those against this kind of global work are organized, syndicated, sophisticated, and resourced. We cannot afford to be divided by organizational differences. Our problems are interlinked so our actions require greater networking and interconnectedness."

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Tendai Murisa

Murisa, from Zimbabwe, said that the Kettering Foundation is both a physical space and a set of ideas. For this discussion, he noted, he would look at Kettering as a set of ideas. "Coming from the Global South," he said, we are inundated by "silver bullets." What he found refreshing at Kettering was that it took a different approach and introduced him to the broader notion of democracy itself.

He noted that those coming from military regimes, colonization, and similar circumstances were told to create a new constitution and related institutions and to establish rule of law. "We did that, but we still don't have democracy." Murisa continued, "Democracy is not only under threat . . . the project of development itself is in retreat. . . . How do we broaden our understanding of democracy to create a consensus? How do we reassert citizens at the center?"

Jenny Zapata

The panel concluded with Jenny Zapata from Mexico. She described her time at Kettering: "I met people from different parts of the world. . . . It was a rare luxury to . . . talk, reflect, exchange ideas, and think about democracy." She closed by stating that the commitment and work of democratic citizenship (understood not in legal terms) "is like a strong muscle, but it's a muscle that we need to exercise every day."

Concluding Remarks

The event ended with remarks from Davies about the future of the foundation. She noted that the foundation's founder, Charles F. Kettering, "had a particular kind of mind." He was an innovator. He recognized "the need to always be open to change and the need to innovate as changing circumstances require." She later closed by recognizing the international network as an incredible asset and a "formidable weapon," for taking on the threats to democracy around the world.





August 25: Palermo University, “The Challenges of Democracy,” keynote address by Sharon Davies and remarks from Roberto Saba, Maxine Thomas, and Ed Dorn

The event was open to university faculty and students and was also live streamed. (Transcripts from their remarks can be found in the appendix. An article based on Davies' keynote address was published on September 15, International Day of Democracy, in the *Fulcrum*.)



Kettering board member, Palermo University law professor, and former dean of its law school, Saba began by recalling the enormous expectations for democracy in the early 1990s as democratic revolutions took place around the globe, from Eastern Europe to Latin America to South Africa. But delivering on these promises has been difficult, he said. We have begun to see in all these regions a certain frustration with the results of democracy. He ended his remarks, stating, “The threats we're talking about here are serious ones. And they have a global profile [with] strategic global efforts targeting the future of our democracy.” And yet, he said, there is potential for collaboration from civil society to respond to these threats.



Davies then spoke about the challenges facing democracy around the world and in the United States. “The strength of a democracy can be measured by the fullness of the rights a nation-state accords all its residents, and the steps it takes to promote unity among them. Divisiveness is the enemy of democracy. Inclusiveness is the answer.” She closed by saying, “It gives me great hope that we are in this fight together today, and that, together, we can work to make our world a better place for everyone, creating fuller, more inclusive democracies, where all members of our communities can participate in the project of self-governance, as civic equals.”

Her remarks were followed by those of Dorn, who spoke about what he called the "zenith of democratic practices in the United States" in the 1960s as more women and African Americans could participate in politics and hold public office. But, he said, there was nothing inevitable about that progress. "Very soon after those victories were achieved, there . . . began serious pushback. Over a series of decades, they have managed to mount successful opposition." He spoke about the popular Martin Luther King Jr. aphorism: *The arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice*. "He was not suggesting an inevitability toward achieving justice," said Dorn. "What he meant was that people who wanted justice . . . have to bend that arc."

Dorn was followed by Thomas, who began by talking about her own motivation for pursuing law as a young woman. "One of the reasons that I went into law was that I hoped we could change the world by having a few more lawyers that looked like me." She then talked about the work of the Kettering Foundation and the challenge of responding to the threats facing democracy today. "If we don't build an inclusive democracy, it's not going to get built," she said. "We have to focus our energy on making the world . . . a fuller, richer, more inclusive democracy." And she closed with a quote attributed to Margaret Mead: "Never underestimate the power of a few committed citizens to change the world. In fact, it is the only thing that ever has."

After questions were posed by those in attendance, Davies closed the session with these thoughts: "The war for democracy is never over. We are . . . today's defenders of democracy. . . . We must be in this together; we must never give up this fight for the rights for all because there will always be those making . . . distinctions between valuable people and less valuable people. And these are the impulses that defenders of democracy must be prepared ever to battle."

Network Conversations

Saba spoke about the strategies being used globally to undermine democracy, citing Steve Bannon, President Donald Trump's adviser, sowing doubt about the integrity of Brazil's presidential election and Hungary's prime minister, Viktor Orbán, being invited to the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in the US. His concern was that these efforts were strategic and organized, which increased the pressure on democracy's supporters to be equally strategic in their efforts.

After participants spoke about their time at Kettering and their current work, the conversation moved to a discussion of the challenges in democracy around the globe. As people spoke, a few central, though interrelated, themes emerged:

- Too much focus on elections
- Political polarization
- Growing authoritarianism
- Democracy not delivering on its promises for many
- Those not engaged

The Focus on Elections

One participant talked about the importance of not reducing democracy to elections. "Elections are necessary," he said, "but they are not sufficient for democracy." He said that a lot of money is going to election observing to determine that the rules are being followed. This is important, but the focus remains on the process rather than the substance of democracy. "As a network," he said, "one of our unique opportunities is reasserting citizens in that equation." The democracy space, he said, is a contested space, and using the lens of citizens—seeing citizens as "the connector"—is crucial. "What are the conditions for democracy? Active citizens. Not just with the agency to vote, but to really be problem solvers." Working with Kettering, he said, has helped him to re-evaluate democracy from this broader perspective.

Another participant reflected that some of the worst governments had come about through elections. He noted that when candidates play on people's fear, the results can undermine democracy. Another participant added that, when he thinks about elections, he tends to think about corruption. This sentiment was echoed by another participant who said that she has heard from many in Chile that they don't trust institutions because they think politicians are all corrupt. This has led her to work at the grass roots and try "to speak the language that people speak."

Others talked about the dangers of misinformation, disinformation, and fake news, especially at election time. Another problem, said one participant, is that we have these winner-take-all elections. "In tight elections, the winner wins by this minor margin and everyone else is a loser."

Political Polarization

Elections can contribute to polarization, but people saw other contributing factors as well, such as social media. Most platforms encourage debate, said one participant. "Debate can be good," he said, but not all the time. "Debate is not the best way to generate agreement or understanding."

Others talked about how corrosive the polarization is. "We are not talking to each other," said one participant. "We are just arguing. We are not listening to each other." "I think this is a global challenge," she continued. "Can we show democratic rule as a strength? Even in a time of war?" Can we show that democracy is effective?

Growing Authoritarianism

As we look at democratic backsliding around the world, said one participant, we see shrinking civic spaces. "The power of people is being threatened." Others agreed that spaces for citizen participation are being shut down. It is a global problem, said another participant, as is anti-immigrant sentiment. He went on to say that in Africa, as they shifted from the Westminster parliamentary model toward the US model with a strong executive, they didn't realize how this encouraged a slide toward authoritarianism. There is a growing tendency toward supporting more authoritarian governments, he said, perhaps in part because democracy is "not delivering, so let's accept anything."

Another participant said that, often, authoritarian leaders use the language of freedom of expression, or they play into people's fears. In Guatemala, he said, power is in the hands of a very few. Often people don't worry about democratic or civic rights if they have a job. It is only when they lose everything that they begin to care. But "then it is too late." For this reason, he said, civic education is important.

Democracy Is Not Delivering on Its Promises

"People tend to accept different regimes if they create value," said one participant. "Is democracy creating value?" Another participant noted that in the last Latin Barometer, a large majority of respondents said they would live in a different system if they could have their basic needs met.⁴ Another participant said that in Jamaica, there is so much poverty and corruption that many citizens might support a coup.⁵

Another participant said that, for young countries, it can be traumatic to make choices. The focus is always on "what democracy has delivered." She worried about democracy's ability to deliver on other social goods, but she also wondered how to shift the focus away from what is delivered to the responsibilities that people have in a democracy.

Another participant said that in Mexico de facto powers are threatening democracy. She said there is a "low-intensity war" that includes drugs, Narcos, but also the trafficking of people. The de facto powers, she noted, include corporate interests as well. Notions of development and wealth creation are also a threat to democracy, in particular, "the idea of infinite economic growth. The only organism that grows infinitely is cancer." Other participants agreed with the dangers posed by de facto powers and the "tyranny of growth."



⁴ Latinobarómetro Corporation, *2020 Latinobarómetro*, <https://www.latinobarometro.org/latContents.jsp>. This report cites that 70 percent of respondents were not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with democracy in their country, with 51 percent of those same respondents stating that they wouldn't mind if an undemocratic government came to power if it would solve the problems. See also "Latin American Democracy Is in Poor But Surprisingly Stable Health: The Pandemic Has Fueled Indifference More Than Authoritarianism," *Economist: The Americas: The Latinobarómetro poll*, October 5, 2021.

⁵ Anthony A. Harriott et al. *The Political Culture of Democracy in Jamaica and in the Americas, 2018/19: Taking the Pulse of Democracy*, LAPOP, December 2020. https://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/jamaica/AB2018-19_Jamaica_Country_Report_V1_rev_W_03.25.21.pdf.

Another said, we "took the term *democracy* and put it in a high place"—an elevated space. And so for many people, it is seen as beyond their control. How do we make democracy a very natural thing? The people opposing democracy, she said, describe their anger as natural. "We have to show and portray democracy as a natural thing. We were born with rights. This is not something that is granted or given to us." Another participant stated, "Democracy might be enacted differently in different contexts. I would like to see multiple ways of characterizing democracy." She noted that the last poll in Brazil found that 75 percent of Brazilians support democracy.⁶ "This is heartening," she said, but "we need to make sure the institutions of democracy are strong."

Those Not Engaged

"In some ways," said one participant, "the world is checking out of the conversation. For many people, [the problems facing democracy] are someone else's problem." One challenge, she said, is how to reach those who are not already engaged and how to be realistic about the barriers to reaching them. Some of the concerns that emerged here echoed some of those above.

One participant noted that the problem isn't that "people are unconcerned about democracy and rule of law. We each want to be treated equally. A woman in a village may not name it as rule of law, but she wants to be treated fairly." The challenge, she said, is to talk about democracy "in ways that people can come to the conversation." Another participant said that a huge challenge in his work is that when people's basic needs are not met, they don't tend to think about democracy. "How can you think about democracy when you are hungry?"

Another participant added, "When citizens do not feel secure, they tend to compromise their rights." She said that in Georgia, the war in Ukraine "affects our everyday life and democracy." Another participant noted that in her country there were avenues for participation, but she wondered if everyone sees these avenues as viable options. "Is everyone considered a citizen? Do they consider themselves a citizen?"

Another participant said, "The people we are fighting against know how to use language. We are doing a poor job of communicating, making people feel part of a system, that they should be active citizens. I think we need to rethink what we are communicating."

⁶"Country Report: Brazil," *Transformation Index, 2022*, Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2022, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2022_BRA.pdf. See also Teresa Romero, "Opinions on Democracy Being a Better Form of Government Than Dictatorship in Brazil from 1989 to 2022," *Statista*, August 25, 2022, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1267046/opinions-better-form-government-brazil/>. In Brazil, 75 percent believe that democracy is better than any other form of government.

Another participant was concerned that she was hearing some say that democracy is not a universal value, that people can't be counted on to say that this is what they want. She worried that such a perspective failed to capture the whole story.

Another participant said it is important to recall why democracy matters. It is really helpful, she said, to have the space to reflect on why we are doing what we are doing. "Why do we fight corruption? We want something better. We want human rights, to be self-determined." In Colombia, she said, the new vice president is an Afro-Colombian woman, and she uses the slogan "*Vivir Sabroso*." This means not just to live, but to thrive. Literally it means "to live deliciously." This, she said, is what people really want from democracy: the chance to live well.

Power Dynamics within the Network

Another thread that wove through the conversation had to do with power dynamics within the network itself, and the need to grapple with them. US foreign policy has at times served to undermine democracy, said one participant. "How do you have a conversation with a superpower around democracy?" Another participant said, "We come from the Global South and North, but we don't name the power imbalance. There are countries that don't have the basic amenities that others have." Funding structures often support this power imbalance, as does foreign policy, she said. How can we talk about these things as well? How do we, she asked, unpack "inequality in this room? Structural racism. Imperialism. The origins [of both] in colonization?"

One participant said that he worried that people are becoming more individualistic. "They no longer know how to work with their neighbors." Another participant, however, was less sure. She worried that people in the network can "speak from a position of privilege, but we don't acknowledge our privilege." Social class must be brought in, she said. "There are people who do count on their neighbors." A major challenge for the network, she said, is to "step away from our positions of privilege to see others in their own struggles."

Another participant said, "We as a network have a lot of knowledge, but first we have to understand each other and each of our contexts."

As the first session wrapped up, one of the participants noted that everyone is in agreement that democracy around the world is on "life support." He pointed out that there has been a professionalization of the participatory democracy field. "The problem with professionalization," he said, "is that everyone outside this room doesn't see a role for themselves. If we don't recognize this, then we will continue to do things to people, rather than with and for them."

Another participant noted that the pandemic forced everyone into the same boat. It also illustrated inequities and the dangers of corruption. "This might be a helpful starting point for all of us," she said.

When the conversation picked up again in a later session, Kettering board member Ed Dorn offered a provocative intervention. He noted that the earlier conversation had been framed around "challenges to democracy," language that Kettering has used for some time. "The word *challenge* conjures up an image for me," he said. "I think of the thugs attacking the Capitol on January 6. A more realistic image is not a fortress being attacked, but two large warring views of the world."

He went on to say that many people have long seen US democracy as a fortress, one that is now under attack. "Sharon, Maxine, and I," he said, "have seen a very different view of the US and always knew that large numbers of people didn't value democracy."

"What our history has taught us is that people in the US valued democracy if they were reasonably confident about winning" he said. "The situation is changing because of demographic shifts. That experience has alerted large numbers of people to the true nature of the system and the relatively shallow roots that democracy has in the US. I think we need to abandon this fortress idea in favor of warring groups."

These comments sparked thoughts from others.

One participant said she wanted to honor this intervention. "George Floyd put front and center

the challenges in the US," she said. She also noted the massive turnout in the US during the last election because of the "culture war." Another participant commented that the US "has always appeared on the outside as a monolithic block. It is helpful to see an image beyond this." He said that he watched the attack on the Capitol on January 6, 2021, with disbelief.

Another participant said that this was one of the few times in the network that they had talked about democracy in the United States. This was a welcomed aspect of the conversation.

Today's problems affect all of us. "It doesn't matter where you are," said another participant, "You will be affected." This means that solutions will have to be cocreated. We no longer live in a world with a superpower that is safe or that can address problems on its own, he said.

As the conversation evolved, many spoke about the need to engage people in a broader notion of democracy, where they could see themselves as having power to make a difference.

A Citizen-Centered Understanding of Democracy

One participant said that she doesn't usually talk about "democracy," because people think of politicians. Instead, she said, "I talk about active citizenship, communities." She said there would be an opportunity for the network if people could identify problems that they can work on together, such as climate change. She imagined Kettering helping to make connections, but she thought they needed to have people take personal responsibility in their own countries.



Another participant noted that one problem with seeing democracy as an ideal is that it can lead people to overlook "the democratic practices already happening in our communities." "Democracy is not some intangible thing out there," she said. "It is here."

"We aren't being educated in democratic practices and citizen competencies," said another participant. "Democracy is a process and daily practice. It is a way of engaging with diversity."

She argued that "deliberative and sustained dialogue are ways to bring together very different people with very different perspectives. They can transform the way they see the other." Dialogue is fundamental, she said, and it can lead to action, but it must be ongoing.

