

### List of Speakers

#### 1. Doreen Denstadt – Thuringia Minister for Migration, Justice and Consumer Protection

##### Topic: Fighting for Diversity, Especially Now

Doreen Denstädt is the current Thuringian Minister for Migration, Justice, and Consumer Protection, and a deputy member of the Bundesrat since February 7, 2023. An engineer by training, she holds a diploma in public administration and has served in various roles within the police force, where she supported individuals who faced discrimination. A member of BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN, Denstädt is the only person of color member of Thuringia's government and is a prominent voice against racism and discrimination.

#### 2. Kenny Gozali – Software Engineer at dotSource SE, Berlin

##### Topic: Is AI truly Intelligent?

Kenny Gozalo has immersed himself in the field of AI since his university days, conducting research and witnessing firsthand its transformative potential. Through hands-on experience, he has gained valuable insights into cutting-edge AI research. His contributions include: a sentiment analysis project on Twitter, where he employed a Big Data framework and leveraged a pre-trained AI library for natural language processing-based sentiment classification. A toy example of a randomly weighted armed bandit problem, which he used to implement the Epsilon-Greedy Algorithm for selecting optimal strategies in active learning. A novel variation of the Epsilon-Greedy Algorithm, featuring a decaying learning rate, which significantly improved training accuracy in fewer iterations.

#### 3. Dr. Serhii Smahlo- Theologist and New Testament Scholar

##### Topic: – Turning the World Over: Jesus's Friendship with Outcasts as an Enactment of Apocalyptic Reality

Serhii Smahlo is a Ukrainian New Testament scholar specializing in the Gospels. His research focuses on understanding the Gospels within the framework of apocalyptic literature and ancient Jewish culture. He holds a PhD from Jena University and is currently a Research Fellow at the Saxon Academy of Sciences and Humanities in Leipzig. Smahlo's work combines academic rigor with a deep spiritual connection. As an Orthodox priest, he is passionate about fostering a community of biblical scholars in Ukraine. His research extends beyond traditional academic spheres, incorporating art, literature, and cinema to explore the Bible's relevance in contemporary society. His upcoming monograph delves into the significance of Jesus' meals with sinners in the context of Jewish eschatological expectations.

#### 4. Sheba George - Global Development Policy Consultant and Advocate

##### Topic: The paradox of progress: why we are both advancing and failing in global development and why it all comes down to you.

Sheba George is a Global Development Policy Consultant and Advocate. As a Policy Consultant, Sheba advises international organizations and governments on developing public policies and driving systemic change in the global development and humanitarian sectors. She has served at major international organizations, including the United Nations and the European Commission, and advised governments in Europe, the Middle East, and the Global South.

As an Advocate, Sheba works with multilateral organizations and governments to protect and promote the rights of vulnerable groups. She has served in several diplomatic and advocacy designations, including as a Youth Ambassador at the UN Youth Assembly, Youth Changemaker at the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Feminist Foreign Policy Ambassador to the G7, Global Shaper at the World Economic Forum, and an Advocate for displaced populations' education with the Global Partnership for Education.

Sheba has also authored publications on foreign policy, global development, and humanitarian support.



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## **5. Dara Morgana – Interdisciplinary Artist, Speaker**

### **Topic: Inhabit Yourself: From Trauma Land to Compost Land**

Dara Morgana is an interdisciplinary artist, speaker, and facilitator dedicated to creating environments where creativity and playfulness foster resilience and regeneration. With a diverse background in the arts, sustainability, facilitation, community building, and event production, Dara brings a unique approach to inspiring individuals and communities to unlock their deepest creative potential. Dara's work is grounded in the belief that playful exploration and artistic expression are powerful tools for developing resilience and agency, enabling individuals to navigate personal challenges and contribute to collective growth. She emphasizes the importance of learning to truly inhabit ourselves—not only for personal transformation but also for fostering a more interconnected and sustainable world. In addition to her work as a speaker, artist, and facilitator, Dara leads a vibrant Patreon community where she hosts storytelling and writing circles. These circles provide a supportive space for individuals to explore their creativity, deepen their understanding of their personal narratives, and connect with others on a transformative journey. Dara's approach combines creative exploration with a deep commitment to nurturing a sense of belonging and purpose.

