



Interview with Maria Paula Fernandes (Uma Gota No Oceano)

Ambika Samarthya-Howard

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Ambika Samarthya-Howard: Can you start by introducing yourself and the work you do?

Maria Paula Fernandes: I'm Maria Paula, and I'm the founder of *Uma Gota No Oceano*. Before that, I was a journalist for 40 years, and I worked in the biggest media in Brazil. I worked for *Jornal do Brasil*, which was the biggest, most important journal on the left. After that, I worked for *O Globo*.

Ambika Samarthya-Howard: You left the media world and the journalism world to start a nonprofit?

Maria Paula Fernandes: Yes. But before that, I also worked for MTV Brazil. Then, I was invited and came to work for *TV Globo*. I left *TV Globo* to create a program with a female perspective called *Saia Justa*. This was a very disruptive program that presented women talking about economics, politics, and everything going on in the world from different perspectives. After that, I was invited to come back to *TV Globo*. I was no longer there as a journalist; I was there to talk about content format.

When *TV Globo* started to reflect on what's going on with the media, with the impact of the internet and 4G, I was there. We had a lot of discussions, for example, with the people who made the *Avatar* film and other big vendors. *TV Globo* invited very big minds to reflect on what was happening with communication, and I was there. I listened, and I used everything that I heard to create a 2011 campaign called *Movimento Gota d'Água*.

I was also inspired by Marina Silva's first campaign for the presidency in 2010. She didn't have money. She was just using Facebook, and she got 20% of the votes with her campaign, by just talking about good things, answering questions, not complaining, not being aggressive. This electrified me. I was inspired by her to use everything that I'd learned through my opportunities as a communications professional to do something that gives back to the people.



[At that time, Dilma Rousseff of the PT (Worker's Party) won the presidency,] and she started to have a lot of problems with accounts, and we started to receive denunciations about corruption in the PT government. I grew up with the PT, so I was so upset because we believed they were going to honor our dreams. When Marina left the party in 2010 because she was upset about the *Belo Monte Dam* controversy, I stood with Marina.

I decided to use all mass media tools at my disposal, but at this time, there wasn't an internet algorithm, so we couldn't pay to reach an audience. I used everything that I learned from *TV Globo* and MTV to spread the message and start the first campaign, just to see what happened. We created this campaign against *Belo Monte*. In one week, we got one million signatures.

Then we spread to 20 countries around the world. They independently translated the campaign into five languages. People took this campaign and started to use it independently.

Ambika Samarthya-Howard: Was this campaign you started a climate campaign?

Maria Paula Fernandes: It was against *Belo Monte*. *Belo Monte* is the hydropower plant in Xingu. After I saw what Marina did, I wanted to try mass media tools and the internet. *Jornal Nacional*, the biggest news in Brazil, made a series about *Belo Monte*. They showed that we have more than a hundred sites, and people are complaining about the project, saying it doesn't make sense. I said, This is well-checked because it's already a special series on *TV Globo*. And it was talking about Indigenous people, whose existence people in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo didn't often think about or even acknowledge.

A lot of people were already complaining about these issues, but nobody took into account the public opinion. It was a good example to see that these tools can work together by themselves in a free area, on the internet.

For me, it was like a test. My career is about journalism, but also about format. I like to think about what formats work best to reach people. I worked with cinema, I worked with publicity, and I wrote. I always want to reach people's hearts.

Ambika Samarthya-Howard: There's something special about your approach that's sticking. What do you think it is that has made your work so successful?

Maria Paula Fernandes: What makes us different from most of our partners is that we put everything together. It's all in the same basket. We combine tools. We put media values in the narrative. We mix it up. The work is something that partners and I are developing together.

Ambika Samarthya-Howard: Can you give me an example of what it means to put a media value into a narrative?

