



Chief Information Officer (CIO)  
The New York City Civic Engagement Commission

Jun 2022 - Present  
New York City, NY, US

- **Digital Service Design:** Build a team of developers and designers in a non-technical government agency to design, implement, and maintain [www.participate.nyc.gov](http://www.participate.nyc.gov), the NYC instance of decidim, an open source platform created by the Government of Barcelona to support participatory budgeting processes.
- **Vendor Management:** Create and manage RFPs for technical vendors: Backend and frontend development services, Cybersecurity and cloud services, infrastructure management as well as graphic, UX and UI design.
- **Compliance Management:** Manage compliance with Federal, City and State Accessibility Laws, Cybersecurity Laws, Privacy Protection Laws, and Algorithmic Discrimination Prevention Laws.
- **Co-design of NYC Participatory Budgeting Process:** We launched The People's Money, the first Citywide Participatory Budgeting Process in NYC.
  - **Idea Generation:** Ideas are collected from communities from across the city on local challenges.  
**Outcomes:** 82 community based organizations hired to host 523 sessions over the fall of 2022. Engaged with 12,344 New Yorkers in 12 languages and collected 4,139 ideas.
  - **Idea Development:** Assembly Committees are formed to discuss the ideas, and select the ones that will make it into the ballot.  
**Outcomes:** 78 community members deliberated 1085 ideas to propose 183 projects for New Yorkers to vote from.
  - **Citiwide Voting:** New Yorkers get to select what projects they want to fund.  
**Outcomes:** 208,344 ballots casted in paper and digital. The second largest participation rate in the world surpassed only by Mexico City. 29% of ballots (61,787) casted in a language other than English.
  - **Project Implementation:** Distribute 5 million dollars to implement the most voted projects.  
**Outcomes:** 46 projects to be implemented in Mental Health (13), Job Training (9), Education (7), Food Insecurity (4) Health (3) Housing Assistance (3), Parent Education (2) Violence Prevention (2) Immigrant Rights (1), Sanitation (1), Intergenerational (1).
- **Design and implementation of voting infrastructure:** Manage the design and implementation of a digital infrastructure to support both a mobile-first voting system, as well as Optical Character Recognition technology to count ballots that counted a total of 208,000 ballots. Increased digital ballots casted from 800 to 38,923.
- **Strategic Partnerships Management:** Create partnerships with national and international cities, state governments, entrepreneurs, business incubators, universities and foundations to advance research, co-create initiatives, and ultimately support the Civic Engagement Commissions participatory democracy initiatives.
  - **Open Source International Cooperation:** Partnered with city governments to co-fund, and co-implement software developments to improve NYC Decidim's instance.
  - **Public Interest Technology Pilots:** Partnered with NYU Center for Urban Science and Progress, and Cornell Tech to create pathways for undergraduate and graduate students to support the CEC's programming through applied technology such as VR/AR, Data Visualization, Data Analytics, Web Development and hardware prototyping to support The People's Bus, and The People's Money initiatives.
  - **Impact Assessment Practicum:** Created a partnership with The New School to engage graduate students in experiential learning opportunities to support the impact assessment of the 46 initiatives that the commission is implementing as a result of the first Citywide Participatory Budgeting. Each initiative received between \$50,000, and \$250,000 for a total of 5 million dollars.
- **Trust in Democracy Portfolio:** The Civic Engagement Commission is the only government agency mandated in the NYC Charter to increase trust in democracy. To that effect, I lead an international coalition in partnership with the NYU Governance Lab to create a data standard to define concrete frameworks and indicators to make local government agencies accountable.

CONTACT INFORMATION



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PROFILE

Policy designer focused on building innovation-driven entrepreneurial ecosystems to address poverty and inequality across New York City by leveraging civic engagement, emerging technology, and international cooperation.

Working to connecting diverse youth with opportunities in nonprofits, entrepreneurship and government to increase representation and reduce inequality.

Martial artist, developer, and film maker.



EDUCATION

2017 • International Affairs (M.A.)  
The New School  
2014 • International Studies (B.S.)  
University of Guadalajara  
2009 • Information Technology (Tgo.)  
Industrial Teaching Center



CERTIFICATES

2012 • Economic Journalism: Media, Politics and Enterprises.  
2012 • Latin American Studies: Regional Integration, Regional Geopolitics and Hemispheric Politics.  
2011 • Politics, Culture and Economy in Brazil: A historic perspective.

