



# 34 YEARS

## of amplifying voices for change

2022 Annual Letter to Stakeholders



Metropolitan Group

la fuerza de la voz • the power of voice

February 14, 2023

**Dear Friends and Stakeholders,**

As we enter 2023 and begin our 35th year, we are inspired by the innovative, passionate and impactful work of change agents working to make structural improvements to advance a more just and sustainable world. We have seen the resilience and the impact of people standing for democratic values, doing the hard work of power building and movement building, and championing freedom and human rights for people in Mexico, the United States and around the world. We have supported community leaders, coalitions and organizations invested in authentic engagement, to shift the dynamics of who is seen and centered, whose voices are amplified, and who has agency to drive change.

MG/ISMG is privileged to work with change agents and the communities they serve.

**This year, we partnered with our clients to:**

advance just solutions to climate change, strengthen democracy, counter structural racism, address gender-based violence, advocate for families of the disappeared, center environmental justice, accelerate biodiversity conservation, increase health equity and build currency for equitable well-

being, support organizational transformation based on equity and inclusion, and so much more.

**2022 was also a time for continued work on strengthening our own organizational culture and capacity.** In the ongoing shifts in how we work together (remote, hybrid, in person), we are leaning into increasing practices of accountability on our own Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) journey. Our capacity and resources have increased to meet the needs of our clients, and in 2022 we added 15 incredible new MG/ISMGers to our team—many of whom we met in person for the first time at our staff retreat at **The Public Will Building.**

We also celebrated the well-deserved promotions of eight team members.

**This 34th annual letter to stakeholders shares updates on our team, thought leadership and stories of our clients' work and impact.** As we begin our 35th year, we are deeply committed to advancing the shared imperatives of public health, environmental sustainability and social justice—we are excited to collaborate with you in this work. On behalf of the entire MG/ISMG team, we look forward to partnering with you to advance collective impact, creativity and the power of voice.

**In commitment and community,**



**Eric Friedenwald-Fishman**

CEO/Creative Director/Founder



**Yvonne Tengwall**

Chief Operating Officer/Principal



**Al Machemehl**

Chief Financial Officer/Principal



**Maria Elena Campisteguy**

Senior Executive Vice President/Principal



**Kevin T. Kirkpatrick**

Senior Executive Vice President/Principal



## 14 de febrero de 2023

### Queridos amigos y partes interesadas:

En la medida que nos adentramos en el 2023 y da comienzo nuestro 35.º aniversario, nos sentimos inspirados por el trabajo innovador, apasionado e impactante de los agentes de cambio que luchan por lograr transformar las estructuras existentes en pro de un mundo más justo y sustentable. Hemos visto la resiliencia y el impacto de las personas que defienden los valores democráticos; los hemos visto trabajar arduamente para desarrollar movimientos que empoderan y abogan por la libertad y los derechos humanos de las personas en México, Estados Unidos y el mundo. Durante el pasado año, apoyamos a líderes comunitarios, coaliciones y organizaciones que asumieron el compromiso de lograr un cambio en las dinámicas sobre qué voces son escuchadas, quién tiene el poder para impulsar el cambio y quiénes son vistos y priorizados por los sistemas.

En MG/ISMG tenemos el privilegio de trabajar con agentes de cambio y con las comunidades a las cuales ellos apoyan. **Este año nos unimos a nuestros clientes con el fin de desarrollar soluciones justas relacionadas con los siguientes aspectos:**

- El cambio climático
- El fortalecimiento de la democracia
- La lucha contra el racismo estructural
- La violencia de género
- El apoyo a las familias de los desaparecidos
- La priorización de la justicia ambiental
- El impulso a la conservación de la biodiversidad
- Normalización de la equidad en la salud para alcanzar el bienestar de todos
- El apoyo para el desarrollo de transformación organizativa basada en la equidad e inclusión y mucho más.