Maria Paula Fernandes: For example, when I worked for *TV Globo*, I was editor of a program, so I had to study the impact all the time because at *TV Globo*, we study the impact of all that we do. At the last job I had there, I was analyzing almost everything, except sports. I was analyzing soap operas, specials, and documentaries, and I had a lot of tools to make these observations.

Ambika Samarthya-Howard: If you were giving advice to someone doing a climate media campaign, what would your advice be?



Maria Paula Fernandes: Let me give you a scenario to illustrate because it's complex.

Smart Foundation came to me and said, What are you going to do next? Are you going to stay at *TV Globo*? They said, You have to come to the third sector because you have 2.5 million people following us on your small page. I spent a year and a half reflecting on how to do that, using the knowledge and experience I had.

First of all, we are in a country where the majority of the audience doesn't know how to read. We are an oral culture. I came to *TV Globo* from a paper journal, and everybody said, Ah, it's going to be stupid because it's TV. It's just short stories. No one reflects. But when I was at *TV Globo*, I understood making these short stories is not easy. You choose words from a limited vocabulary because you have to talk with different people at the same time. If I have to talk with the president of a bank, then my narrative must be very simple because I'm also talking with the maid. That is the secret. You have to be consistent, but you have to use plain language.

Gota works in three steps: consistent information, free information, and accessible information.

I think the problem when I started working in the third sector—because now it has changed—was that most of the time, they were complaining. In Brazil, it was always someone saying, You don't save your trash. You don't recycle. People are overweight. It's hard to live in Brazil.

When you point the finger at the people, they say, Okay, bye-bye. Because they already have too many things to think about. They don't want to be judged. Instead of pointing at them, we involve them. The idea is marketing. We start to say, Look how we are happy. We are free in the consumer market. We don't punish or scold.

Ambika Samarthya-Howard: Can you give us an example of how you bring people into the narratives that way?

Maria Paula Fernandes: In the first campaign, we used 22 major actors from soap operas. They said the script was so clear, they could explain the whole technology just from reading the first script. I followed the "Don't Vote" campaign that Spielberg made with Leonardo DiCaprio, where many big stars invite people to vote for Obama in the 2008 election by saying, "Don't vote," because in the United States, they don't need to vote. It's brilliant.

In our campaign, we started with the biggest star, who was the heroine in the soap opera of the moment. She started by saying, Did you hear about sustainability? Then someone says, Sustainable. Which word is that? Because for the regular Brazilian people, sustainable is hard to say, and I imagine, a little hard to understand. We had someone say, I pay my taxes. I separate my trash. I teach my kids to respect the old ones. And I have to talk about hydropower at Pará?

We portrayed people as they used to be and feel in this space. It's not my job, it's not my problem. I don't care. I have too many problems in my life to think about the Indigenous in Pará. We identify with these people. We treat our agents as clients when we talk about advertising. It's not what I want to say, but I have to say what people want to listen to if we want success.

Today, we don't do campaigns with actors. We do what we call invisible campaigns. We work directly with the press and the major media. We are always in dialogue with the news. For



example, Lula is with Macron in France. In the morning, I'm talking to someone, finding out what they are talking about with each other. I was an editor for *Jornal do Brasil*, so we have this expertise, we know how to do this. Maybe I will find out that Macron is talking about Brazilian farmers. That is perfect for us because we have the PL [Liberal Party, Brazil's far-right party] at the Congress. I call the major media and give them this new data. I help qualify the media to talk about what they want to talk about, and in that way, I include my narrative in their speech.

Ambika Samarthya-Howard: You work very closely with Indigenous communities, and a lot of them don't read, don't have access to the same language, don't have access to the internet. How are you inclusive of their way of telling stories, yet still able to reach a mass media audience?

Maria Paula Fernandes: The Indigenous are very good communicators. Their powers come from the assembly they make. They understand that they have their entire culture. If you talk, for example, with Mundurucus, they have 5,000 years of dealing with their people, dealing with other groups. People don't consider that; they only think that most of them don't speak Portuguese or a second language. If you don't have contact with them, you cannot feel the experience they carry.