# Oscar J. Romero Jr.

M.A. International Affairs



## PUBLICATIONS

**Romero (2019)** “Telecommunications and dependency in Latin America: Challenges for autonomous integration.” Latin American Association of Sociology

**Wiley, Byrum, Ponce, Romero (2018)** “Take it or leave it: How NYC residents are forced to sacrifice online privacy for internet service”, Digital Equity Laboratory, The New School. [Available online.](#)

**Romero (2017)** “The Geopolitics of the Latin American Cyberspace”, REDIALC.

**Romero (2013)** “The ALBA-1, a first step towards telecommunications’ sovereignty in Latin America”, XI Seminar on José Martí, University of Costa Rica.



## SOFTWARE, MEDIA & DESIGN

Microsoft Office ♦ Google Drive  
Basecamp ♦ Trello ♦ Slack  
Photography ♦ Film making ♦ Klynt 3  
Adobe (Premiere, Audition, Illustrator)  
C++ ♦ HTML ♦ PHP ♦ SQL ♦ G  
Tableau ♦ Salesforce ♦ Airtable



## RESEARCH INTERESTS

Youth Education ♦ Immigrant rights  
International Cooperation ♦ Digital Equity  
Civic Engagement ♦ Open Innovation



# Management Experience

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**Policy Director, Tech & Equity Platform**  
**Maya Wiley for NYC Mayor Campaign**

**Nov 2020 - July 2021**  
New York City, NY, US

- **Policy Platform Design:** Creation of a Tech and Equity platform with 30 policy proposals for the City of New York. Proposals included issues such as Broadband inclusion, Worker’s Rights, AI for public good, Criminal Justice, Tech Education, Tech Governance, and Workforce Development.

**Director Inclusive Innovation & International Cooperation**

**Jan 2021 - Jun 2022**  
New York City, NY, US

**The NYC Mayor’s Office of the Chief Technology Officer**

- **International Cooperation Management:** Design of international cooperation frameworks and MoUs with national and international cities, state governments, entrepreneurs, business incubators, universities and foundations to finance and manage initiatives, to share best practices, and to research digital equity, open innovation, civic engagement, and inclusive/people-led urban technology strategies.
- **Protecting Children Online Covid-19 Taskforce:** During the Covid-19 pandemic the cases of child abuse online doubled, I convene the City Leadership to identify key challenges in the context of NYC and to submit policy recommendations to the DeBlasio administration.
- **Resources for Undocumented Immigrants during Covid-19:** Worked with the NYC Comptroller’s office to compile resources for undocumented immigrants and distributed them in partnership with City Council members.
- **Mental Health Services for Ukrainian Refugees:** Created a taskforce to identify mental health services for people displaced in the context of war. Worked with the IRC, and city agencies to align emergency response efforts and provide mental health services to newly arrived Ukrainian refugees.
- **Youth Education Programs:** Designed, and executed a gov-led request for proposals to create tech education program for youth in low income communities. Successfully fundraised and launched two workforce development programs:
  - **Cyber Security and Networking:** To increase representation of Latinx youth in the tech industry, we created a tuition-free training program to achieve entry-level jobs in IT, networking, and application security positions in both on-premise and cloud environments. 40+ graduates were position in paid internships, and the program was continued by The Knowledge House.
  - **Multimedia Storytelling:** To create opportunities for justice impacted youth in public housing in Brownsville, BK, we created a tuition-free multimedia design training program to learn, video editing, film-making, virtual reality and augmented reality. 63 students graduated a computer lab was founded at the Brownsville Community Justice Center.
- **Fundraising:** Increased our operation budget of \$50,000 to one million for inclusive innovation initiatives from both private and public funds. For every public US dollar invested the program, we leveraged 2.5 private dollars to support programming through matchmaking with other government agencies, federal grants, and private foundations.

