

BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY

THE
HELLER
SOCIAL
POLICY
IMPACT
REPORT

ISSUE NO. 10 | FALL 2020

Welcome to the Heller Social Policy Impact Report. This report showcases a selection of high-impact research and public engagement from the faculty, researchers and students of the Heller School for Social Policy and Management from July 2019 through June 2020.

THE HELLER SOCIAL POLICY IMPACT REPORT

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“Mindfulness is a way of taking steps into getting to know oneself and one’s experiences.”

JULIET NAJJUMBA, BRANDEIS STAFF MEMBER AND DIRECTOR OF AFRICANO, A WALTHAM-BASED NONPROFIT

Supporting mental health equity among Black youth in Waltham

Associate Dean for Equity, Inclusion and Diversity Maria Madison leads ongoing research into racial equity and mental health for Black students, parents and staff from local Waltham High School. The work is conducted in partnership with Community Health Network Area 17 (CHNA 17), a coalition of public health representatives from Waltham and neighboring towns focused on community engagement and racial equity through evidence-based interventions and initiatives.

Madison and a team of Heller alumni and graduate research assistants facilitated a series of small-group “Devine Dialogues” on mental health, race and equity. These roundtable discussions used Psychology Professor Patricia Devine’s de-biasing interventions and incorporated methods of culturally responsive teaching, cultural humility principles and racial literacy.

The dialogues promote racial literacy to counter bias while promoting self-awareness, self-care and resources for mental health and well-being. The goals include identifying barriers to seeking mental health support for Black youth, characterizing stigma associated with mental health services and improving cultural competence among mental health professionals.

“Mindfulness is a way of taking steps into getting to know oneself and one’s experiences,” says Juliet Najjumba, Brandeis staff member and director of Africano, a Waltham-based nonprofit. As a Devine Dialogues participant and partner, she says, “The dialogue helped to address a lot of issues that are really there but hardly talked about.”

KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

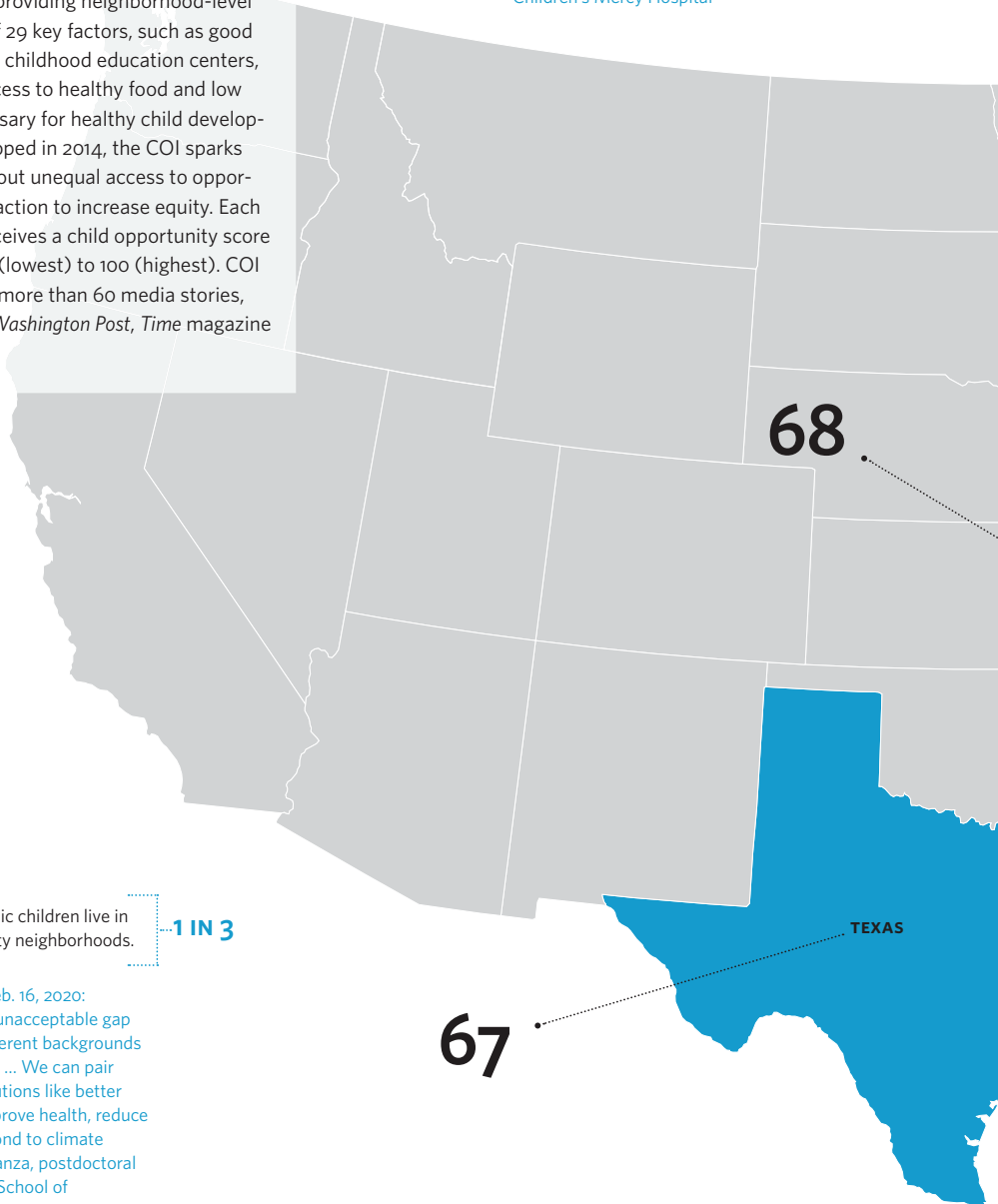
5x

Children with asthma in very-low-opportunity neighborhoods are five times more likely to be hospitalized.

“Pediatricians recognize that COVID-19 exacerbates the inequities that have been present in our communities for a long time. ... It is truly vital for us to understand these inequities and face them head-on.” — Dr. Molly Krager, Children’s Mercy Hospital

Child Opportunity Index 2.0 in action

The Child Opportunity Index 2.0 was released by the Institute for Child, Youth and Family Policy in January 2020, providing neighborhood-level measurements of 29 key factors, such as good schools and early childhood education centers, green spaces, access to healthy food and low poverty, all necessary for healthy child development. First developed in 2014, the COI sparks conversations about unequal access to opportunity and spurs action to increase equity. Each neighborhood receives a child opportunity score on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 100 (highest). COI 2.0 has garnered more than 60 media stories, including in *The Washington Post*, *Time* magazine and CNN Health.



AUSTIN, TEXAS

One in three Hispanic children live in very-low-opportunity neighborhoods.

1 IN 3

Austin Statesman, Feb. 16, 2020: “The data show an unacceptable gap between kids of different backgrounds and neighborhoods. ... We can pair these data with solutions like better green spaces to improve health, reduce inequities and respond to climate change.” — Kevin Lanza, postdoctoral fellow at UTHealth School of Public Health

CHICAGO METRO AREA

Just **2%** of **white children** live in **very-low-opportunity** neighborhoods.

