



Interview with Karen Tse (International Bridges to Justice)

Lissa Harris

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Lissa Harris: Could please start by introducing yourself and your organization and say a little bit about the problem that you're working on?

Karen Tse: My name is Karen Tse. I am the founder of International Bridges to Justice, which was founded in 2000. Every day in countries throughout the world, people are arbitrarily detained, tortured, and denied access to a lawyer. The protection of a lawyer makes all the difference in terms of preventing torture and other due process rights violations. In some countries, the majority of people in prison are pre-trial detainees who have never had their day in court. Many languish for years, simply waiting to prove their innocence. What we do is set up systematic and early access to lawyers for people, kind of like public defenders. I'm a former public defender in San Francisco and recognize that people's lack of access to lawyers is a global problem. In developing countries with poor judicial infrastructure, torture is sadly seen as a useful shortcut, a cheap form of criminal investigation. People are tortured to extract "confessions." Or, they get lost in the system.

We're solving these problems by something really simple, which is giving people a lawyer so their rights are protected and they don't stay stuck, sometimes for very long periods of time, in pre-trial detention. We're dedicated to ensuring early access to a lawyer for every person in the world, to protect them from torture and mistreatment, as well as protecting the fundamental right to a fair trial and due process. This is critical for democracy. Protecting the most vulnerable includes women, children, LGBT persons— but it's also for those who don't have any resources— the criminalization of poverty. Those in prison are the most vulnerable, most voiceless, and most invisible.

Lissa Harris: How do you get connected with people? How much of what you do is directly serving people in the criminal justice system versus working with other organizations on the ground?



Karen Tse: It's 100% supporting people in the criminal justice system because we have the very narrow focus of providing early access to a lawyer. When I started International Bridges of Justice, I realized that because it was such a huge problem. In country after country there just aren't systems for people to tap into. Even lawyers were trying to figure it out because they were used to a system without protections.

I'll give you an example. When we started in Burundi, I remember walking into a prison and I picked up this baby, she looked to be about two years old, and I told the mom how adorable she was. The mom said, "I know, but this is why I'm here." And she told me that she had been in prison because she had stolen two diapers and an iron, which she planned to return. I went to the judge and asked if there was anything we could do for this woman. It was ridiculous she was in prison for stealing two diapers. The judge said, "Sure, fine, but look at my prison. 80% of the people here are in pre-trial detention." They did not have a single public defender that was dedicated to taking care of people. He was like, "So, what should I do with everyone?"

We came into Burundi and met with a number of lawyers. Our model is to train defenders and then ask, "How can we organize this to make it happen?" We trained the lawyers in Burundi and set up a defender resource center there so that they could start taking cases. We did round table discussions with judges, prosecutors, and police. The situation is changing, which is a testament to the fact that there really is progress.

Things have changed from when I started the organization in 2000 to today, 2023. There are many more actors who believe we need to give people the protection of a lawyer early on. When I first began, and in the first 10 years, most countries didn't have a defender's office, so we had to work together with the local actors who weren't necessarily focused on this area to build the capacity of the lawyers and the enabling ecosystem.

Lissa Harris: Can you talk a little bit more about how your clients specifically benefit from the work that you do?

Karen Tse: They benefit because they are not tortured when they're detained—it's really as simple as that. Lots of people who go into prison unfortunately are tortured because it's the cheapest form of criminal investigation. When we're working on developing systematic early access to a lawyer, the hope, and I think we've seen this through the years, is that if you have a lawyer early on, you're not going to be mistreated or coerced into making a "confession." That's the first thing.

The second thing is that people also get lost in the system. There was one country that we worked in, and a man went into prison at 14, he was found innocent at 17, and didn't get released until 40. Prisoners get lost in the system, which is ridiculous in this day and age. So, number one



is hopefully you won't get tortured and number two is hopefully you won't get lost. And then number three, even if you're not lost in the system, you could get stuck in pre-trial detention.

We had a case in Sri Lanka that was taken care of by a local IJL defense lawyer, an IJL justice maker named Harshi. It was a woman who went into prison because she was accused of carrying a small amount of drugs. When the police were interrogating her they said, "If you don't confess immediately, you're going to be here for six or seven years and you're not going to see your kids." So she confessed and it turned out to be much worse. By the time Harshi met her, she'd been there almost 10 years. She'd been to court 53 times, but every time she went before the judge, the judge asked, "Where's your lawyer?" And each time she said she didn't have one and all 53 times he sent her back to prison until she had a lawyer. As soon as a lawyer found her and appeared with her in court, she was immediately released.