**Director of NYCx Co-Labs**

**Jan 2018 - Jan 2021**  
New York City, NY, US

**The NYC Mayor’s Office of the Chief Technology Officer**

Design of a people-led global challenge innovation framework to solve urban development challenges in low income communities known as NYCx Co-Labs. The framework followed six phases: Community Engagement, Field Research, Challenge Design, Call for Innovation, Implementation, Evaluation.

- **Participatory Development:** Creation of local Community Tech Boards with NGOs, universities, entrepreneurs and residents of vulnerable communities in New York City to discuss urban challenges. Co-design research strategies with community partners to identify local priorities. Launch of calls for innovation ([NYCx Challenges](#)) to implement solutions to local urban development challenges in areas such as housing, health, public safety, education, transportation and economic development.



## DISSERTATIONS

- 2018 ● The Internet Revolution in Cuba: Challenges and lessons for inclusive development.
- 2014 ● Internet Geopolitics: Access, sovereignty, power and resistance: The USA and Brazil.



## LANGUAGES

**Spanish:** Native speaker

**English:** Fluent      **French:** Basic

**Portuguese:** Fluent      **German:** Basic



## SELECTION COMMITTEES

- 2022 ● The Artist Collective of the NYC Civic Engagement Commission
- 2022 ● The City Fellowship at Company Ventures
- 2020 ● IBM Call for Code 2020: Innovative Solutions to Take on COVID-19 and Climate Change.
- 2020 ● MIT Solve Global Challenge: Good Jobs & Inclusive Entrepreneurship
- 2020 ● MIT Solve Global Challenge: Health Security & Pandemics
- 2020 ● NYCx Co-Labs Challenge: Accessible Mental Health
- 2020 ● NYCx Co-Labs Challenge: Housing Rights



# Management Experience

- **Implementation of Urban Technology Projects:** Oversaw the design, management, implementation and evaluation of four international multi-stakeholder partnerships (including developing implementation work plans, budgets, data collection protocols, and writing policy recommendations) on the following subject areas:
  - **Tenant Harassment Prevention:** Launched two initiatives: 1) Heat sensors were deployed in apartments where landlords were uncompliant with the NYC heat law which allowed tenants to take legal action and demand repairs. 2) An SMS bot outreach tool was deployed to provide tenants with information about their housing rights, access to lawyers, and pathways to action
  - **Accessible Mental Health Services for Latinx Youth:** Launched two initiatives to increase the availability of culturally competent content for latinx youth experiencing anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation and fear of family separation during Covid-19.
  - **Waste Management in Public Housing:** Launched two initiatives to improve waste management practices in public housing in Brownsville. 1) Incubated a non-profit to provide door-to-door recycling services and hire local youth. 2) Retrofitted NYCHA building gardens to install organic composting machines and created a compost collection program.
  - **Gun Violence Prevention and Public Safety:** Launched two initiatives to increase safety at night in public corridors. Through multimedia design, and light fixtures we increased foot traffic, and usage of public spaces in Brownsville BK, challenging punitive uses of technology such as surveillance, crime predictability and policing.

Managed a team of two staff members, 4-8 partial staff from partner agencies, and 2-7 fellows to produce original content, design workshops and manage pilots.

### Program Manager NYCx

### The NYC Mayor's Office of the Chief Technology Officer

Sep 2018 - Dec 2018

New York City, NY, US

- **Partnerships Management:** Designed and managed partnerships focused on inclusive innovation between NYC Government, entrepreneur incubators, universities, foundations, nonprofits and research centers to improve city services and programs for vulnerable populations.
- **Program Monitoring & Evaluation:** Created Logical Frameworks and evaluation protocols in partnership with community-based organizations and city agencies to assess the success of technology pilots, and determine scaling opportunities.
- **Community Engagement:** Designed and executed a community engagement plan to create community technology boards and created local coalitions of 75 -100 organizations working on diverse issues in low income communities.
- **Curriculum Design:** Design of the content of multiple capacity-building workshops and conferences for the Community Tech Board in the following topic areas: civic technology, urban technology, innovation for development, digital equity and infrastructure redlining.