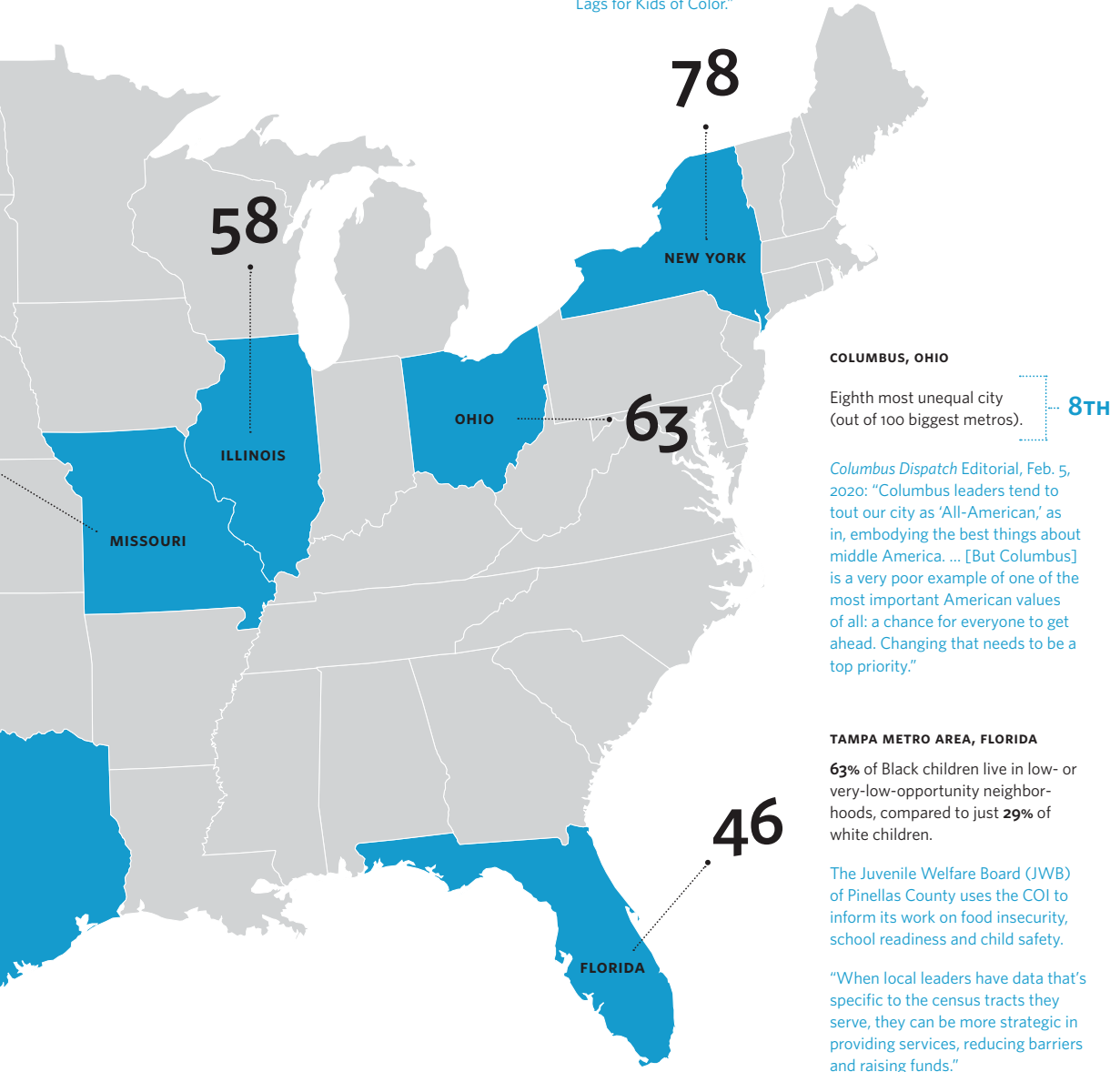
•-----VS-----•
Just **3%** of **Black children** live in **very-high-opportunity** neighborhoods.

Brittney Lange-Maia, an epidemiologist at Chicago's Rush University Medical Center, credits the COI as a "game changer and turning point" in identifying priority neighborhoods that need more resources.

ALBANY METRO AREA, NEW YORK

In 2014, Albany was the **lowest-opportunity place** for Black children to live among the **100** largest U.S. metro areas.

This statistic led to a five-year capital improvement plan to revitalize Albany's parks to increase equity and access to these resources, highlighted in a December 2019 NPR story, "In Nearly Every U.S. Metro Area, New Data Show Opportunity Lags for Kids of Color."



COLUMBUS, OHIO

Eighth most unequal city (out of 100 biggest metros).

8TH

Columbus Dispatch Editorial, Feb. 5, 2020: "Columbus leaders tend to tout our city as 'All-American,' as in, embodying the best things about middle America. ... [But Columbus] is a very poor example of one of the most important American values of all: a chance for everyone to get ahead. Changing that needs to be a top priority."

TAMPA METRO AREA, FLORIDA

63% of Black children live in low- or very-low-opportunity neighborhoods, compared to just **29%** of white children.

The Juvenile Welfare Board (JWB) of Pinellas County uses the COI to inform its work on food insecurity, school readiness and child safety.

"When local leaders have data that's specific to the census tracts they serve, they can be more strategic in providing services, reducing barriers and raising funds."
— JWB's Starr Silver

**ELECTION 2020: POLICY CONTRIBUTIONS
TO POLITICAL PLATFORMS**

**Lurie Institute researchers engage,
critique and consult on presidential
disability policy plans**

APRIL 1, 2019

Before any candidate released a disability plan, Research Associate Robyn Powell, PhD '20, first raised the issue of establishing a disability policy adviser with Democratic National Committee chair Tom Perez during his visit to Heller.