When you are with them for the long term, you see how amazing they are. They're so strategic. In the beginning, when we made this campaign, they came to us because they recognized we are the ones putting their demands in the whole of Brazil's, in the whole world's, ears. They came to us in the first week to invite us to go with them to a meeting they had with the president, Dilma. I had never been in Amazonia before. My first time was when they invited me.

Ambika Samarthya-Howard: How did they hear about you? How did they invite you?

Maria Paula Fernandes: Some of them already had access to the internet. Sometimes, NGOs like Greenpeace introduced us to them. Our *Movimento Gota d'Água* campaign was on the cover of *Veja*, a national magazine.

Ambika Samarthya-Howard: How long ago was that?

Maria Paula Fernandes: 2011. We launched on the 15th of November, and on the 22nd of December, we were invited to their meeting with the president in the *Palácio do Planalto*. We had 2.5 million signatures with identification asking him to stop the hydropower. The impact was so powerful, much stronger than we thought it could be. But the point is not about the campaign, it's about our relationship with the Indigenous.

After this moment, they understood that we could be intermediaries in their talks with society. With the success of this campaign, Ford Foundation invited us to go to New York to share our experience with other communicators who work with Indigenous issues around the world, so they also have the guarantees of Ford.

Everything was so fast. Then we were invited by the Indigenous to go to Brasília. Every year they go to Brasília, but nobody really understands their message. They just think, The Indigenous are just one more movement. But they invited us because they had some tension with the army. They understood that if I'm there with artists, it's like a safeguard because there is not a fight to have in front of the cameras. When I am with famous people, the cameras are always on us.



The first ones that understood this were the Indigenous. Sonia Guajajara was beginning her position as the leader of APIB [Articulation of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil]. She brought us together with her, into her confidence. We started to work with them in all the meetings, helping support articulation with the Indigenous. We started to build from the ground, but not as partners, as part of the movement, as part of Sonia. Sonia was not famous at that time. When she started, her first interview was with *Gota*. We started to build her persona for the world. She's a genius.

Ambika Samarthya-Howard: I'd love to hear about how you work in coalitions. How do you work with the Global Methane Hub, and how are you working in coalition with other folks in the climate space?

Maria Paula Fernandes: Every year since 2013, we've been invited by the Ford Foundation to New York to speak. We bring a new perspective on communication because we have the consistency of broadcasting, but we are working more freely through social media.

During the re-election of Dilma, social media like Facebook was so aggressive. We had the 2013 *Movimento Vem pra Rua*, which means Movement Come to the Streets, that called for the impeachment of Dilma. It was amazing. They brought a lot of hype to the streets, complaining about two cents for bus tickets. The message was not about two cents; it was about how they were losing their rights. This movement was very important to us because it happened two years after our campaign, and they used *Movimento Gota D'Agua* as a reference. Then, people discovered us because I was invited to go to universities and explain how we got such a big audience. From that, a lot of our movement went to the internet.

Then the media had to change. Technology started to include cameras on cell phones. In 2011, we didn't have that, but in 2013, we did. The images that we had on social media made the big covers, like *TV Globo* and *Bandeirantes*. The media couldn't have their perspective [on the cover anymore] because the people were showing their perspective.

We understood that we had to change our focus from social media to the media because the media was losing money and people; they were getting weak. Everything that we worked on in the beginning, all the social and environmental issues, were so complex for them. I always say it's like an aircraft problem because it's never just one thing. It's a combination. It's hard for journalists to understand everything. We have to prepare ourselves to work with the media.

In 2016, I met Durwood Zaelke. He discovered us and said, We want to make the Brazilian government sign the Kigali Amendment. Do you think you can help? I said, I can try. I like change. He had a very strong arsenal of science and data, and I said, This makes good journalism. With that, I think we can work.