The Limits of This Understanding

Another participant noted that in her work in communities she has seen people gaining power and believing in themselves. "Then at some point they get stuck. They are stopped by something systematic, that has a budget behind it," she said. "This experience can leave the communities worse off than they were before. We need to push these grassroots struggles to another level. . . . We want to be able to shift resources, move power, move capacity."

Another participant agreed. He talked about the unpredictability of funding. "You talk to global foundations, and they say they went through a new strategy. So for those dependent on this funding, you can't plan for more than three years." And the power differential between foundations and communities makes it very difficult for communities to affect these funding decisions. "We work with associations of women and tell them to build structures. They go through this process, and then funding dries up." Are we complicit?

Are we, in this room, helping or hindering democracy? asked another participant "We all know the saying: we are the ones we are waiting for. We have all been at the bus stop for deliberative democracy for a long time. Now we got on the bus and wonder, have we been helping or hindering?"

Davies kicked off the final session by returning to the idea of being strategic. "In a world of almost 8 billion, to have an impact we have to think strategically."

"I believe that the expertise in public deliberation is a real asset, but it may be inadequate for the challenges of the moment. It is valuable to encourage productive dialogue across lines of difference," she said. However, "given the challenges we were talking about, I'm not sure we will want to put all of our eggs in the basket of public deliberation."

At Kettering, she said, staff members have been engaging in a similar set of conversations about the challenges of democracy. Staff, she said, have also been talking to leaders in peer organizations about how the needs of democracy today have shaped the evolution of their work. "All of them spoke about issues around equality, inclusiveness, and belonging," she said. "It is important to me that I am hearing similarities across these conversations."

As director of Kettering's international work, Thomas said she wanted to focus on the urgency of the moment.

"We have these fundamental cleavages in our society that make it impossible for everyone to participate," she said. "We live in this world with these cleavages, and we are tied together by the slenderest of silken threads. Silk is strong, but it breaks. The question is, Will it break on my watch?"

Thomas went on to recall the enthusiasm and hope of the Arab Spring, and how quickly it was lost. "We are at a critical moment." She said that she thinks about the 400 or so people in Kettering's international network: "Are we going to be part of the problem, or part of the solution? The conversation is great, but we need to be mobilized to do more."

The foundation, she said, has to leverage who and what it knows to measure impact. "Each one of you has networks," she said. "We need to both enlarge this network and also think about how to keep it connected."

"One of the nice things about having Sharon here is that she is having us think boldly," said Thomas. "These are challenging times, but we have to step up to the plate."

"In my view," said Saba, "the main threat in Latin America and elsewhere is the undermining of the idea that we can live together." It is the phenomenon of an "us" and a "them." Democracy, he said, relies on "a fundamental idea about the ability to live together, even when we disagree. If this idea is undermined, then we are lost." What we all share is that we believe in democracy as a system that, even if we disagree, we can still live together, he said.

Reflection Session

The week ended with a final session for reflection and a call for participants to submit further reflections in the coming weeks. Thomas made a strong pitch for people to commit to what they can do. Kettering, she said, will do what it can do, but the network will only work if people pull their own weight. She also underscored the importance of creating an inclusive network so the network does not perpetuate the very things it is fighting against.

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On Returning to Dayton

#Democracys

As a step to keep momentum going following the trip to Brazil and Argentina, we organized a social media campaign to mark the International Day of Democracy on September 15. We invited everyone in the network to participate. The campaign took up one of the challenges that had surfaced during conversations in Buenos Aires: how to talk about democracy differently. We also decided to encourage people to use languages other than English to foster more inclusive participation. It was exciting to see many people from countries throughout the international network sharing their reflections.

Continued Zoom Conversations

On the Kettering team's return to the US, we convened a series of Zoom calls with the broader international network to bring others into further conversation. As a result of those rich discussions, foundation staff and members of the international network are exploring new ways to communicate in order to share work and ideas effectively in 2023.



Webinars

We learned that one issue of broad concern was elections, so foundation staff and members of the network planned a webinar. Telma Gimenez of Brazil took the lead in organizing. To be able to shine a light on elections in different regions, two webinars were scheduled.

The first webinar focused on the Americas, with presentations on Colombia, Brazil, and the United States. Sandra Martínez with the Colombian chapter of Transparency International talked about election-related issues in her country, including the loss of credibility in the electoral process, which has led to a weakening of political participation and the risk of corruption when political actors are not held accountable. Pauline Almeida, a Brazilian journalist, spoke about how fake news and conspiracy theories affect elections and the surrounding political environment. Historian and Kettering program officer Alex Lovit discussed gerrymandering and other election policies and practices in the United States that have led to the disenfranchisement of portions of the electorate and government policies that are not representative of popular opinion. And last, Marcela Guillibrand, of Chile's *Ahora Nos Toca Participar* (Now It's Our Turn to Participate) offered some reflections before the conversation was opened up to questions from the audience.



The second webinar featured panelists from Romania, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand. Iulia Georgescu, a consultant for the Romanian government, shared her experiences as an international elections monitor. She discussed how international organizations get involved in elections around the world, the instruments they use, what they monitor, and what they do with the data they collect. Asad Shoaib, a development researcher based in London, talked about how populist narratives affect the electoral landscape and how failures of neoliberal capitalism have left young people, especially in developing countries, vulnerable to leaders who exploit their anger and ignite hatred toward particular groups and communities. Nick Leggett, a former mayor in New Zealand, spoke about how political decisions have become more centralized, leading to the weakening of local governments.

Leggett also talked about how the COVID-19 pandemic has fueled political extremes amid concerns about vaccination mandates, government decision-making, and other more generalized fears. Ziad Majed, a professor of political science, director of the Middle East Studies program at the American University of Paris, and coordinator of the Arab Network for the Study of Democracy, then offered some reflections on cross-cutting themes before the webinar was opened to questions from the audience.

The success of these webinars has led to plans for more such gatherings in 2023.





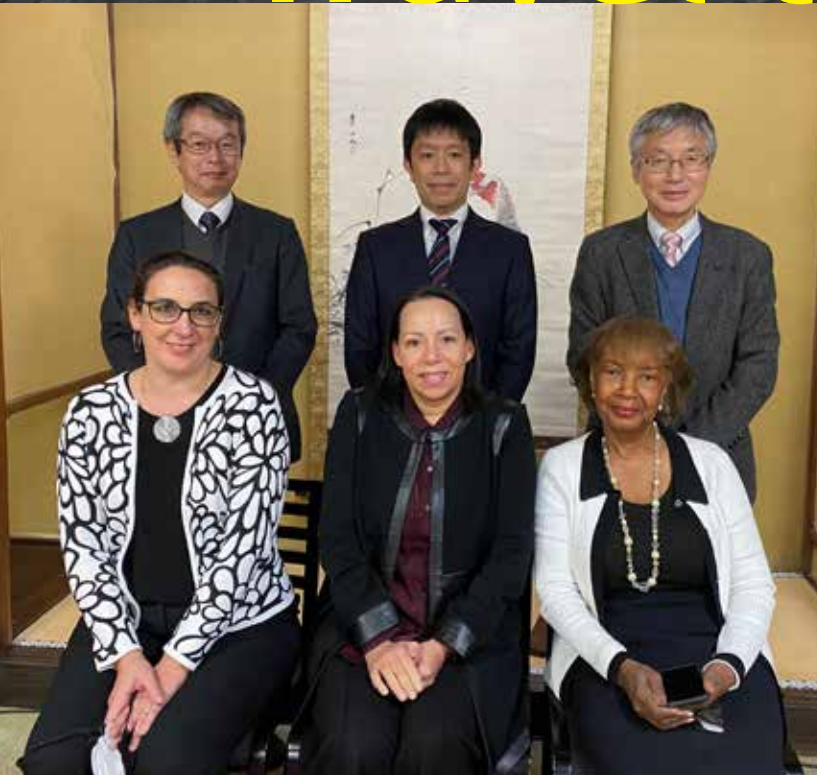
New Collaboration

Eddie Tuiavii from New Zealand and Hernán Charosky of Argentina are working to create a global network of local governments. The public officials within this network would promote civic participation with the citizens of their communities. An inaugural webinar included officials from Buenos Aires city government and local governments in New Zealand for an open discussion about government and citizen participation. Participants also took steps in planning the global network of local governments, with an initial goal of holding a global meeting in the first trimester of 2023.





Travel to Japan





In late November, Davies, Thomas, and Dallas traveled to Japan to continue the foundation's international outreach and exploration. They were invited by Dr. Kazuyoshi Nakadaira, a member of Kettering's international network, who participated in the Deliberative Democracy Institute and later returned to the foundation to learn more about its work. As a professor of civics and social studies, he describes his objective as helping young people learn how to influence government and have their voices heard. He works with future teachers to encourage their sense of democratic agency and that of their students.

Thomas and Davies were invited to speak to students and faculty at Joetsu University of Education in Niigata prefecture, where Nakadaira is on faculty. They also gave lectures at the Japan Association for the Social Studies. During their time in Joetsu, and later in Tokyo, the Kettering team met with potential partners and allies to better understand what opportunities there might be to broaden Kettering's connections in Japan.

During the team's visit, the government of Japan hosted its sixth World Assembly for Women (WAW), which was live streamed. Leaders from around the world came to speak about women's empowerment, gender equality, and overcoming barriers to achieve this equality. According to the 2022 *Global Gender Gap Report*, Japan was rated 116 out of 146 countries in terms of gender equality. In comparison, the United States was listed as 27 and Afghanistan was 146. A conference participant from Afghanistan described the challenge faced by countries like Japan and Afghanistan that had what she called "traditional" cultures. In these cultures, she said, there is a desire to respect tradition, even though women in such cultures often have unequal status. The challenge is how to move beyond slogans and create change.

Shortly after the Kettering team left the country, Japan announced a new national security plan, which would be the country's largest military buildup since World War II. Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said it was an "answer to the various security challenges we face." The decision came amid growing security concerns with China, North Korea, and Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Visits to Understand the Local Context and Identify Potential Partners

Ashoka

Thomas and Dallas met with Nana Watanabe, Makoto Watanabe, and Yoichiro (Yoi) Ashida of Ashoka. Nana Watanabe, the founder and chair of Ashoka Japan, said that identifying changemakers in Japan is, itself, difficult as the culture tends to encourage conformity. One of the changemakers she helped identify and support is journalist Makoto Watanabe, who, because of the online process used for review during the pandemic, has had a "Special Relationship" with Ashoka since 2020.

His idea has been to build a social movement in Japan in which "everyone is an investigative journalist." Concerned that there was little tradition of investigative reporting in Japan, he found that addressing this need required more than simply teaching a new skill set. It led him to try to encourage a broader cultural shift in mindset because societal pressure to conform discourages drawing attention to problems and fighting for change. One of Makoto Watanabe's strategies has been to work with young people, especially in alternative schools, to encourage them to see themselves as changemakers. He describes his work as not only strengthening journalism in Japan but also helping to foster a healthy civil society sector. Finally, the Kettering team and Ashoka members discussed other areas of shared interest, including work on gender inequality.





Fulbright

Thomas and Dallas met with Jeffrey Kim, executive director of the Japan–United States Educational Commission. Thomas, a former Fulbright scholar in Japan, was looking forward to talking to Kim, who was named to the position in July 2022, to learn more about current efforts and discuss ways the two organizations might collaborate. Kim spoke about the Fulbright fellows working across Japan as well as the Japanese Fulbright fellows working in the United States. He also talked about the importance for the United States of having Japan as a democratic ally in Asia.

US Embassy

On their visit to the embassy, the Kettering team met with Shannon Dorsey in the Public Affairs Section. She, too, referenced Japan as an important US ally and a respected voice in Southeast Asia. Dorsey noted that there was work the two countries could do together to promote democracy. She offered helpful insights into relations between the two countries and the most urgent challenges facing Japan, which include gender equity and flagging civic interest among Japanese youth.

Joetsu Junior High School

One of the highlights of the trip was the opportunity to observe civic education in action. When the city of Joetsu began a planning process for the future and sought input from the public, they heard mostly from the elderly. However, teachers at the junior high school in collaboration with Nakadaira saw an opportunity to engage students in the planning. The students conducted research and developed proposals, which they presented in Japanese and in English. The Kettering team was thrilled to observe these presentations and see young people exhibiting democratic skills.

It was interesting that many of the concerns given echoed those of rural communities in the United States, for example, how to encourage young people to stay in the community while also supporting the needs of an aging population. The Joetsu students were also eager for opportunities to exchange with their peers in the United States.



Presentations

Joetsu University

The Kettering team met with Joetsu University of Education president Yasunari Hayashi, and with Nakadaira's faculty colleagues, professors Takashi Shimura and Satoshi Ibaraki. Thomas and Davies then addressed a larger audience of the university's students and faculty prefecture.

Thomas spoke about the Kettering Foundation's work with deliberation, which had influenced how Joetsu professor Kazuyoshi Nakadaira approached instructing future social studies teachers and how he understood the critical role of the civic education of young people. Thomas also talked about how the urgent problems facing democracy were demanding more from the foundation.

Davies talked about the challenges facing democracy today and how the Kettering Foundation is rethinking its work to meet those demands. She noted that when the foundation first began its focus on democracy in the 1980s and 1990s, democracy was in ascendance around the world but now many democracies are under threat. Kettering, she said, is working to respond to those threats.



Japanese Association for the Social Studies (JASS)

The Japanese Association for the Social Studies (JASS), an association that includes professors of geography, history, and civics, invited Davies and Thomas to speak. They talked about the challenges facing democracy and the important role of education in addressing them.

Davies stated, "Authoritarian tendencies will always exist. We need to be prepared to defend democracy from them." To do this, she said, would require education, an understanding of history, and for people to understand their collective power and not see themselves as powerless. It also requires, she said, that we be willing to fight for those whose rights are being denied. Davies closed with a quote from Martin Luther King Jr: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

Nakadaira, who is the author of a popular social studies textbook, also spoke, noting what he had learned from his work with the Kettering Foundation and how it had informed his thinking.

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Questions Going Forward

- What kind of international program do we want to have? What would the goals of such a program be? What strategies should we employ to achieve these goals?
- How should Kettering work with its international network to implement those strategies and accomplish the goals we've set? What would it mean to leverage the collective power of the network to shore up democracy around the world?
- What kind of structures should be considered to sustain the network? These may implicate both the foundation and network members in terms of roles and resources. What would it look like to support local nodes around the world while also building new international connections?
- If we need to be flexible and agile, able to respond rapidly to challenges that arise, what would that mean for our work? How could we foster cocreation with the international network?
- If Kettering wants to better respond to threats to democracy around the globe, how could we work with the international network to do so?

Conclusion

International Task Force

To encourage innovative thinking about the future of the foundation's work, Kettering staff divided up into three separate task forces. One of these task forces has been focused on the foundation's international work. This group explored how we might grow our international program into a global democratic movement. Task force members included Lisa Boone-Berry, Sarah Dahm, Paloma Dallas, Katya Lukianova, Phil Lurie, Ileana Marin, Jaylyn Murray, Randy Nielsen, Kelly Palmer, Isabel Pergande, Maxine Thomas, and Bettina Wright. Presentations on the task force's work were made at the November meeting of Kettering's board of directors and also at the staff semiannual retreat in January 2023.

The task force's findings will contribute to the foundation's strategic planning process, which was kicked off at the January retreat. Many questions remain, and the work of 2023 will be to begin to answer some of them.





Appendix

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“Rethinking Kettering Foundation’s International Network”

Report by Jaco Roets, Ruby Quantson Davis, Tendai Murisa, Guillermo Correa (coordination)

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5. Recommendations - Tendai (highlight the problematization of KF), create themes
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1. Summary of the process

Guillermo Correa completed a research enquiry for the Kettering Foundation in June 2021, exploring the current international network. This research piece was focused on the International Fellows Program. The 2022 research builds on insights and recommendations. The task team was set up by Guillermo Correa, supported by Jaco Roets, Ruby Quantson Davis and Tendai Murisa. Together, they asked pertinent questions to reflect on the opportunities and challenges concerning the Foundation's international program. What does the international network currently look like? What are the opportunities for co-creation and collaborative learning and action? How can we rethink the Foundation's International Work?