Globally, it is estimated that one-third of the people are in pre-trial detention. But in some countries it is much worse— it's more like 70% or 80%.

We're looking at building systematic early access to a lawyer so that legal rights are not just a luxury for just a few special people. Some NGOs only help high-profile people or people they feel are worthy, but everyone is worthy of being protected. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights says that everyone has a right to a lawyer and everyone has a right not to be tortured, but it's not implemented. We focus on implementation so that people's rights are protected on the ground, not just on paper.

Lissa Harris: Can you talk about what makes your approach distinctive from other organizations or other people working on this problem?

Karen Tse: When I started the organization, there weren't many organizations working specifically on early access to a lawyer globally. It's very practical. It's very solutions-oriented. It doesn't look at all the problems in the world. It looks at this one problem. It's not rhetorical, it aims to technically work together with the government. **There aren't a lot of groups that work collaboratively with governments, but we have to. I always joke about it and say, unless you're Brad Pitt or you're in the movies and you can cut a hole in the ceiling and pilot yourself down into the prison, you can't get into the prisons and you can't get into the police stations. You actually have to work with governments in order to make it work.**

In a really good way, we have no choice but to work for system change. We're looking at how we make positive changes for future generations by working with governments to make it happen. **There is a lot of talk now about intersectionality, and the issues in prisons tend to touch on just about every other priority. Number one, there's a lot of concern about democracy, and there's talk about elections and fairness. We care about the environment, we care about women, we care**



about LGBT, we care about kids. If you really stop and look at it, the most vulnerable have always crossed through the prison gates. Nelson Mandela said, "If you really want to look at where a country is, go into their prisons and see how prisoners are treated."

What makes our approach distinctive is our commitment to a global movement for early access to legal representation, starting at the individual level, country by country. We are not a project; we are a movement. Projects can trigger change, but a movement keeps it going. It's really all about our vision, that every man, woman, and child will have access to a lawyer. We make that possible through both action on the ground and a comprehensive global vision. Early access is a cornerstone of our strategy because having a lawyer at the onset prevents issues from escalating and stops a chain of abuses.

What we do touches on all of these different issues. It affects all the issues that we care about in terms of protecting the most vulnerable and thinking about doing it in a systematic way so that it's not just on an emergency basis. It must be something that has been systematized. We've seen this in many countries. Going back to Burundi, in 2015 when there was a lot of civil unrest. Because we had already set up defender resource centers, because we were already in touch with the government and the police, we were able to represent 800 youth who were arrested and beaten and we had a big effect on it. Not because we came in and took care of people who were protesting. Instead, we already had a presence and had built credibility and trust. We have done the same thing in Myanmar where we've also been able to take care of people who are arrested for political reasons.

I think that's one of the things that's distinctive about us. We really look at building something that normalizes access to justice as a baseline and doesn't select certain people to take care of. We look to implement this on a systemic level so that everyone is protected no matter who they are.

Lissa Harris: It must be a real challenge working with so many different legal systems at once. There must be challenges that you've run into in scaling that or in replicating it in different places. I wondered if you could talk a little bit about that?

Karen Tse: Yes, it's really interesting. I don't want to say it's easier than it looks because that seems ridiculous, given the fact that this is extremely challenging. Yet in some ways, it is, because all of what is shared together.

First of all, it's collaboratively led by us and the local bar associations. It's the lawyers who come to us and ask us to show them what we've done in other countries so that we can see if it works in their country. That's the reason I'm saying it's easier than it looks is because, for instance, we'll take a manual from one place and they'll be like, "Hey, this is really cool. We can use this. It's Article 51 in my country, the same thing that says you have a right to a lawyer. Oh, it's Article 99 in



my country that says you have a right to a lawyer." On the one hand, it's specific, and yet there are universal principles.

Also, we learned from the experience we had in each country. We could see that in every new country the methodology got stronger and stronger because we were able to learn from lessons learned in the previous places. At first we were creating manuals and we just expected that lawyers were going to be able to implement the methodology. I remember in one country, I'm not going country specific because I don't want to call out anything specific, but in one country, we had done a training and we were very excited about implementing it. I came back six months later and they hadn't implemented anything because they said they were so high and enthusiastic while they were in the training together with defenders, but afterwards, when they were on their own, they weren't able to implement it. They didn't have the buy-in from the judges or the prosecutors or the police and so they couldn't get into prisons.

