



WEBINAR GUEST BIOS

Leveraging media to transform public health narratives and policy

October 21, 2025



Rinku Sen
Executive director
Narrative Initiative

Rinku Sen is the executive director of Narrative Initiative where she helps social justice movements develop the power to move ideas. She is formerly the executive director of Race Forward and was publisher of their award-winning news site Colorlines. Under Sen's leadership, Race Forward generated some of the most impactful racial justice successes of recent years including Drop the I-Word, a campaign for media outlets to stop referring to immigrants as "illegal" which resulted in the Associated Press, USA Today, LA Times, and many more outlets to change their practice. She was also the architect of the Shattered

Families report which identified the number of kids in foster care whose parents had been deported.

Sen's books, *Stir it Up* and *The Accidental American*, theorize a model of community organizing that integrates a political analysis of race, gender, class, poverty, sexuality, and other systems. As a consultant, she has worked on narrative and political strategy with numerous organizations and foundations including PolicyLink, the ACLU, and the Nathan Cummings Foundation. Sen serves on numerous boards including the Ms. Foundation for Women and the Center for Investigative Reporting, publisher of Mother Jones magazine, and sits as the Chair of Hedgebrook.



Linda Villarosa
Contributing writer
New York Times Magazine

Linda Villarosa is a contributing writer for the New York Times Magazine where she covers the intersection of social justice and public health. Her 2018 cover story, "Why America's Black Mothers and Babies Are in a Life-or-Death Crisis," was a finalist for a National Magazine Award and her 2017 article, "America's Hidden HIV Epidemic," won a National Lesbian and Gay Journalists' award for Excellence in Journalism. That organization inducted Villarosa into its Hall of Fame. Her essay on medical myths was included in the New York Times's 1619 Project and is published in the "1619 Project: A

New Origin Story," a #1 New York Times bestseller. Villarosa's 2022 book *Under the Skin: The Hidden Toll of Racism on American Lives and on the Health of Our Nation* was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. A former editor of Essence Magazine, she teaches journalism and Black studies at the City University of New York.