## **6. Cameryn Moore – Playwright, Performer and Producer**

### **Topic: Let's Talk About Sex: Creating Safer Spaces for Sex-Positive Conversations**

Cameryn is an award-winning playwright, performer, event producer, and host, originally from the US and now based in Berlin. Her performances have been seen in over 80 cities worldwide. Her biggest project is overseeing the growth of Smut Slam International, the global network of community dirty storytelling events that she created in 2011. Cameryn currently hosts and produces 11 regular slams across Europe, from Copenhagen to Cardiff, with more slams planned in Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Luxembourg, and the UK in the coming months. Under Cameryn's mentorship, additional chapters are running in Amsterdam, Boston, Baltimore, Winnipeg, Vancouver, and Victoria BC.

## **7. Dr. Hershita Kaul – Scientist, Public Speaker**

### **Topic: Balancing Act, Aging Like a Pro and New Blueprint for Global Health**

By profession, Harshita is a scientist, working at the Cluster of Excellence in Aging and Aging-related diseases (CECAD). She holds a PhD with cum laude in metabolism research. A committed social changemaker, she is currently on a mission to advocate inter-sectorial allyship in mitigating the under-representation of disadvantaged sections of society in conflict resolution and decision-making. She serves as the founder of Uplift Leadership Lab, a grassroots initiative that employs a multifactorial approach to address refugee integration in NRW state in Germany, with a special focus in Cologne, Bonn, and Dusseldorf. She held the role of the Curator, Dusseldorf Hub of Global Shapers, World Economic Forum, and is the Strategic Advisor for SieDi Hub, an innovation hub in Nigeria that focuses on women empowerment and youth mobilization to address global issues. She has been actively involved in science outreach and communication and has over 10+ years of work experience in pro bono initiatives. She also serves as a corporate Mental Health First Aider and runs safe spaces as a part of her initiative Uplift.

## **8. Dr. Atif Ikram Butt – Chief, Public Advocacy and Communication Section, UNEP**

### **Topic: The Toughest Conversation: Navigating the Environmental Narrative**

Atif Ikram Butt is a seasoned Social and Behaviour Change Specialist with nearly 20 years of leadership experience. He has worked with leading international aid organizations such as DFID, GIZ, ILO, UNDP, Johns Hopkins University, and UNICEF. Currently, he leads Public Advocacy and Communication at the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP)'s headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, as Section Chief. Atif is an expert in strategy development, organizational building, media usage, and advocacy. He holds a doctorate in International Development Studies from Ruhr University Bochum, Germany, with research focused on ideation in policymaking.

## **9. Jeff Kwasi Klein – Political Scientist, Speaker, and Strategist**

### **Topic: Critical Imagination as a Tool for Liberation**

Jeff Kwasi Klein is a dedicated advocate, strategist, and thinker for social justice, equity, and political innovation. As the former Co-Director of the Multitudes Foundation, he supported individuals and initiatives across Europe in reimagining more inclusive, representative, and human politics. Before this role, Jeff led the community-based funding project May Ayim Fonds and Germany's first anti-discrimination counseling center for Black, African, and African Diasporic people at Each One Teach One (EOTO). Jeff is currently a member of the Berlin Senate's Equality Advisory Board, which focuses on combating anti-Black racism in Berlin, and has served in many committees and political initiatives over the years. In these roles, he advocates for the interests of Black, Indigenous, and Communities of Colour and various (post-)migrant community organizations. Jeff is dedicated to addressing structural and institutionalized forms of racism, focusing on community building, leadership, and political innovation.

**Event Date:** 15 November 2024

**Event Location:** University of Erfurt

**Website:** <https://www.ted.com/tedx/events/57479>

**Social media:** Instagram @TEDxUniversityofErfurt

Best regards,

**TEDxUniversity of Erfurt Organizing Team**