The exercise was driven through reflective conversations with interested international alumni. These regional conversations were the start of a process to identify easy wins and current examples of co-creation, including mapping out a future network. Four regional conversations were held, taking into account the different time zones: Americas and the Caribbean, Europe, Middle East and North Africa and Asia\Pacific.

2. Debriefing the journey: what we've done

The main objective of these meetings was to explore ways of weaving a more purposeful international network, including strengthened feedback loops between the Foundation and the international work. Deeper interactions amongst Kettering Foundation' alumni through regional and thematic platforms can be organised by members of the network. These experiments and learning components can then be shared with the Foundation, creating a more connected and reflective learning loop, tying international examples into the current focus areas of the Foundation.

During these conversations we also got an opportunity to hear from participants concerning the ways that they are already connecting with each other within and across regions. These conversations also gave alumni an opportunity to share the issues that they are currently facing in their various contexts.

3. Description of the regionals consultations: Report on 4 Forums held Across Six Regions of KF Alumni

Introduction

A total of four forums were held virtually with members of the KF network spread across Africa, Asia, Caribbean Islands, the MENA region, Europe, Latin America. Most of the meetings lasted 90 mins and were mostly introductory in nature. They were focused on catching up, learning how colleagues had been affected by the global pandemic and exploring ways of how the network can be further organized to enhance working together outside of the formal KF established events in Dayton. The Forums were open to all those interested. Attendance ranged between 25 and 30 participants. Sessions for the conversations were held in a plenary-breakout-plenary format. The four guiding questions were used to initiate the conversations in all forums. The following sections of the report are structured according to these four questions. We conclude the report by providing suggestions for KF to consider on what would be the next steps to strengthen the existing forms of networking amongst the alumni.

Q1. How do we deepen the work we do together?

There is excitement around the possibilities of a thriving and active network which can serve the purpose of sharing best practices, learning from each other, drawing from expertise spread across the regions for local reflections, collaborative work and ongoing solidarity across issues. Many felt that the first step should be about leveraging technology to establish interactive ways of continuous engagement and sharing of information. In all the conversations, there was a call to map out various interests and current work of network members. This would then form the basis for collaborative work. To this extent, collaboration will include a broad range of areas such as learning platforms, developing toolkits for citizens' engagement (e.g. Youth engagement), research, among other experiments. It also means there could be thematic working groups within and across regions that people can join as needed.

There is emerging consensus on the need to 'start small, and slowly build it out (instead of trying to involve everyone) by exploring connections and overlaps which can lay the foundation for more idea sharing and potential collaboration'. In this vein a number of low hanging fruit were identified for immediate implementation, including the development of a newsletter in regions that were ready and had the capacity for this within the network. Other ideas included revitalising social media pages for ongoing communication, information sharing, and space to ask questions. These interventions can present opportunities for more regular engagement, and even more frequent learning exchanges. During conversations, some participants pointed to existing micro-networks, with the potential and vision to connect with more within and even beyond their current regions. Broader connections like these have the potential to promote further learning. A main insight was that while there were many cross-cutting ideas, other strategies were more specific to particular regions, given the various contexts in this network.

Q2. What do members bring to the Network?

It is clear that the current alumni have a wide range of skills, experiences, and focal areas. There were many examples within conversations on how alumni members are reaching out to each other for support, and reflection. This particular question was to focus on the value and resources within the alumni network, pivoting away from focusing on what the Foundation needs to do to sustain the work. In this, it is a shift away from dependence towards co-creation, adding value to the alumni network, ensuring shared ownership, and long-term sustainability.

Some of the resources that participants see themselves bringing to the network are:

- Commitment and passion to be part of the network,
- Thematic and region-focused expertise,
- Capacities to share experiences and practices; making it clear that we can learn a lot from each other
- Incorporating lessons from other networks,
- Organizing and mobilizing the network,
- Research/knowledge generation capacities,
- Willingness to actively share various writings, tools and practices,
- Organisational and network capabilities/capacity which can be deployed to enhance the work of the KF network.
- Availability to provide technical support within initiatives established by network members.

Q3. What are the pressing issues from across all regions?

There are many concerns spread across the regions. The Table below provides a summary of concerns by region and an analysis of what is common across the regions.

Table I - Concerns and cross-cutting issues

Region	Concerns	Cross-cutting Issues
Africa	<p>Failure of the political system. Growing levels of dissatisfaction among the youths.</p> <p>Africa' Youth Bulge is a problem. Youths make up the largest constituency across countries, but countries are failing to create opportunities for youths in the economy and in politics. COVID-19 amplified the challenges that marginalized groups face (an increase in violence, poverty, and limited access to social goods,) leading to high levels of anger.</p> <p>Failure of the existing political system (democracy) to deliver improved material conditions for all.</p> <p>Political elites taking advantage of youths.</p> <p>Partisan-based polarization.</p> <p>Youth losing interest in elections.</p>	<p>Youth Marginalization Corruption</p> <p>Loss of interest in elections</p>
Latin America	<p>Expansion of authoritarianism.</p> <p>Shrinking space for civil society.</p> <p>Corruption</p> <p>Political polarisation (root of the problem), with social media influencing political views much more strongly.</p> <p>COVID-19, in the responses to the pandemic have been polarizing and politicized.</p>	<p>Shrinking civil space</p> <p>Corruption</p>
Europe/ Mena	<p>Democracy is in crisis; further exacerbated by the disruption of COVID-19.</p> <p>Participants spoke about the growing problem of authoritarianism, including how this silences the middle ground.</p> <p>The growing disconnect and distrust is isolating those working in civic engagement, pushing them to the sidelines, and at times placing them at risk.</p> <p>Populism is growing, and this undermines values such as collectivity, shared resources, and co-creation. The answer lies less within community, and more within single actors.</p> <p>Values such as civic engagement, co-creation, and sharing are deteriorating.</p>	<p>Threats to Democracy Distrust</p> <p>Authoritarianism</p> <p>Populist leaders</p> <p>Shrinking civic space</p>

Table I - Concerns and cross-cutting issues (continued)

Region	Concerns	Cross-cutting Issues
Asia/ Pacific	<p>Local government and grassroots work</p> <p>The need for Youth education, education on human rights, education on civic rights and citizenship.</p> <p>The rise of anger directed at political and economic elites,</p> <p>A sense that there is a limited role for citizens beyond voting, Citizens feel they are not being heard</p> <p>The negative impact of COVID-19 on community organizing, Trust between government and citizens at an all time low, Limited impact in terms of addressing issues to do with indigenous nations,</p> <p>Waning interest in elections,</p> <p>As with other regions, trust in democracy as a system of governance is waning.</p>	<p>Loss of interest in elections</p> <p>Distrust</p> <p>Civic Engagement</p> <p>Threats to democracy</p>

Q4. How do we explore ways of mutually strengthening the relationship between the network and KF?

Forum participants acknowledged that:

- The current KF alumni network is an accidental/serendipitous outcome. This alumni network is a direct result of work that KF has been doing over the years.
- The existing network is influenced and mostly led by the work of KF.

KF could also consider leveraging on the international network to broaden its own reach and influence into these regions. The participants suggested that it would be good for the network to have an identity, an agenda (possibly a structure) but still remain identified and/or hosted by KF. The participants suggested a number of possible initiatives that the network could host including;

- Consider hosting quarterly structured (regional/thematic) meetings with clear agenda
- Explore ways in which KF network can collaborate around the different kinds of Research that they do
- Joint publication of the work done by the KF network - consider a network journal
- Organise exchanges among the people on the network
- Organise ongoing self-managed conversations that enabled by leveraging technology
- Connecting the work of the Foundation with the work of the international alumni through shared reflective sessions, sense-making, and identifying cross-cutting themes, concerns, and ideas.

Remaining questions for consideration

1. Who or what is the KF international network/alumni? Is it just a global network with regional expressions or a thematic network?
2. What kind of structures should be considered to sustain the network? This may implicate both the Foundation and network members in terms of roles and resources.

4. Lessons learned

Engaging the international network in these series of conversations generated lessons for the international work while validating some of what we have gleaned from previous years.

1. Within a country or regions there are enough people willing to steer and strengthen the network. KF has to identify and support them.
2. Many in the international network are willing to be a resource to the KF research globally and also to learn with the Foundation.
3. The network sees itself as a resource and this was explicit in the interactions in all four meetings.
4. There is willingness to broaden the KF work from a US focus to demonstrate a more global view of what the issues in and of democracy
5. One size does not fit all. There are rich ideas on different ways to engage. A useful approach could be to identify low hanging fruit, using this as a platform to explore more contextual engagements.
6. Within the network, there are individuals that have more in common with other regionally clusters. These individuals can also serve as a hub for cross-regional learning and sharing, based on their focal areas.
7. Meetings are conducted differently across different contexts. This means deliberation can also look very different, based on the culture and practices. This insight was clear during the meeting with the Pacific cluster. These variations can provide deep insights that can tell the Foundation more about deliberative democracy.
8. Activating the international network can positively feed into other aspects of the international work such as DDI and the fellowship. This feedback loop has the potential to strengthen and build a critical mass to advance the work of the Foundation work. This deeper connection between the Foundation and the international network can be done intentionally. Those individuals that steer regional work can be a resource in developing the DDI curriculum.
9. We engaged a number of people who have not been to Dayton, due to the impact of COVID-19 and travel to Dayton for DDI. The fact that they are engaged, despite only attending regional processes provides a valuable insight. It indicates that there are opportunities to decentralize Dayton, allowing for a broader reach of deliberative practices globally (especially to regions or countries where US Visa processes can be prohibitive). The challenge here is how to keep the balance between online processes and in-person\ face to face events (taking into account Zoom fatigue after 2 years of pandemic).
10. There is a tension between creating a self-governing network and a strengthening of the relationship with the Foundation.

5. Recommendations

To take strategic action given the lessons highlighted earlier, we can consider some of the suggestions that came from the regional conversations:

- Consider some level of communication structure,
- Carry out a rigorous asset mapping (identifying resource). A Google Form can be used to assess and map resources across the international network.
- Set up an online based database (based on the information gathered)
- An interactive platform for organic/ad hoc conversations. This platform will allow alumni to see who shares their concerns, focus area, thematic area, or questions. This can then drive further organic connections,
- A publication platform for network members (it could be an online network magazine or journal),
- The network must be managed taking key components into account: the geographical location, topics and the interests. This could create three concrete collaborative streams for participants to engage in:
 - a) regional level,
 - b) thematic level,
 - c) by affinity groups (research, capacity building, dialogues, etc)

6. Next steps

From these regional conversations it became clear that the international network continues to engage with KF and each other, even if sporadically. This alumni network serves as an important network to the alumni themselves, and the Foundation. From this, we have to consider what role the Kettering Foundation has to play in strengthening the international network. A key suggestion from these meetings was that the Kettering Foundation has to consider taking on an active role in the establishment and running of the network, at least in the initial stages. According to one participant; 'it's not enough just to create the context for people to meet, there is need for more careful thought of what to do with the goodwill that exists'. That said, there are many people willing to self-start and bring their capacities to bear on the process. It is important that the momentum created with these forums is not lost or diminished. The low hanging fruit can and should be identified, and this creates tangible easy wins for networking. Together with this steering team, we can identify champions in each region to explore concrete action. Some groups have already started connecting with others who were in their forum to map out interests, and have set some timelines to reconvene. We can provide some support and structure to these initiatives and share the outcomes widely to inspire others.

There is value in connecting with the alumni to give feedback regarding the process, the lessons learned, and potential strategies in the future. This process validates the time that people spent, including the information and insights that they share. In this way, we also systematically reweave the connections and feedback between KF and the international alumni.

The forums left participants feeling energized, as they reminded people of the value that the international network represents. Through this process, we also realized that there are people who want to engage

more, and an international network linked more closely with the focus areas of KF will be of value to practitioners, community workers, and bridge-buildings that increasingly work in greater isolation and even at increased risk. As such, transparent communication regarding next steps is absolutely key, in order to manage expectations that are created. Lack of feedback at this stage will have a negative impact on further organic growth. It is impossible and not strategic to meet all expectations, but the research team sees the continued management of expectations as a critical first step towards further success.

Deliberative Democracy Exchange: International Network Design

July 11-14, 2022

Exchange Coordinators: Maxine Thomas, Brad Rourke, Paloma Dallas, Ileana Marin, and Nick Felts

The Kettering Foundation's international programs speak to all of the foundation's major research questions and over decades has resulted in a a global network of civic professionals who are committed to a citizen-centered understanding of democracy. This exchange is a working session that includes several of the many active members of this network from all of the major global regions. During this meeting, participants will explore ways to deepen, grow, and strengthen this network and begin to chart a course for how it might best respond to the challenges that democracy faces around the globe today.

Emmanuel Akwetey
Executive Director
Institute for Democratic Governance
Ghana

Guillermo Correa
Executive Director
RACI
Argentina

Paloma Dallas
Director of Special Projects
Program Officer
Kettering Foundation
United States

Phoebe Davis
Education Manager
Te Rūngaga ā iwi o Ngāpuhi
New Zealand

Nick Felts
Associate
Kettering Foundation
United States

Ewald Garr
GIZ Ghana
Ghana

Maureen Gillon
Trustee
Trust Democracy New Zealand
New Zealand

Telma Gimenez
Senior Professor
State University of Londrina
Brazil

Emily Jenke
Chief Executive Officer
democracyCo
Australia

Mihai Lupu
Founder and President
EduCaB International
Romania

Ileana Marin
Program Officer
Kettering Foundation
United States

Tendai Murisa
Executive Director
SIVIO Institute
Zimbabwe

Leonardo Neves-Correa

Assistant Professor
State University of
Montes Claros (Unimontes)
Brazil

Marietjie Oelofsen

Ubuntu Dialogues Project Manager
Stellenbosch University Museum
South Africa

Donna Parchment Brown

Political Ombudsman
Office of the Political Ombudsman
Jamaica

Ruby Quantson Davis

Senior Learning and Impact Advisor
Peace Direct
United Kingdom

Una Raileqe

Community Facilitator
Fiji

Abdullah Rehman

Community Engagement Manager
Bahu Trust
United Kingdom

Jaco Roets

Programs and Learning Manager
Global Accountability Lab
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Angela Romano

Associate Professor Journalism,
Digital Media
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Queensland University of Technology
Australia

Brad Rourke

Program Officer
Kettering Foundation
United States

Gustavo Ruiz Arana

Institutional Delegate Citizen Participation
Fundacion Myrna Mack
Guatemala

Anette Ruiz Morales

ComunicARTE
Puerto Rico

Roberto Saba

Professor
Palermo University Law School
Argentina

Neil Sheridan

Mayo County Council
Ireland

Sumana Suwan-Umpa

Education Development Specialist
Learning Institute
King Mongkut's University of Technology
Thonburi (KMUTT)
Thailand

Maxine Thomas

Vice President, Secretary, & General Counsel
Director, International Programs
Kettering Foundation
United States

William Tolbert

Programs Manager, HAARAN Kenya/
Somalia Programs
HAARAN
Kenya

Eddie Tuiavii

Principal Advisor of Democracy and Engagement
Democracy and Engagement Department,
Governance Division
Auckland Council
New Zealand

Network Participants

The international network participants who joined Kettering staff in Argentina included:

Donna Parchment Brown, office of the Political Ombudsman of Jamaica, works with politicians to help them live up to their code of conduct. She has been participating in Kettering work for more than 25 years, though hasn't been as involved over the past 10.

Guillermo Correa is the executive director of the Argentine Network for International Cooperation (RACI), which is an alliance of Argentine civil society organizations that work together "to strengthen and promote coordinated actions" in the social sector. He was a fellow at the foundation in 2006. Since that time, Correa has been an active member of the network and has often served as a moderator for international convenings held at Kettering.