NOV. 14, 2019

Research Associate Sandy Ho hosted a Twitter Town Hall with Julián Castro. Disability rights activist Rebecca Cokley called it a first — a forum moderated by a person with a disability that gave people with disabilities across the country an opportunity to connect directly with a presidential candidate.

MARCH 3, 2020

Visiting Scholar Ari Ne'eman, who served on President Obama's National Council on Disability and consulted with Senators Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren on their presidential campaigns, said in *Spectrum*, "In this [election] cycle, I think we've probably come further than we have ever before" on disability policy.



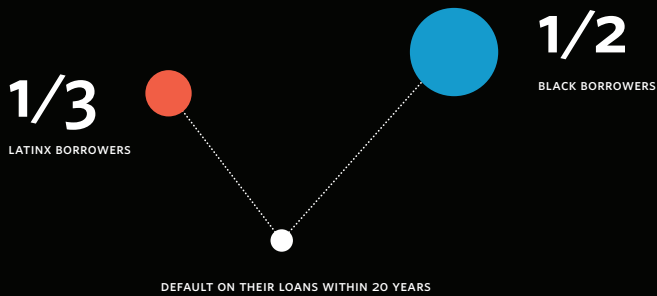
Rebecca Cokley @RebeccaCokley · Nov 13, 2019



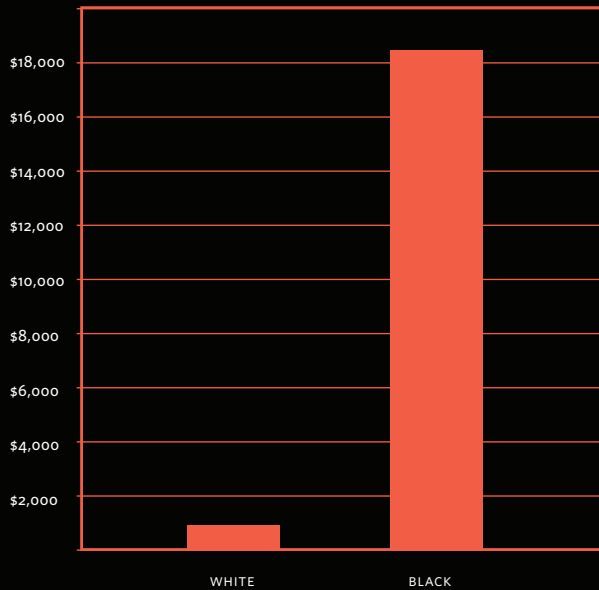
This is a first for the [#disability](#) community!
[@JulianCastro](#) is doing a twitter town hall tomorrow at 9 AM CST with [@IntersectedCrip](#) !!!! Send your questions using [#AskJulian](#)

IASP research informs Sen. Elizabeth Warren's student loan plan

Sen. Warren's bold student loan forgiveness plan, which would have canceled student loans for 42 million Americans and significantly reduced racial disparities in student debt, drew extensively from an Institute on Assets and Social Policy study called "Stalling Dreams: How Student Debt Is Disrupting Life Chances and Widening the Racial Wealth Gap." She cited critical statistics from the IASP report, including:



AMOUNT THE MEDIAN BORROWER OWES
20 YEARS AFTER STARTING COLLEGE



“I am truly blown away by this website. I could spend weeks just reviewing the number of resources provided in this one place. It’s amazing!”

LEADER OF A COMMUNITY COALITION IN A RURAL COUNTY

New web tool helps communities find solutions to opioid epidemic

Associate Dean for Research Cindy Parks Thomas, PhD’00, led a team of researchers from the Opioid Policy Research Collaborative at the Institute for Behavioral Health to develop and launch the Brandeis Opioid Resource Connector (BORC), a user-friendly website designed to help communities craft effective initiatives to combat the opioid epidemic.

The BORC website offers users a curated collection of over 150 community-based program models aimed at reducing opioid addiction and overdose, and an array of toolkits, reports, peer-reviewed articles, data and mapping tools, as well as numerous resources specific to COVID-19.