### Innovation Consultant & NYCx Fellow

### NYC Mayor's Office of Tech & Innovation

Jun 2018 - Sep 2018

New York City, NY, US

- **Needs assessment in Brooklyn and Manhattan:** Undertook field research in Brownsville, Inwood and Washington Heights to identify community needs in partnership with local community boards. Research included interviews, focus groups, co-design problem identification workshops, and community events. Two reports were produced that lead to nine government agencies partnering on urban development pilots.
- **Designed Academic Partnership:** Designed partnerships with The City College of New York, New York University, and The New School to work with graduate students and scale up the NYCx Co-Labs Fellows program.



## SELECT SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- 2023 ● Participatory Democracy & Inclusive Innovation  
Organizer: Consulate General of Switzerland in New York.
- 2023 ● Open Data & Civic Trust  
Organizer: NYU Gov Lab; Open Data Week.
- 2023 ● 24 Hours Cities Network: Nighttime Governance at Cities.  
Organizer: Master Card; City of Bogota; NYC Mayor's Office Media and Entertainment.
- 2022 ● Toward a Third Wave of Open Data for New York City  
Organizer: NYU Gov Lab; NYC Mayor's Office of Data Analytics.
- 2022 ● New York Cybersecurity & Fintech roundtable  
Organizer: Security Delta; Innovation Quarter; Ministry of Foreign Affairs Netherlands;
- 2021 ● Urban Innovation Pilots: How to partner with government.  
Organizer: Cornell Tech; Greater London Authority; NYC Mayor's Office of the CTO.
- 2021 ● Rethinking Urban Living Labs @ Smart Cities New York.  
Organizer: Cornell Tech.



## Co-founder & Executive Director Educational Services for International Development

March 2017 - Oct 2018  
New York City, NY, United States

Managed a team of five consultants to provide capacity building services for nonprofits, foundations and universities. Oversaw the development of ESID's programs and partnerships. [www.esid.org.mx](http://www.esid.org.mx)

- **Client Sample - The Clinton Foundation:** Developed a series of webinars for over 10k CGI U alumni and capacity building workshops on impact assessment for 50+ entrepreneurs working on education, environment and climate change, poverty alleviation,, human rights and public health.

## Digital Equity Research Associate The Digital Equity Lab, The New School

February 2017 - July 2018  
New York City, NY, United States

- **Industry Analysis:** Evaluated privacy protection practices of the major Internet Service Providers and Mobile Carriers in NYC. Wrote an 83-page report with recommendations for the NYC government on how to protect citizen's privacy. Provided comparative case studies. [The report is available online.](#)
- **Impact Evaluation of Smart City Public Policies:** Researched and designed strategies to increase the impact of the NYC's Wireless Corridors—a network of public wi-fi access points developed by the NYC government for public housing residents in Queensbridge and Red Hook. Designed workshops.
- **Field Research:** Produced and administered interviews with government agencies, community based organizations, and young beneficiaries from employment led IT training programs.
- **Curriculum Design:** Researched the discrimination dynamics embedded in the development of the internet and broadband infrastructure in the US. Delivered an annotated bibliography with 86 sources on topics such as net neutrality, cyber geopolitics, the digital divide, big data, data sovereignty, smart cities, and artificial intelligence. Delivered a course syllabus, which is currently active at The New School.

## Special Projects Manager International Cooperation (CGCI), University of Guadalajara

February - August 2015  
Guadalajara, Jal, Mexico

- **International Agenda Development:** Researched International Higher Education Systems as well as the socio-economical context of key regions and countries in the Americas and Europe. Developed and negotiated partnerships with government agencies, research networks, NGOs, enterprises and universities to fund and promote international exchange programs for a community of 120,298 students.
- **Cultural Diplomacy:** Created, developed and maintained networks with governments, and international institutions through cultural projects.

## Managing Editor The Research Network on Autonomous Integration in Latin America and the Caribbean (REDIALC)

March 2014 - March 2015  
Guadalajara, Jal, Mexico

- **Managing Editor:** Coordinated a team of four to edit, correct and verify articles in English, Spanish and Portuguese submitted for [the yearly publications](#) of the Network (50+ researchers from 12 Universities in the Americas and Europe). The network's research focused on economic and political integration across the Americas. My team increased efficiency by 150% successfully overcoming systematic delays with the yearly publications.
- **International Event Manager:** Managed the logistics for conferences and seminars. Designed outreach strategies and advertisement materials for the events.
- **Digital Infrastructure Researcher:** Produced content on urban development and telecommunications. Analyzed Internet regulations in the Americas. Studied discrimination dynamics embedded in the development of the telecommunications infrastructure of the Americas. Produced an undergraduate thesis, academic articles, briefing notes, memos and summaries.