Ruby Quantson Davis is currently working with Peace Direct in London, and originally from Ghana. She attended DDI in 2003 and was a fellow in 2005. She later came back to Kettering as a resident scholar in 2019. She said that she is currently focusing on learning practices and on strengthening democratic structures. She called out the "incredible creativity in this network." Quantson, like Correa, has been an active member of the international network for some time, often moderating international convenings held at Kettering.

Telma Gimenez, a professor of teacher education at the State University of Londrina, was an early fellow at Kettering. Being at the foundation, she said, really "shaped how I think and do my work." Currently she supervises research and teacher education at the university. She said that she has been thinking about how power is interspersed and the role of language in addressing power. She has long been central to connecting Brazilian participants to Kettering over the years.

Marcela Guillibrand is coordinator for Chile's *Ahora Nos Toca Participar* (Now It's Our Time to Participate), working on Chile's new constitution. She has worked on civic issues and women's rights issues. This was her first direct connection to Kettering and its work. Her work, however, fit right into the mix.

María L. Lara Hernandez is a social community psychologist with the University of Puerto Rico, where she has been since 2000, and also the executive director of *Agenda Ciudadana* (Citizen Agenda) since 2007. She connected to the foundation through Ramón Daubón and has been working on participatory democracy issues since 1997. She worked with Ramón and later with Hal Saunders in their Sustained Dialogue work. She was invited to join the group in Argentina at the request of Alfredo Carrasquillo, who was unable to attend. She said that she wants to understand "how we can change our precarious democracy into a more participatory, strong democracy."

Sandra Martinez Rosas, with Colombia's branch of Transparency International, participated in DDI in 1999 and was a Kettering fellow in 2000. She said that her time at the foundation has stayed with her and shaped how she has approached subsequent work. She has not been to the foundation in recent years.

Tendai Murisa, founder of the SIVIO Institute in Zimbabwe, has also been active in the international network. He was a fellow at Kettering in 2013 and again in 2018. Murisa said that he and his team at SIVIO have been pushing for a more local understanding of global issues (Glocal) and also "reframing narratives about my continent."

Leonardo Neves Correa is a teacher and professor of teacher education at Unimontes in Brazil. He teaches future teachers how to better communicate and develop social and democratic skills. He attended DDI in 2009-2010 and was a fellow in 2012. He has also been active in the network.

Aldo Protti Porras is coordinator for the Costa Rican political party Acción Ciudadana (Citizen Action). His first time at Kettering was during a multinational symposium when he was invited by the mayor with whom he was working. He later came back to Kettering for DDI 1 & 2 and with the founder of the political party, Ottón Solís, in 2018. He said that Kettering ideas have shaped his work, and he often focuses on naming and framing political views and understanding what is behind people's concerns.

Jaco Roets is currently with the Accountability Lab and originally from South Africa. He has also been an active member of the international network for some time. He was a fellow in 2011 and said that Kettering helped him to engage with the "racist narrative that he grew up with."

Gustavo Adolfo Ruiz Arana, with Guatemala's Fundación Myrna Mack (Myrna Mack Foundation), was introduced to Kettering through Betty Knighton. He came to the foundation in 2014 and began applying what he learned in the human rights sector. He talked about the importance of connecting not only with minds but also with our hearts. He has also been active in the network.

Eddie Tuiavii, principal adviser for Auckland, New Zealand, a city of 2 million, leads all of Auckland Council's deliberative pilot programs. He was a fellow in 2016 and has been active in the network.

Nino Tvaltvadze is with Kutaisi International University, which is in the second largest city of the Central European country of Georgia. She was formerly the deputy mayor of her city, just after participating in DDI 1 & 2, and found it a great opportunity to use deliberative tools.

Mary Wrafter, of Mayo County Council in Ireland, works with voluntary community groups on community action plans, developing "community futures." She came to Kettering in 2013, was a fellow in 2015, and said she found Kettering to be a great place for thinking. She has not been to the foundation in recent years.

Rocío Jenny Zapata Lopez is with the Mexico City and Latin American office of Germany's Heinrich Böll Stiftung Foundation. She has worked for more than 20 years with civil society organizations in Mexico. Ramón Daubón was her first connection to Kettering. She came to Kettering in 2000 and 2001, was here during 9/11, and then was a fellow in 2009. This meeting was her first time back at a Kettering event in some time.

The group was also joined by two members of RACI, **Olivia Huidobro**, RACI's international relations coordinator, and **Valentina Ruiz**, executive assistant and interns and volunteer coordinator, both were detailed and tireless in their planning and coordinating before and throughout the week. **Rhonda Atkinson**, who was Kettering's travel and events coordinator from 2017 to 2020, coordinated travel and other logistics during the trip.

Navarro Viola Foundation Panel Discussion

“The Work of the Kettering Foundation: Challenges Ahead”

Comments by Maxine Thomas

Good morning, everyone. It's always a pleasure to see people from the network that I have watched grow over 30 years. It began with Roberto Saba, who was one of the first international fellows who came to the Kettering Foundation. I don't know who was the last one in this room.

So, here in this room we have representatives from the beginning and from some 30 years of work. And in that 30 years a lot of things have happened. First of all, let me talk a little bit about the Kettering Foundation and what we thought we were doing when we started this project.

The Charles F. Kettering Foundation was established by Charles Kettering. All of you benefit from Charles Kettering because he's the one who discovered or created the self-starter for the car. Before, you would have to crank the car to start it. He discovered a mechanism that would allow you to turn a key and start your car. So, for everybody who's been in a car this morning, you could be a part of the Kettering network, I guess.

Kettering was also a part of a philosophy in the United States, and I understand it is not worldwide. And that's this whole notion of foundations. These foundations were created when men—mostly men, so I can say "men"—made wonderful discoveries and decided either because they were wonderful people, or because they were embarrassed at being not-so-wonderful people, that they would like to be well thought of. And one way to be well thought of is to put money aside to help the underprivileged or what have you. And so, that really was the beginning of what is the Kettering Foundation.

Kettering himself was interested in why or how grass turns green. He was interested in photosynthesis. His thought was that if we could figure that out, then we could feed the world. This problem didn't actually get solved during that period, but he was an inventor. He was a person that thought broadly, that thought outside of the box and tried to solve problems. So, the work of the foundation has continued in that vein, even as we have moved in new directions.

The foundation has a number of programs. We do things in higher education, civic engagement, and with the public and government. And something dear to my heart is we have, over the last 30 years, had an international component to our work. That international component has been partially overshadowed by three main programs we had.

The first one, the Dartmouth Conference, is a relationship with Russia. As you might imagine, we are not so deep into that relationship right now. The next one is with China. I've had a lot of responsibility in that area as well. Again, we're not quite as busy in that area right now. Finally, the third one is with Cuba. Here, again, there has not been much going on right now.

But I also have always been engaged with this international network. When fellows came to the foundation, a lot of them came to me to learn what the foundation was, how it worked, et cetera. And while they were spending time at the foundation, we just kept doing our work.

Finally, I think it was primarily when we got into the Zoom era when we realized that you can't go everywhere and you have to connect with people on Zoom. We started to identify all of the people who have been fellows at the Kettering Foundation around the world. And we were stunned, really, to find out that there are about 400 or so who had come through our doors. And now we are asking to learn something more about them, about all of you.

So, that's where this whole network idea started. It is an opportunity for us to listen and learn, and it's at a fortuitous time because we have a new president. So, for me, it is a wonderful opportunity to think about the opportunities that we have right now.

As we were coming to Brazil, and I said we should do something with our network. I don't know how I got connected with Guillermo Correa, but he said, "Maxine, you should come to Argentina." Roberto Saba is now a board member. It started to make sense. And the idea grew to this program today.

I must say that we have been in overdrive. I left a little early last night, but I hear you were singing and dancing until 1:00. And so, I understand that all our cultures work differently. And I understand that we are a family and a group that's just happy to see each other. But we also work really hard.

And I just want to thank you for inviting me, and Sharon, and Paloma, and Ed to be here. And I want to thank the fellows who are here for both your work and your steadfast commitment over all these years. And I just look forward to seeing what this will turn into.

Reflections by Ruby Quantson Davis

I am a product of networks; networks that promote knowledge sharing, networks that engage communities, and networks that advocate for change. Networks such as the Kettering Foundation international group. I would like to acknowledge all who have contributed space, knowledge, and skills to inform who I am. I also want to acknowledge the fact that I sit here instead of many others who are not here, could not or cannot be here. I recognize the responsibility I have by being present here.

My journey

Over the years, I have experienced this responsibility on at least at four levels as I interacted with the Kettering Foundation and its network, comprising persons from over 50 countries. My journey began nearly 20 years ago in 2003.

The *first* level of responsibility when I entered the Kettering Foundation space was to develop myself and have a change in mindset, to understand that citizens can make a difference, and to situate who I am within the discourse and the space.

The *second* was to take the knowledge that I had acquired back to the organization where I worked in Ghana. A couple of us, young professionals, took the ideas back into a country that had emerged from military rule and to a civil society sector that was still developing and had much potential. We went back into our communities and asked how these ideas resonated in these communities of our forefathers and ancestors. We understood that the work had to be done at the community level, and not remain at the highest levels. We experimented with deliberative dialogues at the community and national levels, resulting in citizens' engagement, policy advocacy, and influence.

Third, it was not enough to keep these ideas within one country. It was important to change things more widely. At the regional levels, we applied such deliberative approaches by engaging continental processes, including working with other citizens' groups to engage officials and lawmakers. Who could we connect with on these ideas? Who did we know on the African continent who needed the ideas of the Kettering Foundation? We further invited others to learn about deliberative practices, attending Kettering Foundation workshops. The work was growing regionally.

Finally, at the global level, I thought, who should I connect with in the international network so we can collectively use deliberative practices in various spaces—particularly in places of conflict and tensions—and with a wide range of groups—religious groups, women's groups, youth, and peacebuilders. This has generated regular learning spaces with many members of the network. These four levels have been important.

What have I learned during this period?

1. One of our greatest resources as a network is the knowledge and skills we possess among us.
2. Our issues are more connected than we think or know, even though we are in different parts of the world. That has meant listening to one another in the network and listening carefully and without judgment.
3. We can act collectively to create a better world.

However, my deep association with networks has also revealed some gaps:

1. There is a power imbalance in the world within which we do our work, in our individual organizations, and in our communities. These threaten the work we can do together as networks.
2. Because of such imbalance, so many groups and individuals have been excluded from decision-making and from accessing public goods. Networking helps you see who has been excluded, including women; people with disabilities; Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color; and anyone who appears different.
3. Global resources are skewed and go to some places more than to others.
4. We have also learned that knowledge from certain parts of the world is downplayed while that from other regions is valued.

5. I learned that our networks are constantly threatened by issues of discrimination, and racism underlies many of our actions—consciously or unconsciously.
6. I learned that organizations that form networks can be rivals and undermine each other. They can take actions that threaten the survival of the network itself.

In spite of these gaps, I survived. I worked with others to build bridges and remove barriers. I also made efforts to connect with persons in the network regularly. In the Kettering network, these efforts have generated products:

- Mentoring
- Publications
- Training manuals and workshops
- Joint campaigns and advocacy
- International gifts and languages

Looking Ahead

I look forward in hope, in spite of the many challenges we see in our countries, in our families, and in the world. In this next phase of the Kettering network, I wish to:

- a. Foster a deeper understanding of our individual and collective issues, with the hope that we get to know each other and understand our issues, and who we really are.
- b. Engage in more strategic thinking and positioning in order to support struggles in the countries and communities in which our members work. Most times those in affected countries can only do so much. They need networks to support their struggles.
- c. Impact our local and global issues more systematically.

To conclude, it is important to note that those against this kind of global work are organized, syndicated, sophisticated, and resourced. We cannot afford to be divided by organizational differences. Our problems are interlinked so our actions require greater networking and interconnectedness.

Comments by Tendai Murisa

Kettering Foundation is two things. It can be many things to others, but for me, for the purpose of this discussion, I would like to consider Kettering Foundation as two things—as a place, a physical place located in Dayton, Ohio; with its small office in Washington, DC. That's one way of looking at Kettering Foundation. Where is Kettering Foundation? You give those addresses.

But for the purpose of this discussion, I want to look at Kettering Foundation as a set of ideas, a set of ideas—not necessarily a coherent set of ideas, but a collection of ideas. And also, acknowledging the humility of the Kettering Foundation over the years to say we do not claim to say this is a model; this is how you do it. But we have tried these ideas; they could be worthwhile in the challenges you face in the countries you are coming from.

That, to me—for somebody who's coming from the global south—we had been hit by all sorts of development silver bullets that, "For you to get out of your situation, you need to go and do this, you need to go and do this." Coming to the Kettering Foundation for the first time—I think it was 2009, 2010, thereabout—it was refreshing to find a place where they say, "Yes, we have got some things we've been tinkering with for years, but we are not going to say this is the silver bullet that you need to carry in your bag and go and use in your home."

I think if you look at it from that perspective, and see it as it is with the questions of democracy, which are questions that sort of affect all of us in our everyday lives—and one of the strengths about the Kettering Foundation, for me, before I come to talk about the network, is the broader understanding of the term *democracy* itself. In many instances, democracy has been limited to the processes and the rules of elections. How we hold elections. How we conduct elections.

But at Kettering Foundation, you connect with original meanings of democracy, and you begin to say, "If it's this broad, how then do we make it work?" How do we talk about public issues without alienating others? This was very important.

And I think for us, given the context that we find ourselves in right now of high levels of polarization in almost every country I go to, and also just thinking about that to say, "How do we still retain an interest in the idea of Argentina, in the idea of Brazil, in the idea of Zimbabwe—which is not partisan, which is not driven by narrow interests of a certain elite, et cetera?" It becomes very important to come to a place where you still say that "even though we may disagree ideologically, we may disagree at the level of how we want to move forward, but we still need to talk."

So that becomes very important. It becomes something that we put as part and parcel of our arsenal of tools as we go to say, we have to find the middle ground. What is the middle ground that we can use to create a conversation? So that becomes very important.

Also, in terms of—given the challenges that we have—somebody put it as a challenge of language, a challenge of expert-led processes. We talk in a certain way when we're talking about democracy. We talk of constitutionalism. We talk of shrinking spaces. We use terms like *civil society*, which are very abstract.

But the discussions that you now have, and where we come from, where we are at now is to say: What are the concerns of the everyday citizen? It's about safe neighborhoods. It's about hospitals that work service delivery. It's about jobs. It's about a future for the children. It's about parks, et cetera. Those are the everyday concerns in a democracy. Because half the time we make it look like democracy is only about the higher-order needs around elections. But in the process, we demobilize citizens just to focus on that issue.

Also related to that—I'm in trouble here because there are certain disciplines that have sort of contributed towards that. I think we've created silver bullets in how we discuss and how we resolve our problems. For many of us who were sort of coming from military regimes, colonization, et cetera, it was to say: There are certain steps you need to follow, you need in your constitution. You need certain institutions, you need rule of law. Then voilà, you've got democracy. Yeah? We did that, but we still don't have democracy.

South Africa, for instance, has got one of the most progressive constitutions, but you can't claim that South Africa is a full democracy. South Africa is the capital of protests. Johannesburg. They have more protests than the days in a year. So, you see that we still have a challenge.

But I think these are silver bullet-like approaches. And this is where the idea of experimenting, rethinking, and networking become important, to begin to say: What are we learning from the challenges that we are facing globally? What are the lessons from what we are going through? And the humility to unlearn—because half the time that's our challenge—the humility to say what we thought was the way to Mecca is not actually the way. We actually need to reroute and find other things. So, I think that's sort of a challenge.

When I started interacting with Kettering Foundation, I also had my own silver bullets. I also thought the same. But when I began to listen more intently as we were speaking—not only from colleagues in Dayton, but from colleagues coming from the global community—I began to realize that there's something that we are missing, number one, in the architecture of our organizations across Africa. Organizations that are willing to listen, organizations that are not coming with scripts. Yeah? Organizations that are coming with open converses to say, "Let's write this story together."

