

Geoff Thale

Program Director

Areas of Expertise: U.S. Policy toward Latin America, Cuba and U.S.-Cuban relations, Central America, El Salvador, Youth Gangs, Crime and Violence Prevention

Geoff Thale oversees the entire range of WOLA's research and advocacy on Latin America policy and human rights issues. He is well-respected for his strategic policy analysis, rooted in his close relationships to people working in the region.

Along with a focus on specific countries and themes, Mr. Thale led the team that authored Forging New Ties, WOLA's recommendations for new directions in U.S. policy toward Latin America.

Mr. Thale has studied Cuba issues since the mid-1990s and traveled to Cuba more than a dozen times, including organizing delegations of academics and Members of Congress. He coordinates WOLA's advocacy on this issue with a coalition of business, agricultural and human rights groups who favor lifting the travel ban and rebuilding contacts between U.S. and Cuban society.

He also follows police reform and works with Central American counterparts on community-based responses to youth violence. He serves as an advisor to the Central American Coalition for the Prevention of Youth Violence.

With his breadth of expertise, media and policy makers frequently call on Mr. Thale for background and analysis. He has testified before Congress on a variety of issues and has published on citizen security, U.S.-Cuba relations, and Central America.

Before coming to WOLA in 1995, Mr. Thale was the founder and Executive Director of the El Salvador Policy Project in Washington, D.C., which followed the negotiations to end El Salvador's civil war and the construction of post-war institutions. He taught high school for nine years prior to working on Latin America issues.