## SELECT SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- 2021 ● Ciudades por la noche:  
Apoyando las economías  
nocturnas.  
Organizer: Master Card's  
Cities Possible; Government  
of the city of Bogota;  
Government of Mexico City;  
Government of Buenos Aires.
- 2021 ● IBM Call for Code &  
CGIU: Tech for social  
Impact  
Organizer: Clinton Global  
Initiative University & IBM
- 2021 ● Global Design Thinking  
Conference: Policy  
Innovation Lab – from local  
to global.  
Organizer: the HPI School of  
Design Thinking and the  
Global Design Thinking  
Alliance.
- 2020 ● Census, elections and  
migrant communities in the  
Covid-19 Era.  
Organizer: Harvard  
University, ITAM, Agenda  
Migrante.
- 2020 ● How to work on innovation  
in government?  
Organizer: CIV:LAB, Urban  
Tech NYC, NYC Economic  
Development Corporation.
- 2019 ● Co-creating Inclusive  
Innovation: What are the  
benefits of inclusive  
innovation?  
Organizer: World Economic  
Forum, DQ Institute



## Cultural Events External Consultant Argentine Embassy in Mexico

Sep - Dec 2013 & Sep - Dec 2014

Guadalajara, Jal, Mexico

- **Field Research for Cultural Events:** Collected information and wrote a report on venues, theaters, exhibition rooms, plazas, and other cultural centers in the city of Guadalajara. Provided analysis and recommendations for the participation of Argentina in the International Book Fair of Guadalajara.
- **Event Manager:** Managed photographers and journalists to cover events. Provided support for the management of musical events. Managed general logistics for pieces of art and other items of value.

## Product Line Manager Alemex Automotriz

April 2013 - June 2014

Guadalajara, Jal, Mexico

- **Product Line Manager:** Oversaw assembly line for electronic circuits. Coordinated four technicians and one general assistant. Managed the development of [60 new products](#), programmed microcontrollers and designed PCBs. Reduced production costs by 20% and increased productivity by 40% with the introduction of CNC machines.
- **R&D Program Manager:** Developed business plan proposals to achieve international quality standards. Worked with the American Chamber to produce business opportunities in the US and Costa Rica.
- **Quality Manager:** Increased the WHS (Workplace, Health and Safety) standards of the company by developing manuals, establishing and enforcing best practices for the management and disposal of hazardous materials. **Note:** I kept offering consulting services on a weekly basis from 2014 to 2015.

## International Cooperation Assistant The National University of Lanús (UNLa)

April 2012 - January 2013

Lanús, Buenos Aires, Argentina

- **International Partnerships:** Assisted the design of grants for students, staff and academics to travel and research abroad. Assisted the legal office with the revision of Memoranda of Understanding.
- **Scholarships Database Design:** designed a database of International Scholarships for students.

## Founder & Director Innovative Solutions & Software

August 2009 - January 2014

- **Business Development:** Identified customers to provide the following services: web design, web placement, software development (using PHP, CSS, HTML and SQL), hardware & software maintenance, and IT consulting. Hired and managed graphic designers, coders and technicians as needed.

## Speaking Engagements

**100+** Conferences, Webinars, Workshops  
& Participatory Sessions. ([full list](#))

**50+** Partnerships with Academic Institutions  
Governments & non-profits. ([full list](#))

## Internships

### Partnerships and Triangular Cooperation Intern United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation

January - March 2016

New York City, NY, United States

- **South-South Cooperation (SSC) Policy Design:** Researched International Cooperation strategies of agencies from the Global South. Reported on legal and institutional frameworks, institutional management and coordination mechanisms, project management, human resources management, and communication strategies. Produced briefing memos, presentations, talking points and executive summaries in Spanish, English and Portuguese. Facilitated intergovernmental technical cooperation.



## MEDIA PORTFOLIO

### Campo de Santana: Paradise in the Middle of Chaos

Media: Documentary Film.