That's when we started having roundtable discussions, and they enabled country number three to benefit from country number two because they figured out this doesn't work, however, this works, we're going to pass this on. It is specific to countries. Everything is different, and yet, there are enough commonalities where resources and ideas are shared. It is not only resources, innovations, and ideas, it is also inspiration. I remember once, one of our lawyers from Burundi was like, "Oh, my gosh. I can't do this. I only have a hundred lawyers. How am I going to do this through the whole country?" The founder of our program in Cambodia was like, "We only had 10 lawyers and this is what I did." It's difficult, but there are things that they're able to figure out and share.

Lissa Harris: Is there an example that you can point to that really illustrates the impact of the work that you do?

Karen Tse: There are things that are by the numbers, but for me it's beyond the numbers. It's the communities that are built. If you look at it right now, we've been able to establish country programs in 13 countries, and those are not the easiest countries but they're able to build defender resource centers. In Cambodia, for instance, we built defender resource centers in six different provinces representing over 12,000 people, and you could see that the rate of torture was dramatically reduced.

With everything, you take five steps forward and then two or three steps back. I recently talked to our Cambodia director, Ouk Vandeth and, right now, there's a bit of a funding trench. But this is his dream, and he is motivated to make this happen. At a certain point, he was covering almost the entire country with legal aid, but one of the challenges is a lack of long-term thinking with a lot of



funderson. They want to know what's going to happen in two or three years and don't necessarily plan beyond that time frame.

However, Ouk Vandeth does. The most exciting thing is that, even though the funding got cut, he worked together with the Bar Association and other actors, and they were able to speak with the government. The multiple high level roundtables and trainings that included the Bar Association paid off. The government now has, for the first time, started paying Bar Association lawyers who've now taken over our model of being placed in the actual courtrooms so that they can take the cases. It's not perfect, but they were never there before. We negotiated this in an MOU [memorandum of understanding] with the Cambodian government in 2012 so that they would let us put together these rooms in the courthouse so that people would not go undefended. Now, it is institutionalized and the Bar Association is there. It's still not perfect, there's still huge gaps in the system, and people are still unfortunately having problems with torture and everything else because the lawyers are coming in the middle as opposed to at the very beginning. But it's a step, it's a huge step and it's huge progress.

In the beginning, these defenders were standing up and saying, "I'm going to appear in court. I'm going to defend these people and I'm going to go into prisons." Not all of the authorities were very excited about them. They were used to being able to sentence people without a lawyer and make their own decisions. After a period of time, though, they started depending on the defenders and seeing them as part of their system. When the funding got cut, they received letters from everybody across the provinces, from judges, prosecutors, and police. They said they wanted defenders because it actually made their jobs easier.

To me, that is system change. I have another example that I think is also indicative of how things change, and then it's the deeper things that change in terms of mindset change. I was in Takéo Province in Cambodia, sitting with the judge, prosecutors, police, and our defender. They joked around about our defender's work, but in the end, they said, even if he doesn't show up we still don't torture because we know he's coming.

In Myanmar, IBJ successfully set up a system of five justice centers staffed by skilled lawyers, sustaining IBJ's model and fostering continuous transformation despite the recent military coup. Despite the Burmese government's actions of arresting political dissidents, judges, police, social workers, and NGOs throughout Myanmar continued to reach out to the established network of IBJ defenders to defend these detainees. This underscores the profound systemic influence of our mission and the enduring transformations within our capacity.

Our work goes beyond criminal defense. We provide the Burmese public with access to justice in other forms. We have a legal helpline—and we provide legal guidance in person in the centers and



through phone and electronic communication. We have roundtables. We train lawyers and educate the community about their rights. All these things create systems change and a change in the public mindset. This is what we're supposed to do to build an effective system. It's harder now in Myanmar because of the political situation. But it's still happening, even under a military coup.

What I really think is amazing is seeing the mindset shifts within countries. Even when the money isn't there, there's a commitment and there are lawyers who keep on going. I've seen this over and over again in country after country. On the one hand, it's really disheartening because the money isn't enough. It just isn't. The defenders can do so much to save lives and to stop people from being tortured if the money was there, if there's a global commitment to it.