It was the beginning of *Observatório do Clima*, and I was a member. The director at this time was Carlo Rittl, who is living in Germany now. It went well. The governor of Brasilia was open to listening to people's opinions about these issues. Durwood and his team from IGSD [Institute for Governance and Sustainable Development] sent us all the ideas. We use the *Observatório do Clima* to present our perspective. We presented 14 suggestions. They accepted 10 of them. It was a success. Nobody comes from just one side. We came with Greenpeace and others, and they received 10 of the 14 that we offered.



After that, we started working with people in Brasilia, people who work with the lobby, and we shared everything we knew from IGSD with the people doing the lobbying. We worked in this way and it was successful.

In 2019, IGSD said we had to improve the pollution levels coming from air conditioning. They were worried because although the government had the money, if you present plans for this change, the government is going to say they're changing everything, but really, they'll use the money for something else. You know what corruption is like in Brazil, in the world. We had to make a campaign. The strategy was to change the level of the license of those groups [who manage levels of air conditioning pollution].

We had to have something from the Congress, the ministers, about that change. Besides that, we had to have some who could check that we actually changed things. We had two hands. We worked with a publicity hand. Another group worked with the technical design. They worked with *Universidade Federal de São Paulo*, and they created a lab to check the level of the gas.

Let's analyze the example. We have agreements from three *ministerios* [ministries]: environmental, industrial, and one more to evaluate this decision. We finalized our terms with the IGSD, but the third minister didn't move on. Then, the people in the lobby came in. I don't have knowledge about lobbying. I have to work with partners who come to me, say, We have to put pressure in this area. Then, I can plan. *Gota* is a drop in the ocean. We understand that we work on a team. We don't do anything by ourselves. We have a scientific arm, we have a political arm, and we come with a communication arm. It's very important to understand that.

The people from the lobby told me, If you wait until next month, everything will fall apart. It was something very technical from their side. They said, We need just one *ministerio* to sign. I said, Okay, give me the data. The word is a testimonial, so I said, We're going to get this on *Bom Dia Brasil*, which was the biggest TV show for economists. We'll explain what's going on and how it will impact their pocket. The same day that we ran this on *Bom Dia Brasil*, that afternoon, the *ministerio* signed, and we won.

The media is the fourth power. We have to understand how to deal with the media. I think this is our secret. We know the timing. We know the forms to create. It's not one campaign. It's something that we're building. We call it a narrative arc. We always start by talking about the area that we are working in.

For example, for methane, we put something out that helps people start to understand methane, what it is, and where it is. It's something that you build in people's minds. I learned this at TV *Globo*. I learned this at MTV. I think that's why we haven't given up yet.

Ambika Samarthya-Howard: Can you talk a bit more specifically about your relationship with organizations like Global Methane Hub? Do they come up to you and ask for your help on a project?

Maria Paula Fernandes: No. I work with them in the same way we used to work with Indigenous groups because it's just a different Indigenous group. First, we were working with IGSD. Then, IGSD introduced us to Methane Hub. I didn't know Methane Hub before. I worked with IGSD for a decade, and we were always working on campaigns, we were always talking. They help us to



understand their world, and we explain what's going on here. We are like partners; we're an NGO, not a service.

The first time that I talked about methane was at a dinner in Dubai with Durwood and a lot of scientists who work with him. They told me they wanted to work with methane, and they explained its importance. Durwood said, When we get to Brazil for the G20, we need to follow up with *Observatório do Clima* about which organizations work with methane.

We started to observe and understand how methane works. What is the weak part, and what is the strong part? Then, when we went to Azerbaijan, they gave us a small grant to start working. I hired my colleague Julia, and told her to follow that because it's a hard subject. I need somebody dedicated solely to that topic and to the relationship with those organizations. Then, we started to have meetings with this group, just listening, just understanding.