We begin to say: How do we get there? How do we align with what citizens expect? And also, how do we make sure that in it we do not lose the focus? Because it ends up looking like it's a massive process that is not going anywhere, but looks like it's going somewhere.

The process is such that we are at a place—and I hope colleagues understand this: Democracy is not only under threat, but also the project of development itself is in retreat. So, we face a double-edged sword, or double-edged crisis, in terms of us of how we reshape the world and how we realign.

For many years, development thinking was coming from countries such as Brazil and Argentina—are on a state-led model of development, et cetera. But Washington Consensus came and told us, no, we need to retreat; let's leave this to markets. Everything collapsed. Health delivery collapsed. Education collapsed, et cetera.

Now, as we are thinking about democracy, we cannot do it in isolation from development itself, because there's no way you can talk about democracy and not talk about development of the people. Because it ends up being a game of the constitution, the rule of law, and the game of elections.

I think where we are, there's increased dissatisfaction with the model of power, the model of how we are governing our countries. So, the levels of distrust among citizens on governments is as high as 75 percent in Zimbabwe, where I come from. So, many citizens have lost confidence in governments. There are also high levels of intolerance amongst ourselves. We are intolerant of opposing views.

There's also the emergence—especially for us in Africa—of a de facto one-party state. We moved from the de jure where we legalized one-party state, but over time—even with our constitutions—we've actually, without noticing it—through the rules we have put, et cetera—the advantage of the income band, et cetera—we have actually come to a place of the de facto one-party state.

Especially for some of us who went through liberation struggles—South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Mozambique, et cetera—we've not changed political parties since we got our independence. There are literally—even though on constitution we can say we're a multiparty democracy, with all those problems I've mentioned. Then enter some of the things that we've learned from the network of KF.

And the questions that we now have are to say: Number one, how do we broaden democracy to create a consensus that is just not about elections? How do we re-assert citizens at the center? How do we make sure that democracy should work as it should? I think it's a better framing than others who are saying democracy has failed; what are the alternatives?

Because I think there's a certain consensus among some of us to say: Democracy is probably the best form of rule that we have. Anything else is chaotic. But it's got its own attendant challenges, and what can we do as a network?

But in the process, we realize that even though there's been a preoccupation at global levels, regional levels, et cetera, with these high forms of politics, there was a certain citizen politics that was at play that we had decided or chosen to ignore. Across in Brazil, citizens were mobilizing around land, the MST. Citizens were organizing around climate justice. Citizens were mobilizing around "Another World Is Possible" in Seattle. There's always been an undercurrent of citizen politics, but that we have chosen to ignore.

But in the place where we are now, we're beginning to say: How do we bring together all these thoughts and ideas into the agora, the public place, the public space? And to begin to talk about them, reframing and reshaping the state away from the narrow conceptions of democracy that we've developed over the time.

In 2018, I then had the advantage of repeating my fellowship. I always tell people that I was not so good in 2013, I was then invited to come back and repeat my fellowship.

Then in there, my interest was really in understanding—after the years I'd spent coming in for five days, spending six months, et cetera—my interest now was to say, okay, what do citizens where I come from really do empirically? So, trying to understand what citizens do with each other, in the social spaces, in the economic spaces, and in the political spaces. And to say: How do we create an institution or an organization that aligns but does not seek to co-opt and to change the actions of citizens, but aligns and adds weight to what citizens do?

And so, that's one of the challenges that I faced in 2018. And how do we establish such a platform that enhances citizen agency and voice? This is not something that you can easily sell to a donor who wants a quick answer after six months of implementing a project.

But also, related to that conundrum is the youths. Not necessarily the millennials, but the Z generation, the alpha generation, the post-2000s. Trying to understand how they are active in the public space, trying to understand how they consume information. Because general narratives again will tell us that the youths are not engaged in the public space, because we're not doing a deep-dive into understanding that.

But if we're saying that the public space is multigenerational—from the struggles we heard about the feminist struggle in Argentina—you realize the importance of thinking in a multigenerational manner, to make sure that some generations can pass the baton and know that the struggles for social justice continue.

We have to think through how the youths consume information. The youths of today are bombarded by information. By the time they wake up and they touch their smartphones, so much has happened on the different social media platforms that they are in. So, for us, it's actually to say: How do we go into those places and also begin to talk about issues to do with social justice, to talk about democracy, to talk about civic participation within that noise—the noise of Instagram, the noise of Facebook, the noise of Twitter—where they're bombarded by all those things?

You realize that the traditional models that maybe some of us were raised in, that you have to go and read a book this thick—go and read Alexis de Tocqueville to understand democracy—won't work. To begin to say: Oh, there's an essay that has been written by So-and-So. But how do we capture information to make it relevant?

So, we begin to think about pictorial presentations. We begin to think about the use of technology to reach out to the youths, because we realize that they're a significant and important part of the struggle that we are facing. So, that's one thing that we do. The result of all this thinking in 2018 leads to the establishment of an institute called SIVIO, headquartered in Zimbabwe, working across Africa.

But one of the first realizations we make is to say: Given that there's no silver bullet that we're pursuing, and the multiplicity of problems that we're trying to address, it cannot be done outside of a network. It has to be within an ecosystem of like-minded individuals and organizations.

I think when we say "network," it's a shortcut to saying "collaboration." It's a shortcut for saying "sharing experiences and learning from each other." So that's what we begin to say, that we now need the network more than ever, a network of like-minded individuals. Because there are others who are working against the agenda, and they're just as organized—if not more organized, if not more networked than us.

We begin to realize the centrality and our vulnerabilities. The vulnerabilities are—when you're speaking truth to power in a certain location, in the absence of a global or a regional network, calling out those injustices, you can rot in prison. It's a reality. Yeah? So, you begin to say you need the solidarity of a network.

When we come to a place whereby we begin to realize that this is something that we need—and also for leveraging resources, because you can never have enough resources for the kind of work that needs to be done. For the work that we have been doing, we leverage a lot of technology. We use technology platforms. We have what you call the citizenship index where we measure the intensity of citizen-to-citizen interactions in five countries: Ghana, Cameroon, Kenya, Malawi, and Zimbabwe. And we are hoping to expand that. But for us to be able to do that work, we have to leverage the KF alumni to begin to bring them onboard so that they can help us to work on these issues.

As we are going through these things, we realize that we are products of a network, but we also have to be actively involved in the network itself to be sharing these experiences, like we are doing today. But also to hopefully not just depart here to say we had a show in Argentina, but to begin to say: How do we take onboard the lessons from the experiences here?

Because the experiences of the social justice struggles that we have had since yesterday are not an overnight process. Democracy, like my kids will say, is a song that goes on forever. It's a song that never ends.

So, we also have to learn the patience of struggle, that we need to be patient in the struggle. Because so many of us have gone through—we have moved on. Maybe some of us have moved on now to the global agencies, to the World Bank, to the UN—because we got burnt out, you know? The burnout is real. You get burned out by looking for resources, doing this work.

But it's encouraging when you come to a context such as this pause, it reignites your passion in what is possible in countries that are still struggling with issues that you had to deal with 20 years ago. It gives us hope to say that there is light at the end of the tunnel. But what we need to be continuously doing is mobilizing the progressive forces and beginning to be gathering together information that helps us to archive the struggle and to move forward.

Comments by Jenny Zapata

(Her remarks were delivered in Spanish. Below is a translation.)

Good morning. It is a luxury for me to speak in Spanish at a Kettering Foundation event, so I am taking advantage of that since I'm in Argentina.

I first came to a Kettering event in 2001 and then [came back in] 2002. I was able to participate in the international workshops on deliberative democracy. And we discussed how democracies have been threatened. I was recalling that the September 11th attacks happened exactly between those two workshops. In the end, these are discussions that continue: How do we protect our democracies? From where and with what . . . with what tools? Coming to Kettering and these workshops is to arrive at a fascinating space.

In these workshops I met people from different parts of the world: Asia, China, Russia, Eastern Europe, Africa. It was a rare luxury to have five days to talk, reflect, exchange ideas, and think about democracy. These are luxuries that are not so common these days.

Later, I was able to travel a lot and reconnect with many of those people. I was in Poland and Yugoslavia, and in these places, I was able to revisit and build on these conversations, and I have been able to work with like-minded people whom I originally met at the foundation.

Before that, I spent many years as communications coordinator for the WWF foundation in Chihuahua, working on water issues, specifically in regard to the Rio Bravo [Rio Grande], which is one of the five

biggest rivers in the world. We talked about many of the issues surrounding natural resources and the common good and a lot of the tools that Ruby described so well. The foundation offers a space, as well as the knowledge and skills to tackle the natural resources issue. In changing the narrative or changing the language of how we reference this issue, we have moved the focus onto "the commons," which is a term frequently used at the foundation.

In 2009, I came back to Ohio for a six-month fellowship at the foundation. At the same time, I was still working with the WWF on water management and the tensions and values around water management. For example, how does one assign a little bit of water to the environment when there are more users with documented water rights than there is water? So, we talked every year about values, about what is important to each one who has a stake in the game.

I would also like to connect this debate or exercise to the foundation, which has systematized and documented these processes of deliberation. These are processes that take place organically in our regional, indigenous communities. It's not a coincidence that Latin America is where this notion of the right to a healthy environment as a human right has arisen. It's not a coincidence that Latin America is where we are starting to talk about the environment as having rights. Perhaps we should start to consider the environment a political actor in these discussions.

So, it's this relationship to place that has allowed me to incorporate important elements from the work of the foundation. I was in Ohio at the time, in 2009, when there was a lot of violence in Mexico. It was a process, a super-personal process, of questioning myself. What value is my security and my reflections on analysis and theory when my city and state are on fire?

So, I came back with this commitment to citizen activism. For example, I worked to rescue public spaces for the people, for the community of bikers—those who use bikes as their means of transport—as a tool of social transformation. I was able to work with the international cyclist forum in Mexico City in 2017. And in these years, I also worked on the subject of climate change, and I had the opportunity to be at the Copa Perú [soccer tournament], supporting the voices of civil society in Latin America.

What I want to say is that in all these processes, in these participatory processes, the foundation's tools of deliberation have been really good. It is really a challenge because the discussions at the community level as well as in our conversations in the network about our collective decision-making is a process that takes time. And within the society, this is challenging because we are subject to annual financial cycles, and we are required to report on the impacts of our work because the process is not the result.

So, these are daily questions that we see at work. What we are exploring is this powerful network of people and the potential it has and the challenge of how to make this powerful network of people a network of powerful organizations, with power that will allow us to conduct the processes with a long-term view, which will give us the opportunity to develop actions, solid actions with more concrete results.

I want to acknowledge the work of the Kettering Foundation regarding deliberation and democracy and the processes that teach us the skills that we use all our lives. We use these skills in training moderators, in making public debate possible, and in ensuring that all voices are heard. That's important. But how

do we take notes? How do we register what people are saying? How do we learn? These notes should reflect the comments of the participants as we discuss this question of what is the problem behind the problem, which is the important thing. This is the primary lesson I have taken home after these workshops on democracy.

What I also want to mention about the Kettering Foundation is that beyond methodologies, the process, and all the knowledge, there is always a richness, which is in people—in their diversity, knowledge, and skills. Within the foundation there is a diversity of disciplines, trajectories of life, and experiences that intermingle in a wonderful way.

And above all, there is a commitment to exercise the full-time practice of citizenship—not only citizenship according to our passports or credentials, but citizenship as a life exercise, as a muscle. Citizenship is like a strong muscle, but it's a muscle that we need to exercise every day. Thank you.

Comments by Sharon Davies

I'm Sharon Davies, and I'm the new president and CEO of the Kettering Foundation. It will celebrate its 100-year anniversary in 2027. It was started in 1927 by Charles F. Kettering, one of the world's most prolific innovator-inventors.

He did invent the automatic starter for automobiles, but he also helped to invent things like Freon for our refrigerators and our air conditioners, and a mechanism for cash registers that made them automatic, and many, many other things.

He was able to do that because he had a particular kind of mind. His mind was the mind of an innovator. And his greatest philosophy in life—that he talked about a lot—was the need to always be open to change, and the need to innovate as changing circumstances require of us.

I think a lot about that now in my role as the new president and CEO of the Kettering Foundation. Because over the last 40 years of its work, the foundation has made democracy, and the health of democracy, the strength of democracy, the persistence of democracy in our world, its center work.

And one of the parts of that work has been to create an incredible network of international fellows. And there's a bigger group of them in the room with us today. But it's just a small bit of this incredible network that has grown over time.

One thing that I think we did very, very well over these past 40 years in creating this network and having it grow, is to instill some very powerful tools and philosophies about the power of citizens—engaged citizens, and citizen-led democracy—and how we encourage engaged citizens even across lines of difference, citizens who don't agree with each other on a lot of things but are still able to work with each other.

Whenever fellows join us at the Kettering Foundation in Dayton, Ohio, they would be exposed to methods and methodology for that that is designed to help citizens do that work together across those lines of difference, put aside those differences and figure out what they have enough in common that requires their attention and collective work. And that's a very, very good thing.

What we may have been less successful at was actually tracking how those fellows would take those skills and tools and lessons back into their communities and nations, and what they would do with it.

So, what we do have to do, at the Kettering Foundation, is to understand how that has manifested in many, many different ways around the globe now through these 400-plus fellows that we have spent time with. So, I think we will definitely spend some time doing that.

But today's conversation also reminds me that over the course of building this network—and while we were very intentionally focused on the question of public deliberation, and how we get good at that—we were doing it in the context of a changing world. And that's important because changing circumstances require changing approaches to democracy.

And we may have also needed to do additional work with our international fellows about the changing threats to democracy around the world beyond the challenges that citizens have coming together across lines of difference. So, I appreciate inequalities, for example, as a challenge to democracy.

If you read some of the major works of scholars who are writing about democracy today, extreme levels of inequality in our community are often cited as one of the major threats to democracy. And when I think about that, I think that that is almost one of the earliest, maybe perhaps the earliest threat to the idea of democracy to begin with.

It certainly has been in the history of the United States. And I'll use the United States as my primary set of examples because it is the history that I am most familiar with, but I recognize that when I'm talking about this for the United States, I'm talking about this really as a challenge for democracy across the world.

And that is that democracy has always been more of an idea than an actual practice. We're still in the stage of becoming democratically minded people. And so, in the United States, when our founders described our system of governance of a democracy that was "of the people, for the people, by the people," it used that word people in a very expansive way, more expansive than they actually meant. Far more expansive than they actually meant.

Women were not included in that. Half the population. Certainly African Americans were not included. They were enslaved and not even considered full people to begin with. It totally neglected the native people of the land. And that actually has been a part of the democratic project from the very start, is to become a democracy when we started as a system that described it in words but did not live up to those ideals.

Unfortunately, I think that we are living in a time now, despite all of the progress that we made in the United States in the 1950s and the 1960s where we finally were able to legally pass laws that guaranteed rights of all citizens—Blacks—when we got to the point where we guaranteed that women would be able to exercise the right to vote in the 1920s, we moved toward democracy, a fuller democracy. Some even say that the United States did not become a democracy until those achievements of the Civil Rights era.

The trouble is that, with all of those victories, we may have also entered a new period of a backlash that we are really only seeing the fullness of today. And so, while I appreciate all of the work that we have done so far when it comes to creating fuller rights, I think that we will make a very big mistake, as

defenders of democracy, if we take our eyes off of the fact that not everyone believes that all voices are equal or need to be equally heard.

And so, over the last couple of days, as we've been here and we've heard about things like the Department of Citizen Participation, we can see that as an example of real progress that is being structured into governance like the City of Buenos Aires. And we can be inspired by movements like the Ni Una Menos movement, also in Argentina, as a part of this progress toward democracy.

But I think we make a mistake if we neglect the fact that there are people who are living in democracies who are not actual proponents of it. So, in the United States most recently, we had an eye-opening confrontation with that reality, with a president who was engaged in many activities that threatened our democracy and that are not, unfortunately, concluded—indicating that it wasn't just the existence of one individual who came to power, but actually a force in our society that embraces antidemocratic practices.