The program models include innovative approaches to safer opioid prescribing, increasing availability of medications for opioid use disorder, overdose prevention, post-overdose response, recovery coaching, and addressing social determinants of health, such as housing and employment.

“I am truly blown away by this website. I could spend weeks just reviewing the number of resources provided in this one place. It’s amazing!”
— Leader of a community coalition in a rural county

VISIT BORC AT [OPIOID-RESOURCE-CONNECTOR.ORG](https://opioid-resource-connector.org)

Challenging ableist norms around civic engagement

In April 2020, Sandy Ho, Monika Mitra (Lurie Institute for Disability Policy) and Susan Eaton (Sillerman Center for the Advancement of Philanthropy) published “Civic Engagement and People With Disabilities: A Way Forward Through Cross-Movement Building,” with financial support from the Ford Foundation. This report highlights the barriers that people with disabilities encounter when trying to make substantive change in their communities, and how philanthropy, disability rights groups and civic engagement organizations can support leadership among disabled people.

“Informed by this report, we are better equipped to support efforts to build capacity and knowledge on disability justice in order to ensure that every voice in our society is heard through cross-movement collaboration.” — Claribel Vidal, Program Associate, Civic Engagement and Government at the Ford Foundation

Preterm delivery among Black women

Preterm delivery occurs at extraordinarily higher rates among Black women than among women of any other race or ethnicity, a disparity associated with ongoing distress caused by racism. This study, **published in the *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities* by Palmira Santos and colleagues**, examines rates of preterm delivery for Black women in the U.S. to determine the level of risk associated with living in specific states (controlling for known clinical, economic and demographic risk factors).

32

In 32 of the 35 states in this analysis, Black women face a significantly increased risk of preterm delivery compared to Black women living in the lowest-incidence state.



Mississippi, Alabama and Arkansas were among the states with the highest risk of preterm delivery for Black women.

11%

This analysis found that 11% of Black women's deliveries were preterm, compared to 7.9% among non-Black women.

SOURCE:

Santos, P., Joglekar, G., Faughnan, K., Darden, J., and Hendrich, A. (2020). "Disproportionate Preterm Delivery Among Black Women: A State-Level Analysis." *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*. 7(2), pp. 290-297.



**FEDERAL TESTIMONY ON CRITICAL
SOCIAL POLICIES**

Dolores Acevedo-Garcia testifies at two congressional hearings on reducing child poverty, March 2020

The Institute for Child, Youth and Family Policy director testified before the House Appropriations Committee and House Ways and Means Committee. “We have a responsibility to reduce child poverty by half because we know how to do it,” Acevedo-Garcia said.

Joel Cutcher-Gershenfeld speaks at a congressional briefing for H.R. 3837: National Fab Lab Network Act of 2019, September 2019

The act supports community fab labs, advancing digital and design literacy in ways that blend new technology and ancient wisdom across urban, suburban and remote rural settings. Professor Cutcher-Gershenfeld discussed combining social and technical systems to make the vision of self-sufficient production possible.

Finn Gardiner, MPP’18, testifies at U.S. Civil Rights Commission on Subminimum Wage, November 2019

The Lurie Institute’s communications specialist spoke at a hearing against Section 14c of the Fair Labor Standards Act, which permits employers to pay workers with disabilities less than minimum wage. “If this were about people in some far-flung country, there would be public outcry at the kind of sweatshop wages people are being paid,” Gardiner said.

David Weil testifies before the House Committee on Labor and Education on the Future of Work, October 2019

Dean Weil said, “The fissured workplace model has allowed employers to shift risks and responsibilities onto workers and incentivized the misclassification of employees as independent contractors. Its impacts on workers span a range of outcomes, including lower wages, fewer benefits, unreliable hours, and limited or no labor and employment protections.”

“As more women come forward and push for change, Hill’s courageous voice resounds.”

TESSA BERENSON, TIME MAGAZINE

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION HIGHLIGHTS

University Professor Anita Hill

TIME MAGAZINE’S 100 WOMEN OF THE YEAR

“As more women come forward and push for change, Hill’s courageous voice resounds.”