The documentary aims to expose the exclusionary dynamics of public spaces in downtown Rio de Janeiro.

Conducted 57 interviews of people that depend on Campo de Santana in different capacities: vendors, sex-workers, drug dealers, social workers, homeless people, government officials and visitors.

**Role:**  
Co-Producer



## ADVOCACY PROJECTS

**#PosNoMeSubo** (December 27, 2013)

**Role:** Organizer

**Description:** #PosNoMeSubo was a local initiative in response to unjustified increases of the public transportation fares in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico.

**Outreach:** In only **six days** the initiative **reached more than 22,000 people**, received active input from 2,128, and gathered approximately 300 people despite rainy weather to march and share their personal experiences with public transportation while discussing transportation alternatives through participatory workshops.

**Outcomes:** Elected officials presented plans to install bikelines across the city.

**Url:**  
<https://es-la.facebook.com/events/1399476593631713/>



## Visiting Lecturer Milstein Program in Technology & Humanity Cornell Tech University

May 2021 - Present

New York City, NY, United States

- **Civic Innovation: A Development Framework for Local Governments.**
- **Description:** The deployment of new technologies and infrastructure has always generated inequality between those who have access to it, and those who don't. The deployment of infrastructure has reflected the priorities, needs, and political views of those in power leading to the systemic segregation of our societies by race, class, religion, and ethnicity. This course aims to introduce the basic concepts of development in the context of public service, the role of technology and innovation as drivers of inequality, the potential of tech-enabled initiatives to address inequality, as well as frameworks to understand civic innovation in the context of municipal governments.

## Part-time Faculty Master in Transparency and Data Protection University of Guadalajara

August - December 2018

Guadalajara, Jal, Mexico

- **Cybersecurity Resources: Data Protection & Information Privacy.**
- **Description:** This course will provide students with tools and procedures to protect data and privacy according to international standards. Students will learn how to identify vulnerabilities, categories of cybersecurity threats as well as strategies to prevent them.

## Honors & Awards

- **ViP Public Interest Technology Fellowship @ Cornell Tech** (2021)  
The fellowship was designed to involve civic technology practitioners in Cornell Tech programming, research, and education initiatives.
- **2021 IDC North America Awards - Smart Buildings** (2021)  
The awards were designed to recognize the progress North American municipalities have made in executing Smart Cities projects. Our team was awarded for the design of the NYCx Co-Labs Housing Rights Challenge in Upper Manhattan.
- **2019 IDC North America Awards - Digital Equity and Accessibility** (2019)  
The awards were designed to recognize the progress North American municipalities have made in executing Smart Cities project. Our team was awarded for the design of the NYCx Co-Labs Safe and Thriving Nighttime Corridors in Brownsville.
- **The Milano School Travel Assistance Award** (2016, 2017, 2018)  
Covered travel expenses related to field research in Cuba, Brazil and Mexico.
- **The New School's Provost Scholarship** (2015-2017)  
Covered 60% of tuition of the M.A. in International Affairs at The New School.
- **University of Guadalajara's Scholarship for Graduate Studies** (2015-2017)  
Covered 40% of tuition of the M.A. in International Affairs at The New School and provided a monthly stipend for the duration of the M.A.
- **South American Business Forum (SABF)** (2015)  
Covered expenses to participate in a series of lectures in Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- **National Council on Science and Technology Research Scholarship** (2015)  
Monthly stipend to support research on Cybergeopolitics.
- **REDIALC-CONACYT Fellowship** (2014-2015)  
Monthly stipend for a year to support research on Cybergeopolitics.
- **University of Guadalajara Travel Assistance Award** (2015)  
Covered travel expenses for academic conference speakers.
- **Youth Exchange Program: México and Argentina** (2012-2013)  
Covered monthly stipend, and fees to study a semester at the University of Buenos Aires.
- **PIFI (Institutional Program for Researcher Training)** (2012)  
Covered travel expenses for academic conference speakers.
- **German Sopena Scholarship** (2012)  
Covered 100% of the tuition and fees of CADAL's Economic Journalism certificate.
- **DEILA-UDG Scholarship** (2011)  
Covered 100% of the tuition and fees for certificate on Latin American studies.