

# **Russell Vergara**

**Adjunct Assistant Professor Dept. of Social Change & Innovation at USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work**

Los Angeles, CA, US

R. BONG VERGARA focuses on tech-enabled solutions to food-energy-water nexus issues in smart sustainable development.

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## **Biography**

R. Bong Vergara is an Adjunct Assistant Professor at USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work. He currently teaches courses in policy practice and research. As a current member of the Asia Low Emission Development Strategies Partnership, the Climate Leadership Corps, and a Health Equity Ambassador for the American Psychological Association, he uses social work to solve problems in the overlap between human and planetary health, particularly the nexus of food, energy, and water systems. Through his for-profit and nonprofit engagements he promotes the social equity interests of resource-poor communities in low emission development. He is passionate about a next-generation social work better equipped to lead change in the era of climate change and build wealth in the Information Age. He formerly taught at UCLA and The California Endowment Health Ex/Change Academy. He was the former co-chair of the California Mental Health Services Act Multicultural Coalition (CMMC), a component of the California Reducing Disparities Project (CRDP). He has published a number of policy briefs and agency reports on poverty, community health, and community engagement. He has provided testimony to a number of state-level mental health and public health meetings and committee hearings, and also presented briefings before a number of national convenings, hearings and conferences, including the Subcommittee on Populations of the National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics. He earned his undergraduate and graduate degrees in Social Welfare and Asian American Studies from UCLA. He is currently a doctoral student at University of Southern California Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work.

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## **Availability**

Keynote, Panelist, Workshop, Host/MC, Corporate Training

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## **Industry Expertise**

Cleantech, Education/Learning, Health and Wellness

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## **Areas of Expertise**

Social Innovation and Resilience, Global Health, Smart sustainable urban development

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## **Affiliations**

Asia Low Emission Development Strategies Partnership (ALP), Young Moon, LLC: Co-Founder, California Mental Health Services Act Multicultural Coalition : Co-Chair, Racial and Ethnic Mental Health Disparities Coalition : Member

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## **Grand Challenges**

### **Harnessing Technology for Social Good**

I focus on integrating social equity in harnessing tech-enabled innovations at the nexus of food, energy, and water systems (INFEWS), particularly in coastal communities, Small Island Developing States, and Pacific Island Countries and Territories.

### **Creating Social Innovation in a Changing Environment**

In the name of social equity, I focus on promoting the development, commercialization, and adoption of grass-root clean technology solutions to overlapping food, energy, and water problems in Small Island Developing States and Pacific Island Countries and Territories, and other coastal communities.

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## **Event Appearances**

### **3rd Annual Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) Forum**

Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals

### **TACK TO TECH: Framing a ‘technology practice’ in city-level decarbonization**

#NSWM29, Disruptive Leadership: Maximizing Inclusion, Invention and Innovation, Network of Social Work Management, San Diego State University

### **Stress, Racism, and Social Determinants of Health**

Healthy Communities: Promoting Wellness and Achieving Health & Mental Health Equity, Ventura County Behavioral Health Department, Ventura County Health Care Agency

### **Social equity in city-level decarbonization**

Nexus 2018: Water, Food, Energy and Climate Conference, University of North Carolina

### **Harnessing Technology for Social Good**

Making a Difference Thru T2: 2017 FLC Far West & Mid-Continent Regional

### **Small-scale Climate Resilience: Social Work Practice in the Age of Climate Change**

25th Annual Management Conference, Management in the Age of Innovation

### **Political Voice in Beats & Rhymes: Aligning Un-Aligned Efforts in Community Building**

Ninth NaFFAA Empowerment Conference “Building the Next Generation of Community Advocates”

### **Earth Day Briefing**

Federation of Filipino American Associations

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## **Education**

**University of California, Los Angeles**  
MSW Social Welfare

**University of California, Los Angeles**  
MA Asian American Studies

**University of California, Los Angeles**  
BA Asian American Studies

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