



Society for International Development  
Washington Chapter

# FY 2021

## ANNUAL REPORT

Independent Consultants Network (ICN)

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 Table of Contents
- 2 Introduction
- 3 Letter from SID-Washington
- 4 FY 2021 Network Co-Chairs
- 5 Event Calendar
- 6 Event Summary
- 7 Contact Us



# INDEPENDENT CONSULTANTS NETWORK (ICN)

SID-Washington's Independent Consultants Network (ICN) serves as a networking and information resource and fosters a community of interest of international development professionals who are independent consultants and those who are considering becoming consultants.



## Dear Members of the Independent Consultants Network,

We are happy to report that we had another productive year, with programming that was entirely virtual! As we reflect on the past year, the Network produced one incredible event, **Insurance and Benefits for Independent Consultants**. We are currently working on a new and exciting slate of events for FY 2022, so stayed tuned for more information!

We would like to thank outgoing Co-Chair **Mike Shanley**, who put on many fantastic events during their tenure. We wish them well in their future endeavors! We would also like to welcome new Co-Chair **Susanne Barsoum** who joins us this year.

After 5 years with our team, **Paul Sherman**, our Director of Programs, will be stepping down from his role to pursue graduate studies. Paul is still involved with SID-Washington as a Consultant. Thank you, Paul, for your effort and commitment to the Workgroups and their programming!

Stepping into Paul's role, we would like to welcome **Malavika Randive** as our new Program Coordinator. Malavika will be working closely with our Co-Chairs in planning events for the Network.

Thank you for your continued interest and support of the Workgroups. We hope to see you at future SID-Washington events! If you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to send an email to [events@sidw.org](mailto:events@sidw.org).

Best regards,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katherine Raphaelson".

Katherine Raphaelson



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Malavika Randive".

Malavika Randive



**Amy  
Chase**

Project Manager,  
EnCompass LLC

Amy Chase is a full-time Project Manager at EnCompass LLC supporting gender and social inclusion projects. She has a decade of experience in human rights and international development managing USG-funded projects, especially USAID projects in conflict and unstable environments. She has worked in Iraq, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Kosovo, and Rwanda with organizations such as World Learning, Democracy International, The Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation, Abt Associates, IFES, The QED Group, and Palladium.

In 2018, Ms. Chase launched a social enterprise called The Crescendo Group which supports workforce development and economic empowerment for immigrants, refugees, survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) and trauma, people with disabilities, and BIPOC. Crescendo currently works with local partners based in Kosovo, Albania, Italy, DC, Maryland, and Virginia.

As a first-generation Chinese-American who has survived much trauma in her personal life, Ms. Chase was inspired by the resilience and strength of the survivors she met through her work in transitional and post-conflict societies. Prior to her career in international development and human rights, Ms. Chase was a project manager in marketing, media, and sales. She has a BBA from Baruch College and an MA in International Affairs from The New School. Ms. Chase is a native New Yorker and speaks fluent French and Cantonese. She has traveled to 50 countries and aspires to continue exploring many parts of the world.



**Mike  
Shanley**

Founder and CEO,  
Konektid International

Mike Shanley has fifteen years of experience working in the USAID market, including at Chemonics International, USAID's largest implementing partner. In 2013, he founded Konektid International ([www.konektid.com](http://www.konektid.com)) to support new partners to enter the USAID market. Konektid has worked with foreign aid organizations of all types and sizes including both established and new USAID partners, to make it help them to partner and build their USAID portfolio. His clients have ranged from the Fortune 500 and the Ivy League, to local NGOs and small businesses. He regularly works with clients and leads seminars on USAID partnering strategies, trends, and international development market updates. Konektid has partnered with the top foreign aid associations, including USAID, Devex, British Expertise International, Johns Hopkins University, Bond UK, Dochas, AidEx, Impact Hub Geneva, and the Posner Center for International Development.