On the other hand, what's so inspiring is that the defenders are so committed. They have a vision for the future, and are ready to go. It was something that was already present on the ground in the countries, but once they were able to see what happened in one country, they felt that they could do it too. Countries that already have stepped up to help and support others to move this forward.

Lissa Harris: Can you talk about the insights or the lessons that you have learned in your work that other people in this space could draw on?

Karen Tse: This might sound like an oxymoron or seem contradictory, but I think number one is the importance of being super practical. The second part is being able to inspire each other to do what we do to make the super practical things work. **The reason I say practical is because I think we sometimes get in our own way of what is possible when we become super intellectual about whether this is right, this is wrong, this is good, this is bad. I'd say be practical and maybe not judge the systems and people so much.** What we've found is that there are people everywhere who want to help, and there are people in every system who will say, "If you give me an opportunity, I'm going to do what I can do."

In so many countries where we work, people were like, "You can't work in that country. No one will ever let you." Everyone has always let us. There's always been someone who's like, "You know what? We don't agree with this," but someone else will be like, "But a lot of people are being tortured and we want to help you." Believing and being practical about it, not being super judgmental like "this is a bad government." Nothing is monolithic. I believe that everybody wants change in a certain way. People don't want their people tortured. People want progress and they want protection, and they want to be part of the global community that's making that happen. So that's the practical part.

The other thing is that inspiration is underrated. I've seen this happen everywhere throughout the 23 years that we've been going. There have been so many times where things haven't worked and



there've been cuts and this and that. The people inspire me to keep going and to believe that it's possible.

Lissa Harris: Can we talk about metrics? How do you measure success? How do you track progress?

Karen Tse: Yes, some are just by the numbers. With 13 country programs, smaller programs with 99 justice makers in 53 countries, 500,000 cases, 25 million hits on our Wiki Defense, trained 40,000 lawyers, network of women in 10 African countries, some of our impact comes from the case representation; some comes from the roundtables, some comes from our lawyer training, some from our outreach to the community.

But it is more than numbers. What happens after these activities are completed? I think that is what matters. What happens after the training? What happens after a case? What happens after the roundtables? What perpetuates our impact? Our success isn't only about the numbers. Some things are not easily quantifiable. It's about shifting mindsets, paradigm shifts— changing minds, normalizing criminal defense and human rights, making an impact on people. Each component of IBJ's work, the representation, the lawyer training, the roundtables, the public education, all reinforce each other and produce both tangible system change and a change in mindset.

Roundtables as an example. There is real legislative change that happens. For instance, we did a national round table in Indonesia surrounded by women and there were 67 recommendations that ended up in four prisons from four different regions, allowing access to our defenders for the people in those prisons. That never happened before.

Another example involves juvenile rights in China. We had a pilot project for a number of years where we were advocating the expungement of juvenile records. As a result of multiple roundtables the effort culminated in a major revision in Chinese Criminal Procedure law codifying the sealing of juvenile court records.

At a third roundtable discussion we had in Burundi, we said, "Freedom is the rule. Detention is the exception." It was great because a few months later, the president released 1,300 people who shouldn't have been there. He used the same words, that "freedom is the rule, detention is the exception" when he ordered the release of these people. That language is now incorporated into the Burundi Criminal Code.

Yes, we can see results in realities like actual codified laws, and in real cases, but also a lot of these things aren't things that you see immediately. Some take years, even a decade. Now I can say, the Bar Association in Cambodia is able to use those rooms that we set up for lawyers because we set an MOU out in 2012. But I didn't know this in 2015 because it didn't happen until



2021. Measuring long-term progress becomes tricky. I think it's partly patience, but there are metrics that you see immediately and others that are long term. **Much of our progress is really long-term metrics for long-term systemic change.**

Lissa Harris: I think it's really interesting to see, too, the importance of literally creating physical space for what you do.

Karen Tse: Yes, and interestingly, it's physical space and now it is also technological space. For instance, a lot of the stuff that we've been able to achieve with our Wiki Defense is through volunteers. There's a hundred countries that have Wiki Defense, and that's a hundred countries of 25 million hits, but it was put together by a hundred country volunteers who said we're going to create this material. So it's physical space and then there's physical space that's virtual space. It's really our huge dream to build out our Justice Hub, which is a virtual home for the defenders and the world community to support this effort of early access to a lawyer for those who are detained.