In Azerbaijan, I met Zerin Osho from India, who works for IGSD. I started to watch the tables and understand a little bit more. I saw Marcelo Mena at that time, but I didn't have time to talk to him. People from SAG [strategic advisory group] and scientists in Brazil who work with gases said, We need *Gota* to help us popularize this subject because we have to talk with the people. We need you.

I didn't feel totally comfortable doing this campaign on so specific a subject, so I had to go back and learn. With them, we started to feel more comfortable, and then, we signed with Methane Hub about a month ago. Julia has been following everything since September.

Ambika Samarthya-Howard: Do you feel that when they came to you, it was like a consultancy? Do people ever approach you like you're a consultant or a consultant agency?

Maria Paula Fernandes: Yes. For example, ICLEI [Local Governments for Sustainability] invited us once they understood how we work because they have a very good communication system. I only work with organizations that have good communication. Why? Because they have scientific communication. Their communicators are our heroes because they have the answers that we need. We love to talk with the scientists and their communicators. They understand how we collaborate. For example, they launch their study, then we take this subject and use it in different moments. We keep it in the media. This is how they see us. We are the next step for them.

It's like when you are running and you pass the baton. We take the baton from their communicators and we put that [out in the world, in language for the people]. It is important that we work with different subjects. A TV channel might come to us and say, We need you to help us create our plan for copy because we are very confused. We have hell in our minds. We have problems in Congress, we have problems with Lula, and we have copy due tomorrow. We make plans for them using our information about Indigenous problems, *Quilombolas*, methane. We are comfortable because they trust us. They know that we are from the media, that we have been doing this for 15 years. We have a journalistic perspective.

We don't do press releases, for example; we only offer suggestions. It's why we need a really strong structure to process all this information and connect with different agents. For example, someone who is covering problems with the Indigenous calls us to ask, What's going on? It's so complex.



Ambika Samarthya-Howard: Communicating science is almost impossible because you want to be authentic but also accessible, and it's very hard to do both. I'm curious, what's your secret? Outside of using superstars from *novellas*, what are your other secrets to making these campaigns work?

Maria Paula Fernandes: It's always timing and format.

Ambika Samarthya-Howard: By timing, do you mean the length of the ad?

Maria Paula Fernandes: Yes. For example, we have to pay attention to the media every day. We start the day watching the news and looking for moments where we can put our finger on a connection or recognize a connection, moments where we could possibly put our message in different situations. If there is too much information about science, people will not have any space to make those connections. Our secret is to make improbable connections to sell them our message.

For example, when we started with Tasso Azevedo, we used his message. I put his message in Sonia's mouth, and it made Sonia famous because she is Indigenous. It's not because of ancestral knowledge; it's the format. For Tasso, I created a new format to sell his message. For Sonia, I brought consistency to her speech. This is the kind of combination that we do. For example, we don't use soap opera actors anymore because after we did that, everybody started to do it. It started to become noise.

We have to create. We have to use publicity wisely. We have to create new and different approaches for the same message. Each one talks about different parts of society.

Ambika Samarthya-Howard: What are the biggest challenges you're facing right now in your work?

Maria Paula Fernandes: A lot of people who don't understand these subjects have started to talk about them. It's a big challenge. The worst thing for communication is not silence, it is noise. We have too much noise. People don't understand who is speaking the truth anymore. That's why it's important to us to work with Methane Hub. They have high-level information with a high-level brand.

Today, I was talking with a partner from Switzerland, and he asked the same thing, How do you do it? I explained that I have fewer partners. I only work with big partners in order to facilitate understanding in people who are on the other side, to ensure that they know me, and they know I'm with just one partner. Because there's too much noise, [too many people with too many different messages].

For example, the biggest paper for finance is *Valor Econômico*. They've done seminars for 10 years. They invited us to suggest how they can talk about sustainability as a financial opportunity, in a way that everybody will listen.

