



The Top 25
Outstanding Women Listeners
In The World 2023
Global Listening Centre

Alice Wairimu Nderitu



Alice Wairimu Nderitu is a Kenyan national who serves as the United Nations under Secretary General and Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide to United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres. She is a recognized voice and journalist in the field of peacebuilding and atrocity crimes prevention. As an international leader in a male-dominated field, she has advocated for listening and including women in international forums.

Andrea Marsili



Andrea Marsili is the composer and artistic director of the contemporary tango orchestra, Les Fleures Noires. Her compositions are full of invitations to listen, exploring the voices past and present that have whispered to women of what they can and cannot do. The recipient of many well-deserved recognitions, her work has demonstrated that we listen not only to words but also to the music that runs through our lives.

Angela Dorothea Merkel



Angela Dorothea Merkel served as Chancellor of Germany from 2005 to 2021. Serving as President of the European Council in 2007, she played a key role in the negotiation of the Treaty of Lisbon and the Berlin Declaration. Listening to supporters, listening to opposition, and listening to those whose voices are not always heard has enabled her to achieve these many feats and be recognized as a preeminent world leader.

Angela W. Buchdahl



Angela W. Buchdahl is the first Asian-American to ever be ordained as a cantor or rabbi in North America. She leads the Central Synagogue in New York City, but reaches across the world on live-streams, videos, and podcasts. Rabbi Buchdahl is well-known for engaging people of many faiths, and for her commitment to social justice. She instructs her congregation in mindfulness and meditation, encouraging them to listen to what is around them in the natural world, as well as making more time to listen to each other.

Carolyn Calloway-Thomas



Carolyn Calloway-Thomas is a Professor and Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of African American and African Diaspora Studies at Indiana University. She is presently serving as an Intercultural Communication Competence Advisory Expert for the World Council on Intercultural and Global Competence. Her work is encapsulated in her book “Empathy in the Global World”, the first book to examine the nature, practices, and potential of empathy for understanding and addressing human problems on a global scale.

Christine C. M. Goh



Christine C. M. Goh is President's Chair Professor in Education (Linguistics & Language Education) at the National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University of Singapore. She is recognized for her ground-breaking work in second language (L2) listening and metacognition that promoted the importance of rigorous research and listener-centred pedagogies. For successive years, she has been identified among the world's Top 2% of Scientists in Languages and Linguistics by Stanford University and Elsevier. She is regarded as the number one Asian scholar in the field of L2 listening research and practice.

Enriqueta Estela Barnes de Carlotto



Enriqueta Estela Barnes de Carlotto is an Argentine human rights activist and president of the organization "Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo" (Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo). She became a historical symbol of commitment as a human rights activist in Argentina when her pregnant daughter, Laura, was illegally detained and killed during the last civic-military dictatorship. In 2014, she found her grandson, who joined the 133 grandchildren recovered by the organization that she has led since 1977. She could have only listened to her own heart but instead chose to listen to the cries of all the families who lost children.

Graça Machel



Graça Machel is a politician and a humanitarian. She was born in Mozambique, and is the widow of former Mozambiquian president Samora Machel (1975-1986), as well as the widow of the former president Nelson Mandela of South Africa. Throughout her entire career, she has listened to the voices of the underprivileged and the disadvantaged. She serves as the Deputy Chair of The Elders, an independent group of global leaders working for peace, justice, human rights, and a sustainable planet.

Haben Girma



Haben Girma is a disability rights advocate and the first deafblind graduate of Harvard Law School. She has worked to provide accessible digital services, including audio for blind readers and close captioning for deaf viewers. She was elected Trustee of the Board for Helen Keller Services for the Blind and was named a White House Champion for Change by President Barack Obama. She continues to listen to and advocate for those whose voices are silenced and ignored.

Jan De Silva



Jan De Silva is Co-Chair of the Canada-ASEAN Business Council and former President and CEO of the Toronto Region Board of Trade. In her numerous roles – including Canadian representative on the APEC Business Advisory Council, Dean of Ivey Asia for Ivey Business School of Western University, and co-founder of the Climate Economy Strategic Council – her commitment to working and listening across financial sectors has led to increased export strategies and economic development to lift communities.



Judi Lee Brownell



Judi Lee Brownell is an Emerita Professor at Cornell University. One of the top scholars in the world in the field of listening research and practice, she has authored seven textbooks and 80 articles on listening and communication, including *Listening: Attitudes, Principles, and Skills* which is in its 7th edition. She identified six components of the listening process which are presented in her widely recognized HURIER model.

Juliana Yvonne O'Connor-Connolly



Juliana Yvonne O'Connor-Connolly is the Premier of the Cayman Islands, the first woman to hold this position. Her exceptional leadership accomplishments have their foundation in her outstanding listening skills, especially her refined awareness of verbal and nonverbal communication. She has transformed innumerable lives and has been a special leader to the benefit of her country's progress, illustrating how politicians can use listening to make the world a better place.