So, a part of our society that would be regressive when it comes to voting rights would prefer, rather than to count votes that reflect the will of the people, to design ways not to count those votes.

Now, I say all that to say that it is important to be able to deliberate across lines of difference among citizens who are committed to democracy. But not all persons are. And there are actions by some citizens that are citizen-led that are actually designed to undermine democracy rather than to promote it.

The events of January 6th in the United States are an example of citizen-led behavior, but it was citizen action that was destructive of democracy, rather than supportive of it.

I'm mindful of all of these things because I believe that a part of the work in support of democracy in the 21st century has to confront the realities of inequality in our systems and understand that as a weakness for democracy. Democracy should mean, at minimum, that we have a system that is providing shared opportunities for self-actualization of all of our citizens.

And when I look at some of the communities that I have lived in, in the United States, and asked myself: Do I see communities of shared opportunities for self-actualization? I have questions about that. I have lived in a city in Ohio—not Dayton, but in another city—where I know that there are schools, public schools, that are located very close to each other, where the students in one school will—99 percent of them will be heading off to college. And students of another school, located a very short distance from them, will have a much dramatically lower rate of college participation. Where blocks of neighbors located closely together will have dramatically different life expectancies from each other.

I've also seen, when visiting Brazil and Argentina, neighbors living fairly close to each other, living very different lives than each other. That tells me that we have not created circumstances for all of our citizens where there is an equal opportunity for self-actualization. And that there are power structures and inequalities in place that actually undermine the idea that all citizens can engage equally in shaping their communities, in the governance of their communities.

If we have citizens who are that dramatically different, living dramatically different lives, it is hard for me to think of them as being equally situated to engage in the kind of deliberation that has been such an important focus of the Kettering Foundation's work. I think that in addition to the expertise that we have

developed in that area, we have to go beyond that to begin to think about inequalities and how those inequalities actually breed the kind of polarization that scholars also tell us is threatening democracy.

Those are some of the things that I would like to have the benefits of our broad international network of fellows to help us think about, because I think they have examples for what I am talking about, and that this may be an additional important area for us to explore.

We're doing that internally with the staff of the Kettering Foundation. Since my arrival, we have been talking about the urgent demands of democracy, the decline in democracies around the world. What is driving those declines? And what we might do as a foundation that is centrally committed to strengthening democracy both domestically and worldwide, what that demands of us.

I look forward to being engaged in that work. We have this incredible, unique network of fellows around the world who are so dedicated to democracy in their communities and nations.

This is a formidable weapon that we need to use, because we can't be naive about the adversaries to democracy. History tells us that when we are naive about that, we lose democracy. Democracy can be lost.

So, now is the time for us to utilize the strength of this network and to make sure that, in addition to understanding how to deliberate—knowing the things that we cannot afford to deliberate about; there are certain things that are absolute requisites of democracy. And while it is true that the act of casting a vote and participating in an election is certainly not the fullness of citizen—the obligations of citizens, it is also true that having the ability to voice one's concerns and to influence one's governance is a requisite of democracy.

And if we don't have that, or if that's under threat—as it is in some of our nations—then we have to make sure that that is also on the agenda of our work.

Palermo University

“The Challenges of Democracy”

Comments by Roberto Saba

(His remarks were delivered in Spanish. Below is a translation.)

I would like to share the context of why we are here today. The context is our concern—an increasing concern over the last years. And that is the condition of our democracies and the future of our democracies. Here we have colleagues from 20 countries who are all a part of the Kettering Foundation's international network. They come from all the regions of the world, and their work is focused on strengthening democracy, citizenship, and participation—we all share these concerns. We're working in our internal meetings to see how we can contribute in this context.

So I would like to start by sharing some key events, some landmarks, that I'd like to highlight. I think, for many people, me included, we felt hopeful about the democratic future of our countries and regions.

I'm a lawyer. I work with civil rights. And I'll start with two major decisions for those who study civil, or human, rights. These are decisions made by the US Supreme Court. The first decision, *Brown v. Board of Education*, in 1954, helped stop the racial segregation in the US, racial segregation that had been built not only in practice but by the law itself, by legislation. The civil rights movement, after many decades of struggle, ended with the US Supreme Court decision that ordered the desegregation of schools in America.

In 1973, the US Supreme Court decided *Roe v. Wade*, acknowledging reproductive rights and the rights of abortion (the efforts of another movement), consolidating a charter of rights that wasn't written already.

Constitutions are very necessary, very important. But the constitution is more than just written text. It's the practice of bolstering that text. And the Supreme Court rulings are part of the practices of that country, but with a global impact.

Many of us were inspired by those decisions and wanted to see them reflected in our countries too. Here, in 1983 in Argentina, the military dictatorship ended. It had been characterized by much violence, pain, and 30,000 "disappeared" persons—an institutional disaster.

Back then, I was in secondary school. We were so happy about the recovery of democracy and high expectations for a promising future. In 1989, going to Europe now, the Berlin Wall was torn down. Many constitutionalists were collaborating, writing new constitutions for the new countries.

There were high expectations for those democracies in that part of Europe that hadn't had democracy for over seven decades, or maybe more. In 1990, in South Africa, apartheid was ended.

And again, we were so hopeful and happy with the emergence of democracies in those countries and the way we got to that point and the achievements of civil society—South African society and the well-known Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Mandela, and other sources of inspiration about the promising future of democracies in the world.

Alex Boraine from South Africa, who was collaborating with Mandela in designing the commission of truth, he was seeing what we had done here (in Argentina). So we started working globally.

It was an exciting time. We had meetings with different organizations from here, from Uruguay, from Chile, so that our South African colleagues could develop their own response to the challenge of that democratic transition in South Africa.

In 2011—now, I'll go to the Middle East, to the north of Africa, to the Arab Spring—maybe the youngest among us can remember firsthand the expectations for that civil society movement that promised democracy in those countries.

Back then, in all these countries, many people were thinking, okay, what do we have to do to build these new democracies, to consolidate them? In the literature, we have a whole discipline about democratic consolidation and democratic transition.

Many NGOs—for example, back then, I was working for Poder Ciudadano (Citizen Power Foundation) and our work consisted of looking to perfect our new democracies. The Kettering Foundation had many people from those organizations.

The specific work we were doing back then had to do with how we could make our democracies be deliberative democracies—so they were not just about voting, not just about formal representation. We needed the citizenship participation in building consensus to reach or to come up with public policies from the bottom up.

So all the literature about deliberative democracy, Carlos Nino, for example, the author—he was a champion of these ideas. And the NGOs were putting them into practice, they were working on democratic construction or building.

But after these events, we faced some problems around the delivery of democracy, the expectations that democracy could solve political, social, and economic problems. It wasn't like that. Maybe it was an ungrounded expectation, because democracy alone cannot do all that.

I remember what Alfonsín here [in Argentina] said: "*With democracy, one eats, one is cured, and one is educated.*" That was what we thought. But, of course, it wasn't like that because it is a political process for making decisions. It cannot assure the outcome—a positive outcome.

In all these processes I mentioned, we began to feel some frustration with this political regime. This doesn't mean that we gave up. On the contrary, we started thinking that we should come up with new ideas.

Corruption rose, too, in many of these countries, which also feeds disappointment, and inequality. Latin America has very high levels of inequality. I think it's ranked first in terms of inequality in the world.

Then, populist proposals: left-wing, right-wing proposals that undermined some aspects of democracy and the idea of democracy that doesn't have much to do with deliberation. Then, the US Supreme Court decided *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* some months ago, reversing *Roe v. Wade*.

Some decisions were made at the legislative level, mainly at the state level, trying to exclude a sector of the population, especially African Americans and other minorities, which are about to be majorities in many states.

The events of January 6th last year where a group of outlaws decided to take over the US Congress looked like science fiction. And some global events, too, make us think that those democratic "springs" in all these regions, including the US, are today at high risk.

We could give many examples, but I'm just going to give you some examples that explain the global characteristics. There is a challenge and a threat in Europe—in the heart of Europe—two EU members, Hungary and Poland, that have serious problems with the democratic systems in both countries today.

I read an article on Poland about the capture of the court by the executive. And Orbán, who is the prime minister of Hungary, with a populist, ultraconservative platform and almost Nazi-like proposals.

Orbán was invited by Republicans in the US [to the Conservative Political Action Congress (CPAC)]. And I was listening to a journalist saying that, because of what Orbán said about immigrants and minorities, I think they won't invite him to the CPAC convention.

But they invited him. And when he said the same things, he was applauded. We all know Trump's position on many of these topics. One of Trump's advisors, Steve Bannon, known for his ultraconservative ideas, has been building an alliance of politicians—ultraconservative, nondemocratic politicians all around the world, including Italy. And in Latin America, his good friend is Bolsonaro. Steve Bannon met with Bolsonaro in Brazil to see how they could start communicating that the upcoming elections in Brazil will be rigged or fraudulent.

I'm giving you these examples because the threats we're talking about here are serious ones. And they have a global profile, strategic global efforts targeting the future of our democracy. I have talked about Europe, Latin America, and the US only, even though there are other cases.

The American writer Jill Lepore wrote that she believes that not since the 1930s has democracy been more threatened than it is today. You know what happened in the 1930s with Nazism.

This is the situation that brings us together today. On the one hand, from the Kettering Foundation, which I am a part of, we need to see what we can do by working together in the face of these global threats.

We're thinking about these problems. We're thinking about what we can say, write, and decide about the threats we are facing. This is the context for today.

In Response to the Q & A Session:

I have always been a supporter of freedom of expression. My first reaction to any kind of regulation of freedom of speech is to be on the alert. I'll quote from a professor, Owen Fiss, who writes about this issue. Maybe you know him.

There might be situations in which freedom of speech or of expression has a silencing effect on people. When a group from the Ku Klux Klan burns a cross at the home of an African American neighbor in

Minnesota as a message of not welcoming the family and the person, that's a kind of expression. But when we protect that type of expression, we protect the act. That form of expression could be subject to some kind of regulation.

There is a lot of debate about hate speech, equality, and discrimination in the United States and other countries as well. The challenge is, what should we do when we have hate-speech situations, fake news related to hate in social media?

This is very complex. But the good news is that many people are thinking about this, people who value freedom of expression and who value equality and nondiscrimination, even companies who are working with social media are worried about this, maybe because they don't want to be seen as a space for hate.

I will offer an example that is not very popular. It's a very interesting example. It's not a solution. But it's an example of things that are happening. Facebook, for example, worried about this kind of situation and a couple of years ago created a panel, something similar to a kind of supreme court, to support freedom of expression and to support vulnerable groups.

At Facebook, they created a trust to finance this agency, which is outsourced. They have 20 people now. And they will have 20 more people—from Nobel Prize winners, to experts in freedom of speech, to activists from different groups around the world—who don't work for Facebook. They work for this trust.

These people cannot be removed by Facebook. They are people who we can go to with a claim if something is happening on the platform, something that goes against people's rights. And this panel decides what to do.

It is an experiment; the community working on social media and freedom of expression are observing what is happening. They have already dealt with 20 cases. One complained because his account was eliminated. One was Donald Trump.

I won't bore you with the details, but the panel had to deal with the decision of Facebook to remove Donald Trump's account, a difficult decision. But these are mechanisms in place.

Some other mechanisms come from civil society, others from the state. And they have their problems as well. But we have a lot of young people. This is the agenda for the future. Young people will have to think about these challenges, which will be the big topics in the near future.

I want to add something about creativity and doing something. I would add the need to come up with a strategy. I mentioned the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954. That case was the result of decades of legal work.

As a lawyer, I'm fascinated by the story, in which it was fought in different courts, in different states. They were looking for which court they could resort to. And after many years, they got the ruling. So it wasn't a random, spontaneous thing.

When I mention these meetings between Bolsonaro and Steve Bannon and the Italian right, there's a strategy. There's strategy and creativity. But it's also being aware that we need to have a plan. It could be very creative, could be innovative.

We can come up with a plan, then change the plan. But we need a strategy. Some of us heard about the women's movement in Argentina and how we finally legalized abortion.

I can assure you that, behind the passing of that legislation, there was strategic work. So I wouldn't underestimate the importance of having a plan, having a strategy.

What kind of democracy are we talking about? What are we defending? I was thinking about some democratic experiences that maybe were not so correct. I'm thinking about Brexit, for example, the referendum in the UK or the peace agreement referendum in Colombia, decisions that were made by a yes-no vote.

The Chilean case. Very, very important decisions decided by the people in a yes-or-no vote. Maybe in some cases it's the only way. But it is not enough. In the case of Brexit, the decision, for example, was made by people who didn't know the consequences of what they were voting for.

The majority of those who voted for Brexit are over 60, so they won't suffer the consequences. But some see this as a democratic—a valid democratic tool. I think it's actually not.

There was a campaign in Colombia against the peace agreement. And the vote for no, I think, was manipulated with fake news. The peace agreement had to do with reproductive rights, something like that. So, the question is, are referendums a democratic way to make decisions?

Many populist governments in the world think that leaders represent the people, and they don't want intermediaries or middlemen—they don't want mediation. So a diagnosis or a wrong definition as to what it means to decide democratically can lead us to inaccurate results.

Keynote Address by Sharon Davies

I want to thank Guillermo Correa and everyone at RACI, and also Roberto Saba for the invitation to speak to you today about the present challenges of democracy.

It is a true pleasure to be with you all. I am encouraged by your commitment to democracy, especially at a time when the challenges to democracy are rising.

For the past 40 plus years, the Kettering Foundation has focused on the question—what does it take to make democracy work as it should? Our answer has settled on the essential role of citizens actively engaged with each other in the work of self-governance and the shaping of our own communities. Not passive subjects of our government, but the active directors of our own affairs. Through decades of research, learning exchanges and public forums, the Kettering Foundation has seen and written about many moving examples of citizen-led democracy. Examples that we believe are "proof of concept" that, in the right circumstances, citizens are capable of working through differences and finding common ground for the betterment of their communities. Indeed, this may be democracy in its fullest form.

⁷ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2022*, p. 1.

Democracy works when all members of a community are free to engage in the project of self-governance as civic equals, when they are encouraged to listen to each other with a desire to understand their different lived experiences and different points of view, and where they search for ways to achieve some mutually-desired good or collective course of action that is in the service of all. The best democratic leaders understand the value of such an engaged community, embrace the strength of their community's diversity, and are prepared to protect the rights of all to participate in the project of democratic self-governance.

Since arriving in Buenos Aires with a contingent of the Kettering Foundation's network of international fellows and two of our Board members, we have witnessed examples of this type of democracy in action. Earlier, we visited the beautiful city government building located in the southern part of the city and learned about the Department of Citizen Participation and the open government laws that have been adopted here, embedded structures of law and practice that facilitate citizen involvement in government processes and decision-making. As Roberto Saba noted in his comments after those presentations, these things did not exist 30 years ago. They are an outgrowth of an understanding that citizens "add value" to discussions and decision-making about limited resources and city priorities.

This is how democratic societies progress. Through rights and mechanisms that enable citizen engagement, citizen deliberation, and concerted citizen action. It was encouraging to hear about them.

But if you will forgive me for just a few minutes, we also know that, in recent years, democracies around the world are under threat, and it is important for those of us who are committed to defending democracy to take notice of those threats and to understand their seriousness. I want to spend a few minutes reflecting upon that reality, before turning back to some more positive thoughts in the hope of strengthening our resolve to fight for our democracies when that fight is brought to our doorsteps.