**El 2022 también fue un año para continuar fortaleciendo la capacidad y cultura organizativa de MG/ISMG.** A través de nuestro camino hacia la justicia, la equidad, la diversidad y la inclusión (JEDI, por sus siglas en inglés), hemos llevado a cabo cambios continuos en nuestra manera de trabajar juntos (ya sea de forma remota, híbrida o presencial), aumentado las prácticas internas para asignar y tomar responsabilidad de nuestra conducta. De igual manera, para satisfacer las necesidades de nuestros clientes, este pasado año, aumentamos nuestra capacidad y recursos con la integración de quince miembros a nuestra

agencia. Tuvimos la oportunidad de reunirnos por primera vez con muchos de ellos en nuestro retiro de empleados, el cual se llevó a cabo en **The Public Will Building**. Además, celebramos el tan merecido ascenso de ocho integrantes del equipo.

**En este mensaje anual, compartimos información sobre los cambios en MG/ISMG tales como historias de liderazgo y opinión; así como del trabajo y el impacto que nuestros clientes han logrado.** Al adentrarnos en nuestro 35.º año, estamos profundamente comprometidos en lograr las metas compartidas de salud pública, sustentabilidad ambiental y justicia social; por lo que nos entusiasma poder colaborar con ustedes en este trabajo.

En nombre de todo el equipo de MG/ISMG esperamos contar con su colaboración para seguir progresando y en consecuencia alcanzar impacto colectivo, creatividad y fuerza de voz.

**Con compromiso y en comunidad.**





# NEW CHANGE AGENTS

In 2022, we welcomed 15 incredible new change agents to our team. MG/ISMG has significantly grown our capacity and offerings to meet the needs of our clients and stakeholders. Meet our amazing new change agents, each of whom brings deep technical expertise, commitment to authentic engagement and collaboration for impact and experience advancing social change.



**Alacia Lauer**  
Senior Director



**Andrea Leonard**  
Human Resources &  
Operations Manager



**Chris Didway**  
Administrative Director/  
Associate Project Manager



**Dante Francomano**  
Senior Director



**Delma Jackson, III**  
Senior Director



**Erin Bloom**  
Senior Director



**Kayla Beard**  
Executive Assistant



**Kyle Crooke**  
Office Manager



**Laura Hanson**  
Senior Director



**Marie-Hélène Rousseau**  
Senior Director



**Max Friedenwald-Fishman**  
Associate



**Mitchell Collins**  
Senior Associate



**Paul Tigan**  
Vice President



**Philip Wilson**  
Senior Director



**Serene Arena**  
Senior Director



# 2022 PROMOTIONS AND OF COUNSEL

Last year MG/ISMG landed high impact work in all of our priority focus areas: **environment and sustainability, public health and social justice**. Together, we invested in helping our team members grow and build their professional expertise and capacity.

## MG/ISMG promotions:



**Chantelle Stewart**  
Senior Associate of Culture,  
Programs and Operations



**Erica Ellis**  
Project Manager



**Isabel Courtelis**  
Senior Associate



**Matt Baer**  
Senior Project Manager



**Paul Koehler**  
Senior Project Manager



**Somya Singh**  
Director of New Business  
Development



**Tanja Miljević**  
Senior Director of Strategic  
Initiatives and Operations



**Ximena Canseco Michel**  
Senior Associate

## New of counsel members:



**Aayaan Jamwal**



**Rob Sassor**

Our entire team of **over 75 change agents** continued to hone their skills, explore new learnings and collaborate with clients to advance social impact.

**Meet our full team at [metgroup.com/our-team](https://metgroup.com/our-team).**





# IMPACT STORIES WITH OUR CLIENTS

## Creating hope-based narratives to protect civic space.

In Central America, ISMG works with civil society groups to create hope-based narratives that promote protection of civic space and human rights, highlighting the relevance of working together and taking care of each other as a way to tackle social division. The narratives were co-created to have impact in the challenging context of increasing attacks on the legitimacy of civic space. With the **Ford Foundation** our team is working with dozens of organizations to build capacity and to advance a powerful new narrative.