Lissa Harris: Sometimes you learn as much from things that don't work as things that do. Is there something that you tried that didn't work that you learned something important from?

Karen Tse: Well, I think one example is what I talked about earlier where we did this training, we're super excited, and we came back and they're like, "Oh, we're not doing that. We can't get in." We had to completely shift that model. We added another part to our model after realizing that didn't work. I think there's actually been a ton of things that haven't worked. In Burundi in 2007, about 80% of the prison population was in pre-trial detention. IBJ partnered with an NGO for a poster campaign aimed at raising awareness about legal rights. But, a few months into the campaign, we received a call that the posters were being taken down. The reason was: the campaign had generated a demand for legal representation, but there were no lawyers available to meet this need. This happened because we initiated the awareness campaign before securing funding for legal representation. This experience in Burundi reemphasized a lot for us, and really highlighted the pitfalls of implementing fragmented initiatives. We learned that it's not enough to raise awareness or provide training; we must also make sure that the necessary support structures, like legal representation, are in place. This realization led us to prioritize funding for all four pillars of our approach. Again, the components of our work reinforce each other. Each leg of the stool is necessary.

One of the things that I realized for myself, which is why it's great to have this conversation with you right now, is that one of the things that hasn't worked is that I come from something really specific. I am a public defender and then I moved to Cambodia where I recognized the fact that people were being tortured and I trained a group that became public defenders, and then I started International Bridges to Justice.



What's been a challenge is that it's been too narrow in terms of the way that we've talked about it. One of the things that hasn't quite worked yet, but we're changing this, is communication, learning how to communicate it in a way that's maybe not so industry-specific because it is actually an issue that touches everything. I think that's our own not recognizing that people talk about things differently.

Lissa Harris: Could you talk a little more about the big challenges that you haven't been able to overcome yet, whether that's scale or opposition to the work that you do or the big picture challenges that you still need to crack?

Karen Tse: One of the obstacles for us isn't how difficult these countries are. The bigger problem is the subconscious bias that people seem to have with this arbitrary divide between the deserving and the undeserving. A lot of times in the very beginning, there was a sense that the people we were taking care of weren't the most deserving in terms of care and support. I think that the defenders in all these countries throughout the world have come together and are ready to make it much deeper in the countries and also across the globe. I think that they've done it in terms of proof of concept, and they're ready to receive it, and I know it's going to happen.

I think it's a problem where you need to see a solution and say, yeah, we see the solution and are committed to working on this long term. One of the biggest challenges that we had previously was that people saw these problems of torture and other due process violations as being problems that could not be solved. However, our defenders are changing this perception as they are showing it is possible by successfully implementing our model country-by-country and globally. Now it is about the resources available to support them .

People are always like, "You can't say funding is the problem. It's not the problem." You know what? Funding is the problem. It's just true. You need money. You need to scale. You need support. Despite the incredible work of the defenders on the ground who have implemented system change, lack of long-term funding has been a persistent obstacle to our long-term system change. It defeats our efforts to scale, and to maintain country programs for long enough to produce optimal results. We have a proven model, but we haven't been able to take it to the next level because when there are funding gaps, it is a real disruption to long term system change. We've even had some funders say that this was their favorite or most successful project but it wasn't a priority. It's hard to make systems change when you're getting funding project-by-project. This instability can really disrupt our progress. I think that the defenders have done it in terms of proof of concept and they deserve to receive the support.

Lissa Harris: What are your best methods and tools for advancing systems level change?



Karen Tse: I think the only way to do our work is system level change. That was how the organization was founded, because I recognized the fact that people were lost in the system and it was very arbitrary who got help and who didn't get help. That's why we work together with governments. We have to, we can't sneak into the prisons, but a huge part is seeing how we can have the best allies to work with and what needs to happen to institutionalize things. Effective representation, cooperation with other stakeholders, participation, and creating public awareness are at the core. It's a collective effort and we need everyone to contribute to our vision. It's a long-term process that requires commitment and involvement from everyone concerned.

