

KIRSTEN GELSDORF

EMPLOYMENT

University of Virginia, (UVA)

Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy

Charlottesville, VA

Aug 2016-present

Professor of Practice of Public Policy and Leadership, Director of Global Humanitarian Policy, Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy

- Leading applied research and policy development projects for organizations such as American Red Cross, USAID, Sesame Workshop, German Government, United Nations, Save the Children International, and UN Centre for Humanitarian Data.
- Co-Director of [UVA Humanitarian Collaborative](#), co-host of [Beyond Aid](#) podcast and [Let's Talk Faith and Aid](#) podcast.
- Co-founder and co-director of [Read for Action: The Humanitarian Book Club](#).
- Teaching graduate and undergraduate courses on applied public policy as well as humanitarian response, leadership, and data.
- Winner of 2020 State of Virginia Outstanding Faculty Award; 2021 University Public Impact Research Award, 2019 and 2021 Batten Excellence in Engagement of Public Policy and Leadership Award; 2020 Batten Excellence in Service Award; 2019 All-University Teaching Award; and 2018 Batten Excellence in Teaching Award.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) Global 2002- 2016

- Served as the Chief of Policy Analysis and Innovation and a Senior Policy Advisor to the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs on major humanitarian policy issues.
- Served in numerous humanitarian deployments including South African Regional Food Crisis, the Liberian War, the Tsunami in Indonesia, Hurricane Katrina, the Pakistan Earthquake, the Timor-Leste Security Crisis, the Global Food Crisis.
- Served as the Humanitarian Advisor for the UN Special Envoy, President William Clinton, following the 2010 Haiti earthquake.

SELECTED TEACHING

LPPA 4568 Lead from Anywhere; LPPS: PPOL 4991, Policy Capstone; PPOL 3295, Lecture Global Humanitarian Crisis: Dilemmas, Leadership, and Action; PPOL 7610, Seminar Applied Policy Project; PPOL 5200, Seminar Advanced Policy and Practice in Humanitarian Aid; PPOL 6135: Development of Global Humanitarian Policy; Independent Studies on: Data Policy and Practice; Human Rights in Myanmar; Mental Health of Resettled Refugees; Non-Governmental Organizations; Virtual Reality on Displacement; Imagery, Advocacy and Humanitarian Aid; World Humanitarian Day

SELECTED RECENT RESEARCH, ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLICATION AND MEDIA

RESEARCH PIs: *North American Humanitarian Response Initiative (NAHRI); United Nations, Annual Synthesis Report on Progress since the World Humanitarian Summit; Sesame Workshop Early Childhood Development in Emergencies, Humanitarian Leadership*

BOOK: *Understanding the Humanitarian World. Coauthored with Daniel Maxwell. 2019. London: Routledge Press. May 2019. Adopted by Princeton University, Dartmouth, Elon, LSE, Millersville University, Columbia University, Harvard University, George Washington University, and MIT.*

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MEDIA: *The New Yorker*, [How Would a Humanitarian Pause Work in Gaza?](#) Nov 2023, *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, [How Much Good Can \\$100 Million Do? Sesame Street and IRC Put a Big Bet to the Test](#), October, 2023; NPR Marketplace, [“Among the Aid, Ukrainian Refugees can Expect Cold Hard Cash”](#), March, 2022; *The Conversation*, [In some cases, ‘humanitarian corridors’ in Ukraine could do more harm than good”](#) (picked up by *The Independent*, *Houston Chronicle*, *Yahoo News*) March 2022; *Washington Post*, [Humanitarian corridors are meant to evacuate civilians in war. But they can be dangerous](#), March 2022; NPR, *With Good Reason* Invited Guest interviewed for 24 min segment on show, [Humanitarian Aid Misconceptions](#), (April 2021); *Christian Science Monitor*, [“After Haiti quake, aid workers make respect a part of relief”](#) August 2021

SELECTED RECENT FUNDING, GRANTS, CONTRACTS¹

1.	Sesame Workshop	2020-2025
	Award amount: \$250,000 “Early Childhood Development in Emergencies”	
2.	UVA Strategic Investment Fund	2019-2025
	Award amount: \$600,000 “UVA Humanitarian Research Exchange”	
3.	Ruth Young/Indar-Riyukhe Fund	
	Award amount: \$160,500, “UVA Humanitarian Collaborative”	2017-2025
4.	North American Humanitarian Response Initiative	2018-2019
	Award amount: \$90,000	

SELECTED RECENT BOARD MEMBERSHIPS AND ADVISORY ROLES

- *World Economic Forum Expert Network, Switzerland*
- *Advisory Committee for the Humanitarian Innovation Fund, London*
- *Save the Children, Humanitarian Strategic Advisory Group, London*
- *United Nations Centre for Humanitarian Data, Netherlands*
- *Girl Determined, Myanmar*
- *Advisory Committee on Platform for Disaster Displacement, Switzerland*
- *Refugee Self Reliance Research Community of Practice Group, Global*

SELECTED RECENT INVITED SEMINARS, LECTURES

Keynote Speaker DEVEX World, 2025, Presented INEE *Coordination in Practice: Lessons Learned from Early Childhood Development Coordination in Challenging Contexts*, 2024. Featured Speaker Hilton Humanitarian Awards 2023; Chaired Karsh Democracy 360 Panel *The Climate and Refugee crisis and role of Democracies*, 2023; Keynote and Invited Presentation: Princeton University *Policy Challenges in Cash Transfer Programming in Humanitarian Crisis* 2021, GAGE event *The Lessons of War: The United States, Afghanistan, & Iraq since 9/11* with Brookings and the Atlantic Council 2021 Expert Briefing and Facilitation German Government *Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Displacement Contexts* 2021

SELECTED UNIVERSITY AND SCHOOL SERVICE

Batten Executive Committee, 2025-2027 and 2017-2019; Batten Dean Search Committee, 2018-2019 and Dean Re-Appointment Committee 2024; Batten Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, 2018-2019; Batten Applied Policy Project Curriculum Committee, 2018-2019; Batten Admissions Committee, 2018-2019; Batten Engagement Evaluation Committee, 2018-2019; Deans International Engagement Committee 2018-2019; Participant (LAM) 2018

EDUCATION

The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University

MA, USA

¹ All of the grants and contracts involve other faculty and practitioner collaborators and all totals are approximate.

KIRSTEN GELSDORF

1999-2001 Masters of Law and Diplomacy-Humanitarian Affairs and Food Security

Dartmouth College

NH, USA

1993-1997 Bachelors of Arts-History and International Environmental Affairs