## Advancing a well-being narrative.

Well-being approaches to policymaking, budgeting and other decisions are gaining momentum in U.S. cities and around the world, but a major barrier stands in the way: a persistent narrative that progress is primarily about growth and consumption. Shifting to well-being narratives—the shared idea that progress means human and planetary well-being—could create a seismic shift in thinking, actions and policies. Building on our global research, MG, in partnership with **the RAND Corporation** and social justice organizations—and supported by a grant from **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**—developed a new narrative start point and tested it with business and policy influencers. We released a new resource for the field: **insights on building the narrative** that can help drive change through policy change, news media, entertainment, data and other levers.





## Ensuring the future of fish and aquatic species by advancing cutting-edge science.

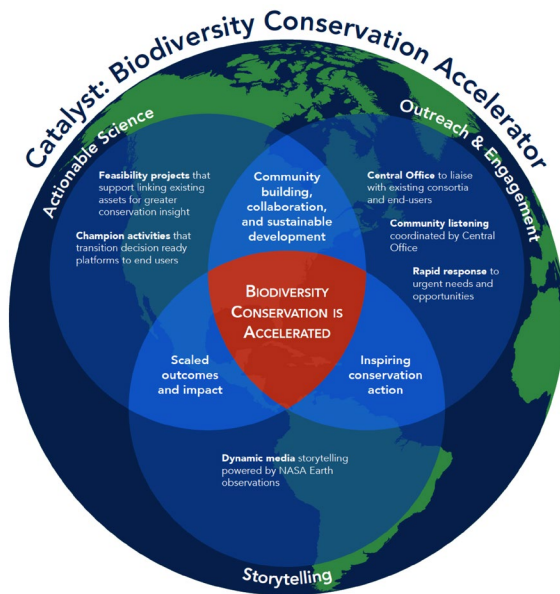
Drawing on listening sessions and interviews with internal and external stakeholders, MG worked with the **United States Geological Survey** (USGS) Ecosystems Mission Area to articulate a bold new vision for the future of the fish and aquatic species research component of the Species Management and Research Program. This vision ensures the healthy future of species and resources by advancing cutting-edge science; conducting unbiased research; collaborating closely with diverse partners; and providing partners with innovative and accessible tools. To equip the program to communicate and realize that vision, MG also developed a messaging guide with customizations for a wide range of key stakeholder groups.



## Reproductive human rights in El Salvador.

MG/ISMG developed a collaborative campaign to call for the release of women who have been imprisoned in **El Salvador** as a result of suffering obstetric emergencies. This campaign helped elevate and leverage the work that for many years has been carried out by local civil society organizations. El Salvador is one of the three countries in Latin America with a total ban on abortion, even in the case of health emergencies. This law disproportionately impacts low wealth and Indigenous women living in rural areas with little or no access to health care. MG/ISMG developed the strategy for the campaign in partnership with El Salvadorian civil society organizations, international women's and reproductive rights advocates, and others. As a result, a number of women have been released and allowed to return home to their families, but the fight continues to free them all and to advance changes that guarantee reproductive rights.





