Shalmali Guttal is the Coordinator of the Defending the Commons Programme at Focus on the Global South (Focus) in Bangkok, Thailand. Since 1991, she has been researching and writing on economic development, trade-investment, and ecological and social justice issues in Asia – especially the Mekong region and India - with emphasis on local peoples’ and women’s rights.

Focus’ Commons Programme seeks to strengthen efforts by social movements, local and national civil society, legislators, and policy makers to stop the privatization and commodification of the commons and build alternative systems of use and governance.

Focus is committed to ecological and climate justice, food sovereignty, and securing land and resource rights for local communities. In addition to research and writing, Shalmali organizes educational programs for students, civil society organizations, policymakers and representatives of local communities, municipal boards and other public bodies on economic policy, investment, food and land rights, and climate justice. Shalmali has also been working with social movements and civil society actors to develop campaigns linking human rights with trade, investment and development issues.

About the Visiting Global Associate: Established in 2002 with an endowment gift to the Institute for Women’s Leadership (IWL) from the Ford Foundation, the Visiting Global Associate Program provides scholars and activists from around the world opportunities to visit Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, to work with the Center for Women’s Global Leadership and the IWL Consortium. Visiting Global Associates may be in residence from two to six months to participate in leadership programs, curriculum development, and research initiatives on campus.