



Administration & Staff

GLi CEO

Pier Alberto Merli, Ph.D

Pier Alberto received his degree in Philosophy from Florence University and his Ph.D. in Economics and Social Sciences at the European Florence University. He is the Resident Director for Hobart and William Smith Colleges and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in Rome. He is the Director of Leonardo da Vinci School (School of Italian Language and Culture) Rome. He is a member of Forum of Education and NAFSA. He is a wine expert and sommelier.

GLi Director

Sonia Massari, Ph.D

Sonia Massari is the director of Gustolab International and the Academic Director of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in Rome. She holds a degree in Communication Studies at Siena University. She received an M.A in “Web and TV reporting”, an M.A. in “Marketing, CRM and Communication” and she received her Ph.D. in Food Systems and Interaction Design, from the Electronic Engineering Department of the University of Florence (Italy). Since 2004, she has worked for several Education and Communication Agencies and European Commission Research Centers as researcher, evaluator, and professor. She taught at MSU University (NJ) and CUNY (NY). Winner of the Women and Technologies Award 2012 intended for women committed to innovation in food and nutrition. In 2014, Dr. Massari won NAFSA’s TLS KC’s Innovative Research in International Education Award. She actively collaborates with the U.S. and Italy-based international organizations and institutions on food-related issues (BCFN Foundation, ADI Design, WE for Expo, ISIA Design School and Scuola Politecnica di Design). She teaches “Sustainability Design Thinking” at Roma TRE University. She is part of the ASFS Board. **Contact Dr. Sonia Massari** >

Director of Expansion and Development and Critical Studies on Food Systems and Sustainability in Japan Summer Program Faculty

Steve Nussbaum, Ph.D



Steve Nussbaum, GLI Director of Expansion and Development, has had extensive experience in international education. He received his undergraduate degree at Notre Dame University (USA), an MA from Sophia University (Japan) and his Ph.D. in cultural anthropology from Cornell University (USA). In addition to faculty appointments, he has held senior appointments in managing and developing International programs at the University of Illinois, the University of New Mexico, Waseda University and Earlham College. At Waseda, he guided the university in the creation of the School for International Liberal Studies. He is now assisting the senior management Gustolab International Food Systems and Sustainability expand their operations in the United States, and to develop field-sites in East Asia and other suitable locations across the globe.

Senior Advisor for Development

Carmelita Nussbaum

Carmelita Nussbaum, GLI Senior Advisor for Development, has an extensive background in international education in the United States and Japan. She received her undergraduate degree from Webster University (St. Louis) and MA in education from Miami University (Ohio). She has managed university consortia programs in Japan and at Earlham College and has directed educational programs at multiple locations in the United States and Japan. She is a specialist in learning strategies and challenges.

Program Advisor for GLI

Fabio Parasecoli, Ph.D

Fabio Parasecoli is Associate Professor and Coordinator of Food Studies Initiatives at the New School in New York. Deeply involved in the international food studies movement, he helped establish the Study Abroad Spring program in Rome for the University of Illinois at Urbana - Champaign; in addition, he is on the advisory board for the MA program in Food Systems at Universitat Oberta de Catalunya in Barcelona, and teaches courses on food and media at the University of Gastronomic Sciences in Pollenzo, Italy. He worked for many years as the U.S. correspondent for Gambero Rosso, Italy's authoritative food and wine magazine.



Critical Studies on Food Systems and Sustainability in Vietnam Summer Program Faculty

Professor Le Hung Anh

Le Hung Anh is Associate Professor and Director of the Institute for Environmental Science, Engineering and Management at the Industrial University of Ho-Chi-Minh City in Vietnam. He holds a PhD from Humbolt University in Germany and has done extensive research in Vietnam, Germany, Belgium, Cambodia and Laos. He is a specialist in the cultivation of organic rice, biofertilizers, and biogas, among other topics, and has run training programs for the Vietnam Farmers Union on climate change, global warming and environmental policy. He enjoys working with international students and frequently supervises internship placements for US students. [Resume >](#)

Critical Studies on Food Systems and Sustainability in Japan Summer Program Faculty

Aiko Tanaka, Visiting Professor, Gustolab International

Aiko Tanaka is a well-known food educator, essayist, and commentator based in Osaka, Japan. Born in Osaka she studied with Chef Akiko Yoshioka. She appears frequently in Japanese and international food media, including Today's Cooking (kyo-no-ryori) on NHK, Japan's national broadcasting corporation. She has published multiple cookbooks and her essays appear frequently in both local and national magazines. Her current projects include the design and development of "Halal Washoku" - Muslim-friendly Japanese cuisine, in collaboration with Chef Daisuke Murota, the chairman of the Japanese Cooking Skills Associations of Osaka. She has offered Japanese culinary lessons at multiple locations across the world including New York and Tasmania. In 1999 she opened Lista Culinary School. She founded the Edible Herb Garden Association to build a network for food education at schools in Osaka and served as a consultant to Shoin High School to establish nation's first high school food studies curriculum. She is currently Professor of Food Studies at Osaka Shoin Women's University.

Program Staff

Programs Coordinator

Daniela Mannino



Daniela Mannino is Programs Coordinator at Gustolab International. She holds a degree in Foreign Languages and Culture at Roma Tre University and a M.A. in Translation at the University of International Studies of Rome. Prior to Gustolab, she was the Programme Coordinator for the B.A. in Global Governance at the University of Rome Tor Vergata and at The Rome Study Center of Richmond. She has worked as Tour Coordinator for EF Education and in the tourism field. She is also a translator and subtitler.

Media, Outreach and Projects coordinator

Salem Paulos

Salem has a 9-year experience in the field of global education. Prior to Gustolab International, she worked as a Student Advisor at CAPA International Education in Florence, Italy. She also has experience in the field of social entrepreneurship and social innovation and has worked as a Fellowship and Venture Development Project Manager at Ashoka: Innovators for the Public in Arlington, Virginia. She received a degree in Family Financial Management from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. **Contact Salem Paulos** >

Learning Facilitator

Lucina De Paolis

Lucina has a Master's degree in Modern European Languages and Literatures with a focus on English Studies from the Università degli studi La Sapienza in Rome. She is passionate about foreign cultures, and loves books, cinema and tv series

Emergency & Wellness Advisor

Emilia Finizia

Emilia Finizia is an Emergency advisor at Gustolab International. For more than ten years, she has run businesses in tourism, hospitality and management, in Italy and abroad. She has lived and worked in Italy, Denmark, and Brazil.



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