## Catalyst: the Biodiversity Conservation Accelerator.

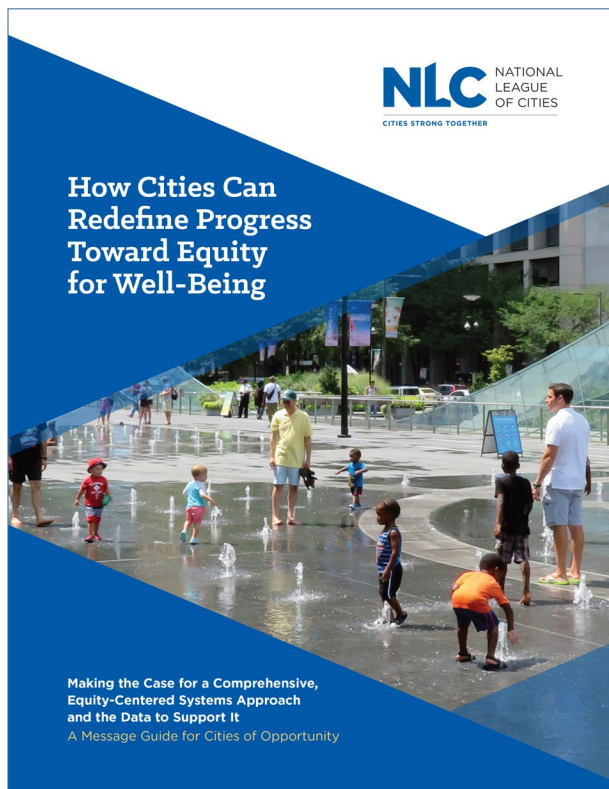
Despite significant efforts to halt the mass extinction and the loss of biodiversity, scientists estimate that we have lost two-thirds of vertebrate populations globally—and that’s just since 1970. **NASA** worked with MG to conduct stakeholder engagement and facilitate program design for its new biodiversity initiative, **Catalyst: the Biodiversity Conservation Accelerator**. In 2023, NASA will launch its first solicitation for Catalyst projects to inform diverse biodiversity conservation efforts with a deeper understanding of Earth as a system.

## Pursuing big impact by centering Earth Science in philanthropy.

MG has worked to connect **NASA Earth Science** with major philanthropic organizations that need science to better tackle some of the world’s most persistent problems. MG began by identifying trends in Earth Science that NASA and the philanthropic community both care about and can shape in a positive direction together. MG then facilitated engagements between NASA and philanthropies designed to unlock innovations in what urgent research gets pursued; how science gets integrated and applied on the ground; and who has access to being a scientist and user of science. While still in an early stage, these innovations hold the potential to dramatically accelerate the pace of scientific discovery and drive more enduring solutions that save lives and improve livelihoods.

## Envisioning places of equity, opportunity and well-being for all people.

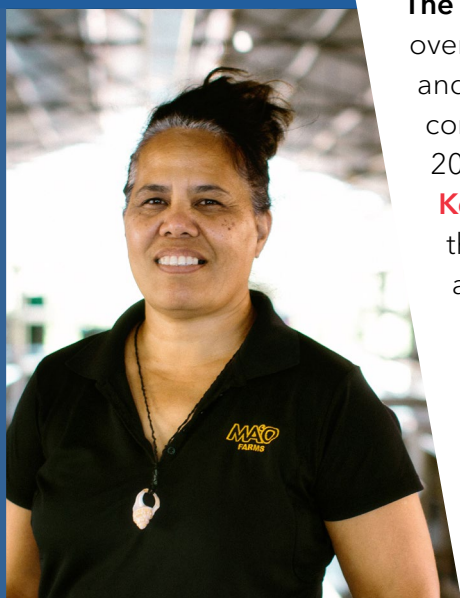
Cities of Opportunity are places where all people can reach their full potential and live healthy, productive and fulfilling lives. Realizing this vision means shifting how cities define, track and pursue progress, broadening from an economics-centered notion to a holistic idea of well-being. MG worked with **National League of Cities** to develop and test **messages** that support city leaders to make a case for this approach, and to share early insights from an Atlanta pilot project. Cities are using the tools to build the data and collaboration they need to center equity, opportunity and well-being for all people.





## Addressing global challenges.

MG/ISMG is currently collaborating on multiple international projects, research activities and **Social Behavioral Change** campaigns with international development agencies and foundations related to human rights, countering corruption, shifting the narrative on migration, advancing women's rights, strengthening democracy and civic space.