Communication is a relationship. We help different people talk to each other. I think our secret is our relationships. Our network is knowledge, and the quality of the network is high. Together, they make our work stronger and more impactful.

Ambika Samarthya-Howard: What's next? Where is the climate story going?



Maria Paula Fernandes: I'll invite my team member Júlia to answer that question.

Julia Cruz: My name is Júlia Cruz, and I've been with Gota since the beginning of this campaign, working on the "climate emergency brake" built during the G20 Summit that happened here in Brazil and the COP29. I graduated with a degree in architecture and urban planning, but I gained experience with sustainable development as well. After graduation, I migrated into the third sector. I work here at Gota building climate diplomacy between the partners and the media. I translate materials that our scientific partners produce into more simplified language, so the content is accessible to more people.

For example, while most of the Brazilian population is aware of methane, they don't understand how methane can affect their daily lives. The big challenge then is breaking down how methane affects daily lives. It's in waste, it's in fossil fuels, it's in agriculture— it's everywhere. People most associate climate change with CO₂, not the super-pollutants. We're trying to help break down the importance of methane mitigation for climate action.

Ambika Samarthya-Howard: What is going to happen over the next 5 to 10 years in the larger climate story? Right now we're doing methane work, we're doing a lot of work on the temperature, a lot of work on Antarctica glaciers. Is that the story for the longer-term, or if not, where does that story go next?

Julia Cruz: We're facing tipping points, and the Amazon Forest is one of the most important tipping points, at least for us here in Brazil and the Latin American region. Of course, we're focusing on that, but at the same time, we have the arctic tundra, which is a very specific biome, and is also a tipping point. We have to tailor an approach that can be feasible for both biomes and for other tipping points as well.

The Trump administration is another tipping point and a catalyst for chaos in climate action. In the big picture, focusing on methane mitigation is the way to go. It is a climate emergency brake because it's a very potent gas, but also, it's a short-lived gas. It stays in the atmosphere for 10 times less the amount of time CO₂ stays, for example, so if you focus on that, the road to 1.5 will not be much easier, but it will be less complex. In the short term, we have to focus on methane mitigation somehow.

Kathleen Saboya: Hi, Ambika, I'm Kathleen Saboya, and I also work with Gota. I would like to add another point of view about climate, which is politics-facing. During our meetings within Gota, we always talk about how we have a big problem, here and all over the world, with negationism, or right-handed politics. It's not a specific technical climate problem, but many people in Brazil, and I believe in other countries, don't understand climate change or they're not interested in facing this reality.

Ambika Samarthya-Howard: I think that goes back to what Maria was saying about it's not the silence, it's the noise. The minute we have misinformation, and the minute we hear, Oh, this is not an issue, it becomes very unproductive.

Maria Paula Fernandes: We have to bring the methane alert to all Brazilian people. When we associated methane, for example, with what happened in the South earlier this year, when the whole state was drowning, [it was effective]. We have to create an idea about methane that is different from science. I'm a storyteller, so I'm free to make more associations and use



allegories [to help people understand]. When we started to work with the Indigenous, for example, most of the Brazilians said that we don't have any Indigenous people anymore in Brazil.

Ambika Samarthya-Howard: Who says that?

Maria Paula Fernandes: The big seats. They think that the Indigenous are people who exist in books. We saw some documents from the 1960s and 1970s, documents created during our dictatorship and were used for diplomacy, that say we don't have Indigenous in Brazil anymore.

I tell all our partners that COP30 was our beginning. Before that, we were building the structure needed to change people's minds because this is structural.

For example, Brazil is a country dying for football. *TV Globo* has exclusive permission to exhibit *Copa do Mundo*, but we started to create the campaign two years before the *Copa do Mundo*. To keep the audience with us as a TV channel, we have to have characters who like the sport, series where we have games, or elements of the culture of the country where the *Copa* is happening that year. We have to create an arc narrative.