If democracy watchdog organizations like Freedom House and respected democracy indexes are correct, after years of ascendance, for the last 16 consecutive years, conditions for democracy around the globe have worsened.⁷ Sixteen years running. That is not quite half of the roughly 40 years that the Kettering Foundation has been trying to understand and strengthen democracy, but it is close. Almost nightly, we hear distressing reports of growing authoritarian threats, we see leaders fomenting division in their societies, instilling fears of others, instead of encouraging the cross-cultural understanding and consensus building efforts that bolster democracies. These are leaders, Freedom House writes, who "once in power" suggest that "their responsibility is only to their own demographic or partisan base, disregarding other interests and segments of society and warping the institutions in their care so as to prolong their rule."⁸

Just a few weeks ago you may remember hearing about the statements of the Prime Minister of Hungary, Viktor Orbán, who denounced "mixing races," saying that places where European and non-European people intermingled had essentially forfeited their nationhood and were "no longer nations," as if some imagined form of racial purity should be Europe's goal. That mindset for many harkened back to the days of Nazism. It even caused a longtime staffer of Orbán's to resign in protest. Orbán's remarks attracted

rebuke from leaders worldwide, but he shrugged off the criticism claiming to be misunderstood and, just weeks later, he received a hero's welcome at the Conservative Political Action Conference held in the United States in Texas. So, unfortunately, we are living in a time when such events are being normalized, and it is important for all defenders of democracy to be attentive of those political leaders who play on voters' fears of diversifying populations. Rather than recognizing the potential and promise in that diversification—and all the creative and innovative power that diversity holds—leaders with antidemocratic and authoritarian tendencies do the opposite, sowing fear and division.

There are other threats to democracy about which we are rightly concerned. In many nations we see an erosion in the rule of law, which democracies rely upon to constrain the impulses of authoritarian-minded leaders. We see waning public confidence in democratic institutions, and the erosion of democratic norms, the soft guardrails of democracy. In the United States, we have seen hard-won rights, like voting rights, imperiled by new efforts to make voting more difficult, particularly in localities where minorities reside. We have seen attacks on the independence of our press, in its role as watchdog.

And as the world watched, on January 6, 2021, for the first time in the history of the United States, we witnessed an attempt to prevent the peaceful transfer of presidential power. It was not a military coup, but a congressional commission has made the case that the attack on the US Capitol was the result of our past president's effort to remain in power after the vote of the people had gone against him, and that he did that by sowing distrust in the integrity of the vote counts of the states he did not carry, against all credible evidence to the contrary, and by encouraging violence to prevent the certification of the election results in favor of his opponent Joe Biden.

This was a new experience for the people of the United States, and, we realize, an unsettling event for the globe and all nations committed to democracy. And although it did not succeed, it must continue to concern us because, more than a year into the administration of President Biden, many of the past president's supporters continue to repeat the lie that the election was stolen, and many elected officials in Congress in his party refuse to refute that falsehood. The president of Brazil, behind in polls for his reelection, has made similar, unsupported claims about voter fraud, and shown similar authoritarian tendencies.

These are just some of the most overt challenges. There is also concerning evidence of the fraying of the checks and balances that our framers designed to guard against tyranny. The United States Supreme Court is increasingly accused of ideological activism. It has given rights of personhood to corporations, stripped rights of reproductive freedom from women, eroded voting rights, and sanctioned the expansion of gun rights at a time of exploding gun violence. The legislative branch is largely gridlocked along partisan lines, with historically low public approval ratings.

I also want to briefly mention a *final* example of a less often mentioned threat to democracy, which is the assault on the ways in which certain topics are being taught in our public schools. Underway in the United States at the moment is a sweeping effort to restrict how teachers explore the topics of race

and gender in US public schools. More than 35 of the 50 states have taken steps to restrict classroom discussions of the nation's history of racism, and how the toxic fruits of that history might continue to constrict opportunities today. There are bills in a number of state legislatures forbidding teachers from offering instruction that "promotes division" between the races, or "promotes resentment" of members of a particular race, or teaching that causes "discomfort," "guilt," or student "anguish" due to their race. In Iowa, lawmakers proposed that teachers be banned from describing the United States as "systemically racist or sexist." Critics of such bans have made the argument that among other things, the new restrictions would prohibit a teacher from asking her students to read the collection of Pulitzer Prize-winning essays published by the *New York Times* called the *1619 Project* which reframed the history of the United States by putting the enslavement and contributions of Black Americans at the center of our national narrative. Once such bans are in place, violations can lead to teacher termination, or cuts to school funding. Online forms have been created to enable parents of students who resent being taught about race or gender in objectionable ways to complain. Teachers have already reported decisions to self-censor out of fear of the consequences. Other bills and governmental restrictions have targeted teaching students about sexual orientation or instruction that promotes "gender fluidity."⁹ It is significant that these restrictions will apply to school systems in the United States that continue to be largely segregated by race, and at a time when suicides and suicide attempts among the young are disproportionately high in the LGBTQ community. Just yesterday, during our visit here in Buenos Aires, a Texas school board near Dallas and Fort Worth voted to limit discussion on gender identity and nonbinary pronouns. Other schools have limits confining students' identity to the biological sex listed on their birth certificates, or confining students to restrooms that correspond to their biological sex. One state ban broadly prohibited educational materials that "promote, normalize, support or address" LGBTQ issues.

This is not the first time in the history of the United States that lawmakers have attempted to prevent powerful, feared ideas (systemic or structural racism, nonbinary gender, etc.) from taking root in the minds of their state residents. I am currently writing a book about an era in which the slave states in the United States made it a crime for any person to disseminate "abolitionist materials"—writings that called for the abolition of slavery—and for any Black person, free or enslaved, to possess such writing, based on the objection that these writings would "cause discontentment" among the slave populations. The book is about the true story of a free Black man in the state of Maryland who was prosecuted for possessing a copy of Harriet Beecher Stowe's famous novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. You may know of it. It was the most best-selling novel of its day.

When we see laws being enacted to prevent citizens from being exposed to ideas, it is generally due to fear about the power and implication of those ideas, and what they require of us as members of ostensibly free, fair, and democratic societies. Often what they require of us is greater fairness, a broadening of inclusion, and the dismantling of barriers that serve some but disserve others.

¹⁰ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2022*, p. 2.

I have suggested that we are in a global fight for democracy. And events like those of January 6 for those of us in the United States are both sobering and humbling. In such times, we must find encouragement from the work of fellow democracy defenders. As put by Freedom House, "Only global solidarity among democracy's defenders can successfully counter the combined aggression of its adversaries."¹⁰

Where do I find hope? I find it here. At the offices of AMIA, which we visited earlier this week, we learned about the courageous response of the Jewish community of this city and its allies to the horrific hate-based bombing of its community center in 1994. We also heard a moving presentation about the intergenerational citizen-led movement here in Argentina for women's rights and the fight against gender violence and gender-related discrimination. And we visited Ex-ESMA, a space of Memory, Truth, and Justice—a powerful and devastating testament to horrific human rights abuses and the importance of documenting them in the hope that history will not repeat itself. This reminded us that citizen engagement to advance democracy comes in many different forms, from tweets to inspiring symbols of resistance like the *pañuelos verdes*, to mass demonstrations of hundreds of thousands insisting, "*Ni Una Menos*." We take heart from such examples of democratic leadership, and they inspire us to find our own ways to defend our democracy.

Let me close. At the Kettering Foundation, we have always recognized the critical role of citizens—of an engaged public—at the center of American life. We know that democracy is not just the function of our institutions; it also depends on us, everyday people. In the days ahead, our world will depend on all of us to safeguard and to build the kind of inclusive democratic systems that make space for all. The strength of a democracy can be measured by the fullness of the rights a nation state accords all its residents, and the steps it takes to promote unity among them. Divisiveness is the enemy of democracy. Inclusiveness is the answer.

When people come together to address public problems, the true strength of democracy becomes evident. It is with great humility, then, that I say there is much work to do—in the United States and globally. And while I recognize that the relationship between our two countries has sometimes been fraught in the past, it gives me great hope that we are in this fight together today, and that, together, we can work to make our world a better place for everyone, creating fuller, more inclusive democracies, where all members of our communities can participate in the project of self-governance, as civic equals.

Comments by Ed Dorn

Let me begin with one of Martin Luther King Jr.'s most famous aphorisms. He said that the arc of the moral universe is long. But it bends towards justice.

It's very important that we unpack what he was saying. He was not suggesting that there was some inevitability toward achieving justice. What he meant was that people who wanted justice for themselves and for others had to bend that arc.

I think he also was not thinking in terms of a single arc of justice. Martin Luther King was a widely traveled man. And he realized that every country, every society has a different timetable. I would argue that the zenith of democratic practices in the United States occurred following the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965, a dramatic increase in the numbers of African Americans voting but also holding important public office, also a dramatic increase in the numbers of women who were holding office inspired by the promise and the legal requirements of the Voting Rights Act.

But there was nothing inevitable about that progress. And very soon after those victories were achieved, there occurred or there began a serious pushback. Not everybody agreed with the law.

And over a series of decades, they have managed to mount a relatively successful opposition, finding ways to limit political participation without violating the Voting Rights Act and finding ways to elect to office—and to appoint to the Supreme Court and other judicial bodies—people who would support those retrenchments.

We all witnessed that clash at the US Capitol on January 6th. We all have burned into our memories the idea that a small group of policemen was holding back a huge group of thugs who were attempting to enter this huge symbol of democracy.

And often, I believe, when we talk about challenges to democracy, that is the image, an arsenal of democracy being attacked by a ragtag band of ignorant insurgents. I think we need to recognize that, while the Capitol was assaulted by a bunch of very unpleasant men and women, millions of Americans shared their belief that the election was flawed, that it was stolen, that Joe Biden was not the legitimately elected president and that Donald Trump somehow should remain in office in spite of the electoral outcome.

In the past year or so, public opinion surveys have revealed that around 70 percent—70 percent of the members of the Republican party buy or claim to believe Trump's lie that the election was stolen. I do not believe that 70 percent of Republicans in the United States are quite that stupid.

What I believe when they say "We think it was stolen" is something a little bit different, something that they are reluctant to say. What they're really saying is we don't like the outcome of this democratic process. And we are determined any way we can to change it, to keep our guy in office whether or not he got the right number of votes.

I want to suggest a slightly different metaphor than the metaphor of a ragtag band of insurrectionists attacking this arsenal of democracy. I want to suggest that all of us, all of us are part of a huge force in an open field confronting a very different force or very different forces of autocracy and, in some instances, military dictatorship.

We have to be prepared for that kind of battle, not one in which we are fully protected behind pristine marble walls but one in which we are very exposed. And we need to be prepared for that very long battle. So let me close with a Texas aphorism. It is time to mount up and ride.

In Response to the Q & A Session:

We have a saying in the United States that a lie can run halfway around the world while the truth is still putting on its pants.

Obviously, social media provide the technology that enables lies to spread very quickly and that allows people to be mobilized very quickly. But that should also be true of the truth. I think, perhaps, we, "the good guys," have not made as effective use of social media as we might have.

However, let me remind you that one of the keys to Barack Obama's victory in 2008 was his campaign team's mastery of social media. So we're not completely incapable of doing it. I think what has happened—again, we think that or we sometimes think in spite—that these attacks on democracy are sporadic, that we are relatively comfortable, even smug behind our walls.

And we've failed to mention that those walls are permeable. And that army out there, that barbarian horde will not relent.

One large disadvantage that Democrats have is that they have a baseline commitment to the truth. And so we cannot respond to the threats we see simply by making up more and more lies. One of the things we need to do is to become very creative about the use of truths.

I'm not very creative, so I can't offer specific solutions. But this is a time when we have to call on those who have musical talent, those who can draw, those who can write, those who can come up with compelling visual and narrative statements about why democracy matters, why it is important along with statements that characterize the threats we are confronting.

For a very long time, the Kettering Foundation has been studying the ways in which citizens assemble in small groups to make decisions that affect their neighborhoods, their cities, and so on. And those are often published.

Maybe publication is not the most appealing or emotionally gratifying way to reveal those answers. So I think one thing that each of us can do is to search for different ways to tell our stories—to share and not have to be written down.

It's a picture. It's a little ditty of the kind that appears on *Sesame Street* and so on. That's one thing. The second thing speaks to the efforts to censor information, especially for school children. It seems to me it would be very difficult to censor stories about democracy.

I think it's very important that kids, beginning very early, come to understand what democracy means by going through certain exercises in their kindergarten or first grade classes and so on.

A third thing concerns the visit by Viktor Orbán and his big speech. What we need to understand is that, while Orbán is giving the big speech, several of his operatives are meeting with operatives in the United States and in other countries to share stories about what worked, what lie worked effectively and how it was conveyed, which visuals worked effectively. And we need to learn to do those things, to tell our stories in a compelling way.

Comments by Maxine Thomas

One of the reasons that I went into law was that I hoped we could change the world by having a few more lawyers that looked like me. And as I began my career, I always asked whether my presence at that particular job was making it better for someone that looked like me.

It's not just because I'm selfish about that. But I know I was given the privilege of sitting in those rooms that other people would not have. So it was my responsibility to make sure that I cleared a path for others to follow.

I recall, when I went to the University of Washington, they were doing an affirmative action move. They were really trying to get more minorities in it. And it started me on this journey about selecting places where the law might make some changes.

And that's from going to law school, going to the attorney general's office in the State of Washington and other places where I not only did affirmative-action work, but I also behaved in such a way that I would represent those that looked like me.

I came to the Kettering Foundation with much the same idea, that there were a lot of people at the Kettering Foundation. They were making comments at least and efforts in a global world. You know, some of the people in those conversations from the United States needed to look like me.

And I've stayed there these years because of that. Kettering had an idea—well, I should say David Mathews at the Kettering Foundation had an idea. It was a pretty simple one. He was sharing it with universities and colleges initially in the States.

And I wanted to make sure it was being shared with my community if it really was going to make a difference. The idea was a simple one. It was a methodology even though we didn't like to hear that. It centered around naming ideas in public terms, putting together a framework where people could come and talk about it.

And initially, it was only in the United States. There were two little ladies who came to the foundation from Guatemala. We've tried to find them. It was really just as I was coming in. And someone ahead of me was handling the international work.

But we talk about the Guatemala ladies because they came to the foundation. I don't know how they found us. I really don't. But they came to the foundation, and they asked us, could they just watch us? Could they just learn from us? Could they just come and sit in? We said okay. Come on.

And that began to build what now is a pretty large network of folks who came and watched and listened and learned. And we have been in this endeavor for some 30 years, coming together, sharing the methodology, learning from others as they took it back.

But you know, as we did that, we began to see cracks in this. You know, the Arab Spring—it was such an exciting meeting that year—I remember we had a big symposium on it where the Arab members who were attending that year talked about just how it was going forward and how good it was.

And we thought, boy, now that's really working. As I listen to us—we, certainly as Americans—it's almost like I can hear your problem. But I can't really feel it until it's my problem too. I know there were things going on in other countries. But I didn't get frightened until January 6th.

It's selfish. But it was real to me. It did remind me, however, that we are global and that the United States is not exempt from the things that have been going on around the world. I've spent a lot of my work at the foundation working on the dialogue in China.

Often, when I would come back from China, I'd go through Hong Kong. Boy, when I watched what happened in Hong Kong, that concerned me. I mean, the way we—even though we'd like to be really thoughtful and broad, those places where we have genuine connections really impact us. I don't know what will happen with Hong Kong. But it frightens me.

I know I sound concerned and worried and urgent. But we are no longer at the methodology stage. We are challenged now to look more broadly.

We've been given the opportunity to look internationally. I know about Bolsonaro. I know about Hong Kong. I know what's going on in Brazil and Argentina. I know about those that disappeared; I'd heard about it before. We can't keep watching this and just saying it's horrible. We can't wait.

One of the wonderful opportunities that we have now is to work with a leader who is standing on the shoulders of what we've done but not just repeating it. One who is challenging us to think more deeply, to think in the context of where we are now.

Forty years ago, the deliberation, the coming together, the methodology was good. It was working. It's not working anymore. It's not sufficient. It may indeed be necessary, but it is not sufficient.

We have seen the cracks. We can either come together and do something about it. Or it will continue to crack.

I hope what we decide to do is to double down, to work together not only on the threats in my neighborhood but on the global threats. That we take notice of what everyone is saying. That we see what is going on in this world and we reach out beyond gender boundaries, race boundaries, and those places that do not include everyone and see as our goal greater fairness, broadening of inclusion, dismantling of barriers, global solidarity.