## Harnessing the power of collective action of a Global Fellows Network.

**The W.K. Kellogg Foundation** (WKKF) has provided leadership development for over 90 years. Fellows from the programs are global change agents, thought leaders and influencers from over 40 countries—making transformative change to create conditions for thriving children, working families and equitable communities. In 2022, MG worked closely with WKKF and fellows to rebrand and launch **The W.K. Kellogg Foundation Global Fellows Network**. By bringing the network closer to the Foundation, the power of collective action to positively transform communities and our world to create equitable opportunities for all, is stronger than ever.





## Deepening the knowledge of equity and environmental justice.

The **Federal Energy Regulatory Commission** (FERC) is working proactively to advance equity and environmental justice (EJ) considerations across its work. MG worked with FERC to design and conduct an agencywide equity assessment and develop the agency's first ever Equity Action Plan, published in early 2022. MG also led an EJ and Equity training session for the agency's equity team. The goal of this work is to create a deepening knowledge of equity and environmental justice that will help to inform the Commission's decisions, including permitting of natural gas, electric and hydro power projects subject to FERC jurisdiction.



## Solving the housing affordability crisis through research and policy.

MG worked with **Up for Growth**, a national, cross-sector member network committed to solving the housing shortage and affordability crisis through data-driven research and evidence-based policy, to merge and redesign the Up for Growth and Up for Growth Action websites. The new site encompassing the organization's 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) activities is designed to facilitate policy change that eliminates structural barriers to housing opportunities, spur coalition building, grow membership, and disseminate research and resources to a broad array of stakeholders.





## Lifting up the stories and voices of community-based organizations.

After gathering input from more than 100 organization leaders nationally, **The Deep South Center for Environmental Justice** (DSCEJ) will deliver a two-day community power-building training workshop in February 2023 to help prepare EJ groups and networks of cross-sector organizations to successfully secure funding from the once-in-a-generation federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act. Their *Communiversi* curriculum will build the capacity of frontline community organizations to better understand the opportunity at hand, build a powerful case for support, mobilize local decision-makers and effectively navigate the application process. The DSCEJ contracted with MG to assist with developing the training curriculum and a roadmap, and in compiling case studies that lift up the stories and voices of community-based organizations who have successfully secured local, state and federal funding in support of their community's priority needs and projects.

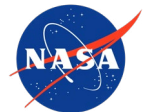


## Community resources for promoting health and academic success.

MG worked with **Oregon School-Based Health Alliance** (OSBHA) to develop a strategic messaging campaign, toolkit and other resources to inform key stakeholders about the availability of COVID vaccines through School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs), as well as other information about general health services available at SBHCs. The goal is to ensure SBHCs are recognized as a community resource for families and young people to receive health services, promoting health and academic success amongst young people. To inform our work, MG surveyed SBHCs across Oregon and conducted informational interviews to better understand their unique cultural and regional contexts, priorities and communication needs. MG also engaged parents and youth in the initial discovery phase and worked closely with a youth advisory committee on the campaign's creative direction. The campaign is expected to launch in Winter/ Spring 2023.



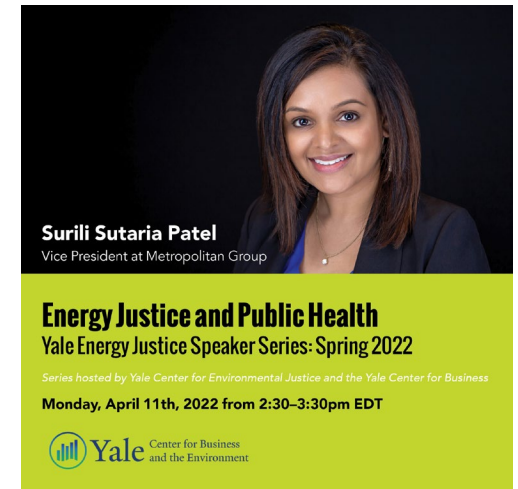
# THANK YOU TO OUR 2022 CLIENTS



# EXCHANGING IDEAS

Every year, thought leaders at MG/ISMG explore new ideas, create new models and test existing ones by applying them to our work. Our team shares their lived experiences, expertise, learning approach and points of view through: hosting convenings, public speaking, articles, media interviews, podcasts, civic participation, leadership and service.