— Tessa Berenson, *Time* magazine

Marc Kiredjian '05, Associate Director of Academic and Student Affairs

HONORABLE MENTION, 2019 VOINOVICH PUBLIC INNOVATION CHALLENGE

Awarded in recognition of his leadership in spearheading the Heller Summer Institute, a free online platform for incoming students to meet, prepare for courses and share support resources. “It is this kind of innovative thinking that will form the future foundation for professional higher education programs.” — Voinovich award committee

Dean David Weil

FRANCES PERKINS INTELLIGENCE AND COURAGE AWARD


Named for the first female secretary of labor, this award was presented by the Frances Perkins Center in honor of Weil’s work in the area of social justice and economic security.



Professor Joel Cutcher-Gershenfeld

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD, LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS ASSOCIATION (LERA)

Cutcher-Gershenfeld served as president of LERA in 2009 and led the establishment of industry councils in areas such as health care, higher education, the public sector, K-12 education and automobiles.

A young man with short, dark, curly hair is sitting on a light-colored wooden stool. He is wearing a light-colored, long-sleeved button-down shirt under a dark vest, dark trousers, and light-colored sneakers with dark accents. He is looking off to the side with a thoughtful expression. The background is a workshop or classroom setting with shelves, a desk, and a lamp.

Transforming youth employment in Ethiopia

**THE CENTER FOR YOUTH AND
COMMUNITIES BUILDS CAREER
DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY THROUGH
YEARLONG PILOT AT SIX UNIVERSITIES**

BY KAREN SHIH

ETHIOPIA FACES A YOUTH EMPLOYMENT CRISIS.

Its economy is evolving rapidly from agrarian to industrial/technological, as climate change and poverty are shifting the population to cities. Against this backdrop, youth under age 25 — who make up nearly 60% of the population — are finding few opportunities to enter the workforce.

To tackle this problem, the government has invested in education, increasing the number of universities over the last two decades. But universities have struggled to address the skills mismatch between university graduates and employers, just as the private sector has struggled to create jobs and increase wages to keep up with the influx of graduates.

That's why, in 2019, the Center for Youth and Communities (CYC) partnered with Save the Children for a one-year pilot program funded by USAID called Building the Potential of Youth Activity: Institutional Capacity Development Support to Ethiopian Higher Education Institutions.

"At its core, it is a university change initiative," says CYC Director Susan Curnan. "The impetus is an amalgam of factors: poor employability and career options for millions of college graduates; a government mandate that universities take on the career issue; university missions that place them as leading economic engines for the country but without best practices, structures and policies that enable them to fulfill it vis-à-vis their students."

The pilot program engaged six universities: Bahir Dar, Hawassa, Jigjiga, Jimma, Mekelle and Samara, across different regions of the country.

The CYC team was tasked with capacity development support for piloting the change initiative, which required working at both the national and university levels, says Senior Fellow Della Hughes, implementation director of the project. "What would it take to get career development centers up and running and engaging university leadership, faculty, employers so students could develop

the competencies they need for the workforce and life?"

The pilot required buy-in at the highest level from the university presidents. All six presidents met in October, shortly after the project began in summer 2019, to create the Presidents' Compact: Leadership for High-Level Innovation and Accountability, signaling their commitment to prioritize student employability development and career readiness.

"University presidents aren't always asked to be advisers to government, so this Presidents' Compact is groundbreaking as a way forward for us and for other universities to achieve social impact," said a university president during the session.

To start the pilot, the CYC team conducted a rapid assessment of the universities in the summer of 2019. They interviewed leadership at each campus, including the university president, academic vice president, director of the gender office, director of the institute for technology, and career development staff and students to establish a baseline of each university's capacity. Then, the CYC team created a report, which they shared with university leadership, and conducted action-planning workshops with university teams in September to develop a plan for the rest of the pilot year.

The CYC team, which also included Senior Scientist Sangeeta Tyagi, Senior Fellow Cathy Burack, Senior Fellow Alan Melchior '74, MA'07, Senior Fellow Tammy Tai, MBA'06, Research Assistant Angesom Teklu, MA SID'19, and Heller Assistant Dean Ravi Lakshmikanthan, MA SID'99, designed and piloted the "Education Works: Transferable Life Skills Trainers' Guide and Curriculum." They facilitated a training of trainers for 75 leaders, faculty and staff members across the universities.



PHOTO: SENIOR SCIENTIST SANGEETA TYAGI WITH TRANSFERABLE LIFE SKILLS TRAINEES FROM JIMMA AND JIGJIGA UNIVERSITIES.