The challenge at Kettering is to make real what our purpose is in this global network.

If we don't build an inclusive democracy, it's not going to get built. We have to focus our energy on making the world a better place for everyone in creating a fuller, richer, more inclusive democracy not only in the place where I live, but in the place where others live.

I will paraphrase Margaret Mead: Never underestimate the power of a few committed citizens to change the world. In fact, that is the only thing that ever has.

I just want to add that it's not only about elections. There were other things going on the last few years. You know, I mentioned one day at the foundation that I've never really been afraid in the US.

But now when I drive, when I'm in community, when I watch—you know, I'm watching from here that they're still beating up Black men. Okay. I won't say it's concerted. But some of those things that constrained our behavior are falling away. There's this—I want to say vigilante because a lot of those are police officers—though some aren't. So there is a vigilante element of it.

But there's just also those pillars of the democracy that include the police where there is now a different sensibility that they can express. I won't say they didn't think that before. But now, they seem to be doing it with impunity. And there seems to be no way to stop it.

So when that's going on and they're also at the Capitol and there's also all of this legislation that's rolling back the rights of voters, it's a fearful time for me. I'm concerned. I'm worried. And again, that may be part of my urgency. I can't just sit there and watch it go on. It's kind of like everywhere I look there's another example.

We have to link arms. It can't be the Kettering Foundation over here and others over there. We need to be in a network that crosses these boundaries. Other than that, we each sit in our own little place and watch somebody else's democracy be extinguished.

The way to connect with people is you share your email. And I share my email. And we build a site. And we invite others to join. And as I look at the Kettering Foundation, that's what I want us to do.

And it needs to be global. And we need to be a part of it. I can't run it. I can't tell people what to do in Jamaica. But when they do something in Jamaica, I want to share it with others, so all of us will know. You know, it's really a pretty simple notion; I'm not a gatekeeper.

I won't be a gatekeeper. You don't have to make sure you do a, b, c, d, and e in order to be a part of the network I'm looking for. You do have to be concerned about democracy. And beyond that, you know, we will self-censor what we do.

I want us to be larger than the sum of our parts. I'm not going to agree with everything people say. And I'm not going to agree with everything people think we ought to do.

But I'm going to learn from what some of you are doing that I would not have thought of that will inform how I do my own work. So to the extent that I can get emails and names and interest, that's what I want. I want to make sure I know that you're interested in this and that we build on that.

There's a lot on the table right now. I'm not a very patient person. I think sometimes we take way too long to just do something. I always say the perfect is the enemy of the good.

And so we can get a wonderful structure. And it can be perfect. But we won't get it for another 10 years.

What I would say is, you know, let's start simply. Let's just start. And that's the urgency I'm seeing.

And I think, if we could start—you know, I'll do my part. You do yours. There are things that I am best placed to do. There are many things I'm not. I always like to defer to somebody else. But I will do my part.

I will do my part. This is an idea I had at the very beginning. If each of us just had four other people, four other individuals, organizations—I don't care—just think what we would multiply as the number of people who are in the network take the ideas of democracy and do it in a more visual or auditory way.

I think there has to be a plan. But in order to have a plan, some of us have to come together. And in order to come together, we have to decide we're going to do that.

Joetsu University of Education

Remarks by Maxine Thomas

I am Maxine Thomas. I am a vice president at the Kettering Foundation and the director of our international programs.

First, I would like to thank the people and organizations who are responsible for offering us this wonderful opportunity to come to Japan. The chance to visit high school classrooms, college classrooms, and to talk with university faculty and officials is important to the work we are currently doing as we define Kettering's new research agenda.

From the meals and the rides on the Shinkansen to brief conversations with colleagues, this will be a major influence on the next generation of the Kettering Foundation's work. We appreciate your hospitality. I particularly want to thank Professor Kazuyoshi Nakadaira for finding us, attending several meetings in the United States, and becoming an important part of the Kettering network with others from around the world.

It was on Professor Nakadaira's [Nakadaira Sensei] visit to the United States and the Kettering Foundation that he learned about the National Issues Forums (NIF). The work of the forums represents an early innovation of the foundation as we explored the role that citizens needed to play in their communities if democracy were to survive and thrive. Kettering calls this "citizen democracy."

Citizen democracy, in its most basic form, happens when citizens come together to solve common problems. Citizens talk together, decide on courses of action, and then act. Much of the work of NIF focuses on the decision-making process. It supports the work of citizens as they address community problems.

NIF is based on a specific method of doing citizen democracy. It was first pioneered in 1981, when former Kettering president David Mathews and a few close colleagues began experimenting with how to encourage deliberation on difficult public problems. Over the years the ideas and practices were refined. NIF was a separate organization from Kettering. Mathews' interest in the work of both Kettering and NIF resulted in Kettering eventually taking on the task of writing issue guides for NIF.

People in communities across the United States hold forums using issue guides. These forums are hosted by many different civic, educational, and religious organizations. They are also held in classrooms and on university campuses. The forums are often small, but their power is derived from the significance of the ideas about politics that they generate.

Now many other organizations produce their own deliberative forum materials, and the ideas have expanded beyond the borders of the United States to democracies new and old around the world. But this all started with the idea that if you framed information in a way that citizens could understand some of the problems behind the problems, they would be able to understand the complexity of

issues and form their own ideas about what was important when making any decision, even those that ultimately are made by government officials.

When people attend deliberative forums, these students, community members, and social group members come together and weigh potential actions and the potential drawbacks to those actions and think about which solutions they prefer and why. Most important, they learn how complicated many key policy issues are and how tough the choices are.

I will share an example of an NIF issue guide: *Youth and Opportunity: What Should We Do for Future Generations to Thrive?* It is concerned about how, despite the current economic issues and influences on young people, we can ensure a better future for our children. The guide lays out three options. One looks at education, one looks at fairness, and one looks at economics. Having three options is important. Often choices are framed around two opposing options, which can contribute to polarization. Having three options helps to avoid this.

Forum participants using an issue guide work through the options, weighing the possible benefits against the possible drawbacks that may result. As this weighing occurs, forum participants get to hear not only what others think, but also why they think the way they do. This allows people to possibly even reconsider their own positions on an issue. It is in forums such as this that Kettering's initial work began to emerge. These spaces presented people with the opportunity to talk about difficult issues and offered the potential, occasionally, of finding common ground.

But that is not all that Kettering was doing. We were also inviting scholars and practitioners from around the United States to come to meetings, or research exchanges, to discuss together democracy and its challenges. And this work grew to include international participants. Eventually Kettering and these scholars and practitioners became an international network, learning from each other and thinking together about our common problems in democracy. It soon became evident that what communities in one country learned may be relevant for communities in other countries.

Earlier this year, the Kettering Foundation appointed Sharon Davies as our new president. She has come at a time in which democracy in the United States and around the world is in crisis. What is clear, given the depth and severity of the crisis, is that deliberation is not enough. Action is equally important.

Today democracy is clearly at a crossroads, and those who care about protecting it need to think innovatively about how to address today's challenges. That is why I am so delighted to have the opportunity to gain experience and learn about what is happening in Japan.

As Professor Nakadaira knows, many years ago I was a Fulbright professor at Tohoku Daigaku in Sendai. I brought my husband and two small daughters to Sendai where we experienced the warmth of the Sendai community. It left fond memories and *sukoshi Nihongo*. But mostly, it left me with an abiding interest in what happens in Japan.

I was a young lawyer then, and I was interested in how Japan's democracy was different from mine. At the time, democracy was ascendant and there were many examples of what it looked like in different countries, but I continued to be interested in Japan. Many years have passed, and democracy is now on the decline. We are seeing challenges to and violence in democracies around the world. Responding to

this will require us to design new innovations. That is what the small international network Kettering is leading is trying to do. Professor Nakadaira is an important voice in that effort, and we appreciate his contribution to and interest in this work.

I met Professor Nakadaira when he joined one of Kettering's large international meetings in Dayton, Ohio. He later returned several times and collaborated with people from a number of countries around the world who not only studied democratic citizenship but who also learned of the challenges to democracy itself. It was out of those meetings and others like it—and with the encouragement of our new president to innovate—that Kettering is now in the process of defining what this new international network should be.

In August of this year, we held the first small meeting of an international group of professors, scholars, and practitioners who are interested in citizen democracy in Buenos Aires, Argentina. That gathering was followed by Zoom meetings with members of the international network, webinars—one on elections around the world and one on democracy—and the formation of a global city officials' group that will meet and discuss ways to bring citizens together to deliberate and participate in democracy. The work is growing.

Democracy is at a critical point. We who live in such systems will play a critical part in the success or failure of our democracies. While it is often easier to sit back and watch what happens, if we wish for our children and their children to have a better life, we need to do our part. That is the work of the Kettering Foundation. We are focused on innovating for democracy. And for that innovation to be successful, those of us from democracies around the world must innovate together.

What is required today is not what we should do *instead* of what we were doing before but rather what we should do in *addition* to what we are already doing. Today's challenges require not only deliberative forums but also something more than forums. Today's challenges require not only talk but something more than talk. They require not just action but *innovative* action. Kettering is on a new, innovative journey to strengthen democracy; we are excited to share this journey with our colleagues here in Japan. Thank you for your gracious hospitality and support in this work.

Remarks by Sharon Davies

I am Sharon Davies, and I am the new president and CEO of the Kettering Foundation. It is such a pleasure to be here with all of you today. Thank you for this invitation.

Thank you, in particular, to Professor Kazuyoshi Nakadaira, who has been a most gracious host and an important colleague and friend to the Kettering Foundation. I am also grateful for the opportunity to meet with Joetsu University of Education president Yasunari Hayashi and with other wonderful faculty members, with the president of the Japanese Association for the Social Studies, Osawa Katsumi, and with a delightful group of junior high students. Like my colleague Maxine Thomas, I am so honored to have this time to learn about Japan, the challenges you are struggling with, and the innovative solutions you are developing.

Before coming to the Kettering Foundation, I spent much of my career in higher education, at The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, and later at Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia. I am delighted to have this opportunity to talk to a room of students and educators. I feel right at home.

The Kettering Foundation was started in 1927 by Charles F. Kettering, one of the world's most prolific innovator-inventors. He invented the automatic self-starter for automobiles, and he also helped to invent things like Freon for our refrigerators and our air conditioners, and many, many other things. The only inventor of his day, or even today, to surpass the number of Kettering's patents was Thomas Edison. Charles F. Kettering's legacy of innovation drives the work of the foundation.

For the past 40-plus years, the Kettering Foundation has focused on one question—What does it take to make democracy work as it should? Our answer has settled on the essential role of citizens in the work of self-governance and in the shaping of our own communities. We have studied citizens not as the passive subjects of our government, but as the active directors of our own affairs.

Through decades of research, learning exchanges, and public forums, the Kettering Foundation has seen and written about many moving examples of citizen-led democracy. Examples that we believe are "proof of concept" that, in the right circumstances, citizens are capable of working through differences and finding common ground for the betterment of their communities. Indeed, this may be democracy in its fullest form.

Democracy works when all members of a community are free to engage in the project of self-governance as civic equals, when they are encouraged to listen to each other with a desire to understand their different lived experiences and different points of view, and when they search for ways to achieve some mutually desired good or collective course of action that is in the service of all.

The best democratic leaders understand the value of such an engaged community, embrace the strength of their community's diversity, and are prepared to protect the rights of all to participate in the project of democratic self-governance.

When Kettering first began its focus on democracy in the 1980s and 1990s, democracy was in ascendance. As some of you will recall, people in countries around the globe were fighting for freedom to overthrow dictatorships and autocratic regimes and to realize the project of democratic self-governance.

Today, however, democracies around the world are under threat. If democracy watchdog organizations like Freedom House and other respected democracy indexes are correct, conditions for democracy around the globe have been in decline for 16 consecutive years. At the Kettering Foundation, we have been taking stock of those threats and trying to determine how we can best position ourselves to counter them.

Almost nightly, we hear distressing reports of growing authoritarianism. We see leaders fomenting division in their societies and instilling fear of others, instead of encouraging the cross-cultural understanding and consensus-building efforts that bolster democracies. These are leaders, Freedom House writes, who "once in power" suggest that "their responsibility is only to their own demographic

or partisan base, disregarding other interests and segments of society and warping the institutions in their care so as to prolong their rule."

In many nations we see an erosion in the rule of law, which democracies rely upon to constrain the impulses of authoritarian-minded leaders. We see waning public confidence in democratic institutions and the loss of democratic norms, the soft guardrails of democracy.

In the United States, we have seen hard-won rights, like voting rights, imperiled by new efforts to make voting more difficult, particularly in localities where minorities reside. We have seen attacks on the independence of our press, in its role as watchdog.

And as the world watched, on January 6, 2021, for the first time in the history of the United States, we witnessed an attempt to prevent the peaceful transfer of presidential power. This was a new experience for the people of the United States, and, we realize, an unsettling event for the globe and all nations committed to democracy.

And although the effort did not succeed, it must continue to concern us because, nearly two years into the administration of President Biden, many of the past president's supporters continue to repeat the lie that the election was stolen, and many elected officials in Congress in his party refuse to refute that falsehood. We have seen politicians in other countries adopt this same approach, making unsupported claims about voter fraud as a tactic for eroding public trust in the institutions and systems of democracy.

In the United States, we are also seeing many of the issues dividing our nation surface in our schools. The role of guns in our society is no longer a theoretical question for students in our universities, our high schools, and even our elementary schools. Too many of our children have found themselves on the front lines, victims of senseless violence even as the country continues to be deeply divided about how to respond.

We are also seeing efforts to limit teachers' ability to discuss the topics of race and gender in US public schools. More than 35 of the 50 states in the United States have taken steps to restrict classroom discussions of the nation's history of racism, and how the toxic fruits of that history might continue to constrict opportunities today.

Once such bans are in place, violations can lead to teacher termination, or cuts to school funding. Other bills and governmental restrictions have targeted teaching students about sexual orientation or instruction that promotes "gender fluidity." It is significant that these restrictions will apply to school systems in the United States that continue to be largely segregated by race, and at a time when suicides and suicide attempts among the young are disproportionately high in the LGBTQ community.

When we see laws being enacted to prevent citizens from being exposed to ideas about new freedoms and equality, it is generally due to fear about the power and implication of those ideas, and what they require of us as members of ostensibly free, fair, and democratic societies. Often what they require of us is greater fairness, a broadening of inclusion, and the dismantling of barriers that serve some but disserve others.

At the Kettering Foundation, we have always recognized the critical role of citizens—of an engaged public—at the center of American life. We know that democracy is not just the function of our institutions; it also depends on us, everyday people. In the days ahead, our world will depend on all of us to safeguard and to build the kind of inclusive democratic systems that make space for all.

At the Kettering Foundation, we are re-imagining our work to try to meet the demands of our time. As we take stock of the challenges of today, we want to encourage the kind of innovative responses that these challenges require. And we are looking for inspiration.

Where do I find inspiration today? I find it in people like all of you who are thinking about how to educate young people to be effective, committed democratic citizens. I find it in your efforts to teach young people to engage each other in constructive ways to foster better listening and cultivate greater understanding.

One of the board members of the Kettering Foundation is a law professor in Buenos Aires. He shared recently that he thinks the greatest threat in his country and elsewhere around the globe at this moment is the phenomenon of "us" and "them," of those who "belong" and those who are "other." It is the undermining of the idea that we can live together, he said.

Democracy relies on the fundamental idea that, even when we disagree, we must live together and respect one another. The deliberative work that my colleague Maxine Thomas described helps us live up to that ideal. It helps us exercise our civic muscles: our ability to live together as civic equals so that, even when we disagree, we can find ways to work together to address shared problems with mutual respect.

Thank you all for your warm and gracious welcome, and for your hospitality to our group. Through such cross-cultural exchanges, we build stronger relationships with citizens elsewhere who share our commitment to the idea that, together, people possess the power to improve the world.



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