Click the images on this page to learn more and visit our [Ideas](#) page to find more tools, resources and thought leadership.



# CONVENING TOGETHER

MG/ISMG hosted three convenings to bring together change agents to explore current trends, issues, opportunities, innovations and approaches.



**Colaboratoria's Rexistir: Strategic Communication for Social Change.** This event honored practitioners actively building a more just and inclusive society in Mexico. Topics included fundraising, strategic communication, as well as how organizations can build alliances, networks and capacity.



**Harnessing Infrastructure to Advance Racial Equity and Climate Justice.** Panelists shared what is at stake and what is possible with regards to infrastructural improvements related to the once-in-a-generation federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act.



**Reclaiming Democracy: Narratives, Civic Space and Action.** Panelists emphasized lessons learned, emerging narrative trends, and the importance of organizers, coalitions and power-building movements to advocate for civic space in the fight to advance democratic values.

We were also thrilled to host mission-aligned events for other organizations to convene and collaborate at The Public Will Building, including: **Allies Group, BBPDX & B Local PDX, Central City Concern, Governor's Team Planning Retreat, Local Progress National Convening hosted by Portland Street Response, MO 100 Summit, Partners in Diversity, Portland Audubon, Urban Renewal Action.**





# JUSTICE, EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

As a mission-based B corp that strives to lead with our values, we are committed to leaning into our **Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion** (JEDI) practice to improve our internal culture. Our hope is to realize and apply powerful learnings, deepen relationships and engagement, and advance collaborative explorations that lead to more equitable policies and practices for all staff. This work is the result of shared leadership from teams, task forces, committees, and affinity and resource groups across MG/ISMG.

We continue to examine what it means to actively undertake and embody the work to identify systemic racism in order to dismantle it. For us, this means we have committed to learn, unlearn, listen, repair and disrupt the ways white supremacy shows up in our lives, our workplace and our communities. We are **committed to this journey** and using the power of our voices to make the lasting changes needed to build more equitable spaces.

One of the key outcomes from our conversations this year was to examine the topic of accountability through a power up/power down lens at our agency. We have used the frame of accountability to codify a more equitable culture and to drive re-evaluation of and improvements to our systems, policies and practices to create a more equitable culture for our staff. We are on a learning journey and appreciate the vulnerability, courage and humanity that it takes to truly embrace principles rooted in justice, equity, diversity and inclusion.



