



Biography of Ritu Sharma, Co-Founder and President

Ritu Sharma is a leading voice on international women's issues and U.S. foreign policy. Due in large part to Ms. Sharma and the Women's Edge Coalition, the interests of poor women worldwide are now being incorporated into U.S. economic assistance and trade policies and, in some cases, into U.S. law itself.

A first generation American of East Indian heritage, Ms. Sharma's family left behind generations of violence and poverty in Punjab, India to build a new life in the United States. Her family's legacy and her first-hand experience of the injustices suffered by women, combined with her strong belief that American citizens must ensure that the U.S. acts positively in the world, led Ms. Sharma to create the Women's Edge Coalition in 1998.

Ms. Sharma is an adept coalition builder, political strategist and communicator who has led numerous advocacy campaigns to success. Her work continues to link women's organizations from around the world with U.S. organizations to rally their efforts to help poor women.

Ms. Sharma is an eloquent public speaker, drawing on her personal experiences, travels, unusual insights and "out-of-the-box" thinking to inspire audiences to get involved to change women's lives for the better.

She holds a BSFS in international economics from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service and a Masters of Public Health from Johns Hopkins University.

Ms. Sharma is the author of *An Introduction to Advocacy: A Training Guide*, which has been translated into six languages and is a primary reference for advocates around the globe. She serves on the Board of Directors of InterAction and the Center for Global Engagement.

She lives in Annapolis, Maryland with her husband and two sons.