Katherine van Wormer



Katherine van Wormer is an Emerita Professor in the Department of Social Work at the University of Northern Iowa. She has worked in the United States, Northern Ireland, and Norway, authoring or co-authoring over 20 books and 60 articles on such topics as addiction treatment, the criminal justice system, and restorative justice for women, centered on the value of listening in therapy.

Laura Ann Janusik



Laura Ann Janusik is an Emerita Professor and the McGee Chair of Communication at Rockhurst University. For over 25 years, she has conducted research, education, and consulting in the field of listening. She is widely recognized and cited internationally for the development of the Imhof-Janusik listening concepts inventory. She was previously recognized by the Global Listening Centre in 2020 as a Distinguished Listening Scholar.

Laura Lundy



Laura Lundy is Co-Director of the Centre for Children's Rights and a Professor at Queen's University, Belfast. The "Lundy Model" for child participation in decision making has been adopted by various institutions, including the European Commission, the World Health Organization, and UNICEF. She reminds us that we must listen to everyone including, or perhaps especially, those whose voices are often overlooked or discounted in society.

Maren Krings



Maren Krings is a German freelance photojournalist and climate impact storyteller. With works published in numerous international media outlets and displayed in prominent locations globally, she seeks solutions to socio-ecological impacts to improve the climate. She expertly blends image and story to make us see and hear the effects of climate change.

Mariam Mohamed Fatima Matar



Mariam Mohamed Fatima Matar is a geneticist, medical researcher, and radio host in the United Arab Emirates. She is the first woman to serve as Director General of the Community Development Authority and is the founder and director of the UAE Genetic Diseases Association. Committed to women empowerment and advancement, especially in STEM and medical innovation, her work encapsulates the importance of listening in science and healthcare and the importance of listening to empower others.

Meaza Ashenafi



Meaza Ashenafi was the first woman to serve as a Judge of the Federal Supreme Court of Justice in Ethiopia. She founded and directs the Association of Ethiopian Women Lawyers, which provides legal aid to poor women and advocates for their rights. Her commitment to listening and fighting for the rights of women have earned her numerous awards for philanthropy and leadership, including the African Leadership Prize.

Park Ji-hyun



Park Ji-hyun is a noted South Korean journalist, social activist, and politician. Writing under the pseudonym “Flame,” she helped to expose one of the largest online sex-crime rings in South Korea. Because of her investigation, more than five million people signed a national petition and by the end of 2020, over 3,000 people had been arrested. As a journalist and as a politician, effective listening has been the key to her success.

Rafaela Polanco García



Rafaela Polanco García serves on the Boston Public Schools Committee where she advocates for listening to the voices of the LatinX community. She is an immigrant from the Dominican Republic who lives in public housing in South Boston and has a background in law and bilingual advocacy. She has served as the Director of Parent Engagement and Organizing at St. Stephen’s Youth Programs in the South End.



The Top 25
Outstanding Women Listeners
In The World 2023
Global Listening Centre

Sahle-Work Zewde



Sahle-Work Zewde serves as the first woman President of Ethiopia. She has represented Ethiopia as an ambassador in France, Djibouti, and Senegal. She has further served as Representative to the United Nations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization and as Director-General of the Nairobi United Nations office. She has committed her life to ensuring education develops the capabilities to engage in dialogue and act together, placing listening at the center.

Tererai Trent



Tererai Trent is a Zimbabwean-American woman whose educational success has brought her international fame. She won the 2018 NAACP Award for Outstanding Literary Work (Instructional) for her book, “The Awakened Woman—Remembering & Reigniting Our Sacred Dreams” and was a keynote speaker at the UN Global Compact Leaders’ Summit where she used her growing voice to appeal to international businesses to invest in equal access to quality education. Through listening and supporting others, she has become a symbol of hope for everyone.

Terry Gross



Terry Gross is an American journalist, host, and co-executive producer of the radio show “Fresh-air”. Recognized as an exceptional interviewer, her friendly tone of voice combined with empathy, curiosity, and intelligence reveal her ability to actively listen. Her skill in engaging with thousands of guests has captured millions of daily listeners around the world.

Tulsi Gowda



Tulsi Gowda is an Indian environmentalist known by her tribe, the Halakki Vokkaliga, as the “Tree Goddess.” She is estimated to have planted over 100,000 trees over her lifetime and to have identified over 300 medicinal plants. She is a living example of how listening is connected to the well-being of self, community, and the planet.

Yuhua Guo



Yuhua Guo is a Professor in the Department of Sociology at Tsinghua University. The author of five books, her research focuses on state-society relations in the process of social transformation, farmer oral histories, and the rights and interests of migrant workers. She is an advocate for democratic reform and for listening across political and social divides.