In terms of systems change, it's being able to work together with the governments but also in some ways to be a bridge with people on the ground who sometimes need a little bit of protection. In terms of tools, we need to work with others. It's the government, but it's also recognizing the enormous advancement of the possibilities of using technology. Technology has been a great force multiplier for our work. We have our DefenseWiki, a great reference tool for lawyers and others needing legal resources. We have developed excellent eLearning tools for training lawyers and disseminating information about the legal system and human rights to the public. We have helplines, in which our lawyers give legal advice on the phone and through digital communication. Technology has also made a huge difference for us in terms of how we've been able to connect all the communities with each other and volunteers. The hundred countries for the Wiki Defense was totally done online by volunteers and, like I said, it's had 25 million views. We also have the Justice Hub platform which also hosts our mobile apps which have been developed for five countries.

IBJ is entering a dynamic new phase of growth, thanks to the opportunities posed by artificial intelligence. A lot of people with technology are excited and want to contribute. For example, we have an initiative developed by two brilliant young students on a Stanford Public Interest Fellowship. They created an AI voice recognition chatbot for prisoners who can't read and write, who are illiterate, inside of Indian prisons so that they say their name and they can find out what they're charged with, which is a huge problem that can be solved.

An essential part of creating system level change is being able to tap into possibilities of positively using technology.

Lissa Harris: When you're talking about your partners in the space, local governments, courts, police, what is needed most from them to advance the systems level change that you're seeking?

Karen Tse: I think, number one, it's always a negotiation in terms of stepping up. I think there's also something that we don't always recognize, which is for them to do the work that we want



them to do, they need the resources too. I remember one of the ministers of justice coming to me and saying, "Everyone is complaining at the UN that we're torturing people." He's like, "And we are. But you know as well as I do that we have agreed to partner with you to give people a lawyer and to do training for police." We've done a lot of police training too in countries throughout the world. He says, "But no one wants to fund it, so how do the people just blame us?" It's both recognizing that there can be a partnership, but there needs to be actual commitment to building up the partnerships and what they can do in order for there to be change. To achieve this, we must emphasize the importance of cooperation, collaboration, and active participation. It's not just about pointing fingers, naming and shaming, but working together to secure the necessary resources and support. We've already had over 80 national governments be willing to implement IBJ's model domestically, which is a big success. That's system-level change.

Lissa Harris: How do you see your work evolving over the next five years?

Karen Tse: IBJ's momentum is unstoppable—because access to justice is the right idea at the right time. It is possible to end torture as a state-sanctioned tool of criminal investigation and create systematic early access to justice in our lifetimes. Governments made the declarations—IBJ delivers the implementations.

Our hope is that things are going to completely explode because people start to understand that it's possible and it's related to everything. Our plan is to deepen our country programs. For example, there are some countries where we are only in one province, but want to be in 3 or 5 provinces and then in the whole country. We will strengthen and expand the country programs so that this is possible.

The second is that we have 99 justice makers in 52 countries and with small seed money they have done remarkable work. We would love to help them so that we are 52 countries strong.

The third thing is that we're looking at ways that this can be done without us—that is to say, that our projects become self-perpetuating. A sign of IBJ's success is when our projects outgrow IBJ; we are no longer essential since the local defender community can manage on its own. These communities have learned so much—they work together. Our Justice Hub and Apps are leading us in this direction.

Through our Justice Hub technology and this platform, they can connect and support each other more and harness advanced AI to manage cases, assist in preparing filings and use data to optimize performance.

We are embarking on a new level in our development of technology with our mobile phone apps, developed for countries in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, that can strongly promote access to



justice, and legal and public education. In the next phase, we will employ artificial intelligence technologies adapted to maximize their effectiveness. Our digital resources will be tied together in our Justice Hub, which is already operational and developing. This global digital home for our movement will further connect lawyers, the judiciary, other professionals, and civil society organizations. Others are already creating their own innovations and we will invite more to do so.

I feel so much hope sometimes when I speak to our defenders. Going back to Burundi, our defender said he went to go visit these kids in prison, and they don't have the materials anymore that they used to torture the kids in these two police stations. Bad stuff still happens, but the material has been removed, and that's a good thing. We're moving towards progress. And we can do so together.

Lissa Harris: I so appreciate you taking the time and sharing insights from your work.

Lissa Harris is a freelance reporter and science writer (MIT '08) based in the Catskills of upstate New York. She currently writes about climate, energy, and environment issues from a local perspective for the Albany Times Union, her own Substack newsletter, and various other digital and print publications.

** This interview has been edited and condensed.*