**Thursday, June 10, 2021**  
2:00PM - 3:30PM ET | Online via Zoom

Insurance and Benefits for Independent  
Consultants



# Insurance and Benefits for Independent Consultants

Moderator: **Stacy Edgar**, Founder, Veneur

Speakers: **Angie Ferretti**, Senior HR Manager, Resonance  
**T. Edward Williams, Esq.**, Partner, Williams, LLP

**Event Description:** While there are many advantages to being an independent consultant, we know there are also unique challenges that you face. In addition to having to find your own work and manage a variety of clients, there are also operational challenges that you have to figure out including insurance and benefits. During this event, attendees heard a variety of perspectives and gained advice on how to obtain insurance and benefits for themselves. The panel discussion featured an established USAID partner, an international corporate lawyer, and the CEO of a startup that is providing new insurance and benefits options to independent consultants.

## Key Takeaways

### 1) The Basics

To kick off the event, **Stacy Edgar** (Veneur) acknowledged the many uncertainties that arise when working as an independent consultant by posing questions like: How do I make sure I'm protected when "what ifs" happen? How do I make sure I can still benefit from safety nets? Edgar shared that uncertainty around what premium or deductible to choose has resulted in about half of adults delaying or denying care. With that being said, it is crucial to understand and consider key elements such as copay, co-insurance, and in or out-of-network insurance. Both **Angie Ferretti** (Resonance) and **T. Edward Williams, Esq.** (Williams, LLP) agreed that the most important types of insurance to have are health, medical, vision, and life. Ferretti recommended taking advantage of the ability to carry previous plans with you as you transition into new roles.

Ferretti discussed her own experience switching from a low deductible and high premium to a high deductible and low premium, pointing out that it saved her a couple of thousand dollars in insurance costs. She then emphasized the importance of considering your current reality, as well as location and future travel plans, when considering types of insurance.

### 2) Choosing Entities

Williams highlighted the value of doing business through an entity that will serve as an additional layer of protection, leaving you less vulnerable. When deciding what entity to set up, the panelists concluded that size and function are two of the most important factors to consider. Williams shared that LLCs are a popular choice for independent contractors and consultants as it is relatively straightforward, easy to set up, and taxes are passed through. It may, however, not be the best option for all circumstances. For example, consider how easily you can convert your entity to accommodate for growth. If your services extend overseas, make sure to set up an international LLC.

### 3) Charging Services

Prompted by an attendee's question, Williams, Ferretti, and Edgar discussed the importance of conducting market research on your position's average salary range when determining how much to charge for your services. This process often requires some trial and error. Ferretti reminded attendees not to sell themselves short— try raising your rates and seeing what the client says. It should be a continuous conversation between parties. When there is little context to base your rates on, take advantage of the flexibility you have. Figure out what you provide that your competitors don't. What makes you an attractive consultant?




Negotiation skills and transparency are essential when building the costs of benefits into your rate. Williams pointed out that building costs of benefits into your rate is not necessarily a legal issue, but rather one of negotiation. He added that you should not merely present your costs, rather, be transparent and break down your costs to build trust and understanding between parties.

### 4) Dealing with Contracts

Knowing what to look for in a contract can feel daunting but the panelists suggested focusing on what obligations the contract puts on you, what you are required to deliver, and how you are required to deliver it. Williams highly advised getting professional support when dealing with contracts. He emphasized the importance of understanding your lawyer's effectiveness, and pointed out that you should focus on a lawyer's efficiency, and not the hourly rate. If you choose to handle a contract without professional support, ensure that your understanding of the contract is clear via follow-up emails. This sort of documentation of your understanding can be used as evidence if a conflict arises later on. getting to work with a range of clients on a variety of issues and projects.

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Washington Chapter**

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**FY 2021 Network Co-Chairs**

Amy Chase - Project Manager, EnCompass LLC

Mike Shanley - Founder and CEO, Konektid International

**Photo Credit**

Paul A. Sherman - Director of Programs  
Screenshots from various SID-W events  
Stock images from Canva

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