We do the same thing with science. We have to reach a bigger audience, but not as a science. We have to work with it as an archetype, to say, Oh that is our very intelligent friend [who knows about methane or this other issue], and to popularize those characters so people use them as a reference.

We have to do this in different steps. We have recognized the right partners. Last month, we recognized Methane Hub as a partner. Henrique Bezerra is the regional lead, and he is an incredible partner because he is open and he is intelligent. We can suggest different things, and he'll say, Okay, let's go. That's the perfect partner. They know a lot about methane, so we feel free to have crazy ideas because if it's too crazy, they'll say, No, that doesn't make sense.

That's why I think we can build something great together. We have very good access to the media. We have a good reputation in Brazil. [We're already starting to see success.]

For example, *Museu do Amanhã* in Rio was built for the Olympic Games. It's all about the future. Everything there is media, but they talk about science. They talk about *antropoceno* [a proposed geological epoch that is defined by the impact of humans on earth's ecosystems]. This is a concept that Brazilian people have just realized through *Museu do Amanhã*.

Now, they are building a new museum in Belém for COP30, called *Museu das Amazôniaas*. The museum is in the same area where COP will happen, alongside the river, and we are working with them. For example, we had Raoni Metuktire, [an Indigenous leader and environmentalist] talk for them in a video. We sent a script, and we recorded Raoni. Then, they offered us space in the museum during COP. This is how we make partnerships with people.

Now we have space in a theater for 150 people. I'm talking with Henrique about it today. We have to think together about what we will do because there are so many things to decide. I told Henrique I need you guys because this is a new campaign for me. Once we are more used to this topic and we are really working together, it will be easier. But in this moment, I'm more dependent on you guys because you have the whole picture. I need to start by following you.



We don't have the whole list of grantees for Methane Hub yet. When I get that list, I have to study it and think about how I can reach this organization and how I can reach that one. For me, it was a luxury, when Henrique told me, You can reach anyone because our grantees all want to understand the information and the studies. But it's too many people. It's too many organizations.

Ambika Samarthya-Howard: What are you guys doing next?

Maria Paula Fernandes: We are working more with the Afro-descendants in the Latin-American community, the *Quilombolas*. We are focused on them because the Indigenous are working by themselves. We will give a little support, but not like we were doing before.

I was also talking with my partner from Switzerland who has worked with Indigenous communities. He finalized a 10-year grant for his work with Mundurucus, an ethnic group from Tapajós who are fighting against the Tapajós hydropower plant. I was analyzing it, and I said, They are so small, I love them, but they are so small, the grant is nothing. I always work with bigger projects. So I told him, We're not working with Indigenous anymore, but we are working with Methane Hub, so we can talk about hydropowers through Methane Hub, and you can put in the Indigenous complaint. This crazy mix works. That's something I learned from TV.

Ambika Samarthya-Howard: I think that's the only thing that works.

Maria Paula Fernandes: Yes. If you think about TV, people can take the remote and change the channel, so we were always thinking about how to keep the people watching our station. There is a principle that says, If I talk with you, I must always be wondering, What is she going to tell me next? If I already know what you're going to say, I will change the channel. You have to keep people with you, keep people listening to what you have to say.

Ambika Samarthya-Howard: This goes back to politics. People already expect you to say a specific thing, in a specific way, so they're not listening at all.

Maria Paula Fernandes: You must be disruptive.

Ambika Samarthya-Howard: This is incredible. Thank you so much for your time.

Ambika Samarthya-Howard (she/her) is the Solutions Journalism Network's Chief Innovation Officer: She leads on innovation and technology, leverages communication platforms for the network strategy and creates cool content. She has an MFA from Columbia's Film School and has been creating, teaching and writing at the intersection of storytelling and social good for two decades. She has produced content for Current TV, UNICEF, Havas, Praekelt.org, UNICEF, UNFPA, Save the Children, FCDO, Global Integrity and Prism.

** This interview has been edited and condensed.*