# COMMITTED TO CHANGE

## In Our Communities

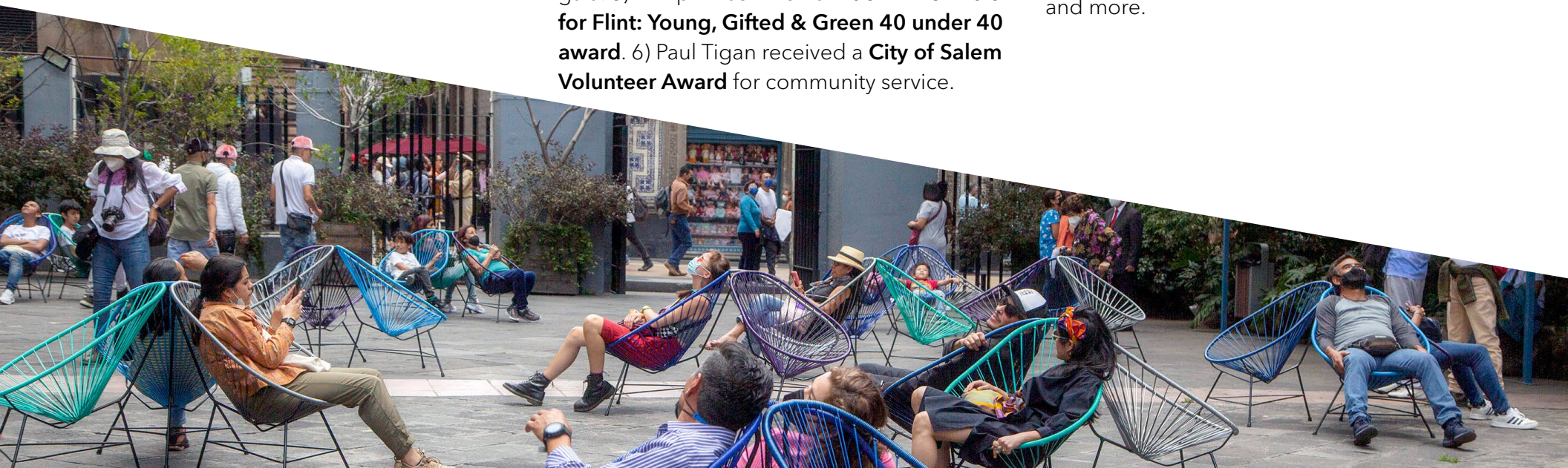
We are proud of our team's service and dedication as board members and volunteers in the communities in which we live and work. In 2022, our team dedicated time and expertise for organizations and nonprofits based in the United States and Mexico. A selected list of these organizations includes: **Audubon, Capital Plus Exchange, Central City Concern, Children's Environmental Health Network, Clean Water Action, El Caracol, Japanese American Museum of Oregon, Latino Network, Oregon Business for Climate, Seeding Justice and Women's Foundation of Oregon.**

We were honored that our in-community work was recognized with a number of awards, including: 1) **Best for the World in Governance** by B Lab; MG joins the top 5 percent of world companies that excel in overall mission, ethics, accountability and transparency. 2) MG was awarded the **2022 Real Leaders Impact Award**, which recognizes innovative global businesses committed to improving the well-being of our planet and society. 3) MG received the **MO 100 impact CEOs award**, and Eric Friedenwald-Fishman was also recognized as a **Child Health Advocate Awardee in Business**. 4) Maria Elena Campisteguy was honored at **Latino Network's Noche Bella** gala. 5) Philip Wilson won a **Black Millennials for Flint: Young, Gifted & Green 40 under 40 award**. 6) Paul Tigan received a **City of Salem Volunteer Award** for community service.

MG is proud to be a **certified B Corp** and ISMG is proud to be **certified Sistema B** meeting the highest global standards for social and environmental responsibility and governance accountability.

## We Walk the Talk

MG lent its voice, and engaged other businesses and organizations to lend theirs, to call for expanding protections related to democratic values, anti-authoritarianism, civic space, addressing homelessness, reproductive rights, gender-based equity, climate issues, gun violence prevention, advocating for people experiencing intellectual and developmental disabilities, and more.





# THANK YOU

We are thankful and honored to work with our clients, partner organizations, coalitions, vendors, volunteer leaders and communities to advance equity, justice and sustainability. Together, we can:

- Support and build the capacity of people to leverage their power of voice.
- Shift and counter inequitable narratives to powerful new ones that open civic space and create possibilities for positive social change.
- Advance the policy, practice, behavior and attitudinal changes that build public will and shift mindsets and expectations for a more just and sustainable world.

As always, we hope to collaborate with you, convene with you, learn from each other, and support your impact initiatives in the year to come.

- The MB/ISMB Team  
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follow: @metgroup



# STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INTERCULTURAL ENGAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGY AND INNOVATION



Metropolitan Group crafts strategic and creative services to amplify the power of voice of change agents in building a just and sustainable world.  
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