“We stressed with our participants that you can’t just train a few students in one week and have that be enough. You have to embed this training throughout the university curriculum so that every student is able to learn and practice over the course of their education,” Hughes says. “They heard that message and understood how critical it was. They took it very seriously and sent faculty from the medical school, law school, engineering, humanities, technology and others, including at the level of dean and associate dean.”

The curriculum addressed six core domains and topics: (1) positive self-concept, covering self-esteem, self-reflection, self-awareness, self-confidence and taking initiative; (2) self-control, covering delayed gratification, time management, goal setting, stress management and coping mechanisms; (3) social skills, covering empathy,

conflict resolution, teamwork, adaptability and flexibility; (4) communication skills, covering active listening, verbal and nonverbal communication, reading and writing; (5) higher-order thinking skills, covering creativity and problem-solving, critical thinking and decision-making; and (6) job-search skills, covering CV writing, job interviewing, market analysis and search mechanisms.

The training of trainers “was effective, participatory, manageable and amazingly transferable,” said the center director of Mekelle University.

The CYC “Education Works” series also included: “Education Works: Career Development Center Management Course,” an eight-week online program; the “Education Works: Advancing Career Readiness and Private Sector Navigation Through University-Employer Engagement” guide; and “Education Works: Assessment of Institution-

alization of Student Employability Development and Career Development.”

An essential aspect of the pilot was establishing a relationship with the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MoSHE) and the Ethiopian Jobs Creation Commission (JCC). Along with Save the Children, CYC helped facilitate and lead a collective impact group that included representatives from MoSHE and JCC and other donor organizations. With all parties focused on solving the same problem, the opportunity to collaborate, reduce duplication and work toward high-impact common outcomes was imperative.

“Institutions of higher education form the bedrock of knowledge-based economies,” says Magdalena Fulton, Save the Children’s director of Youth Economic Opportunities. “The multi-sectoral partnership that resulted between universities, the government and the nonprofit sector under the pilot activity is exactly what is needed in order to support the 500,000 young people entering the job market every year.”


The COVID-19 pandemic and civil unrest in Ethiopia necessitated adjustments to the work plan in the final months of the pilot. The CYC team traveled to Ethiopia six times between July 2019 and February 2020, and once travel was restricted, the team trained and supported Save the Children Ethiopia staff to complete the remainder of the in-country work.

A MoSHE senior official described the CYC-developed curriculum as “impressive, a great job. We will include it in the academic curriculum and standardize it in all universities.”

Curnan says, “There are many opportunities and challenges remaining. Institutionalizing student employability development and career readiness will require careful scaling and management of the systems change process, as well as providing the ongoing policy and resource supports needed to deepen practice and engage employers.”

“The multi-sectoral partnership that resulted between universities, the government and the nonprofit sector under the pilot activity is exactly what is needed in order to support the 500,000 young people entering the job market every year.”

MAGDALENA FULTON, SAVE THE CHILDREN’S
DIRECTOR OF YOUTH ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES



Supporting working adults with mental illness

**PROFESSOR JOANNE NICHOLSON'S
WORKINGWELL PROJECT EQUIPS
PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH
DISORDERS TO SUCCEED ON THE JOB**

BY ALIX HACKETT

FOR ADULTS WITH SERIOUS MENTAL HEALTH

disorders such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder or major depression, employment can provide much more than a paycheck. Holding down a job, even a part-time one, can improve self-esteem, meet requirements for federal benefits and ease the road to recovery.

Despite those benefits, and the fact that an overwhelming majority of individuals with serious mental illness want to work, unemployment among this population is staggeringly high — nearly 80%, according to some studies. It's a conundrum that has occupied Joanne Nicholson, professor of the practice in the Institute for Behavioral Health, for decades: How do we open the door to success for those who need it most?

"I'm committed to helping people with mental health conditions do the best they can to achieve the goals they set," Nicholson says. "Employment is a huge piece of that."

GREATER IMPACT

In 2015, Nicholson began working on a new kind of project, one informed by research but with the goal of creating a tool that could help people with mental illness succeed in the workplace. For a clinical and research psychologist accustomed to academia, it was uncharted territory.

"As an academic researcher, you get your grant, you do your research and you write a paper, and that's all good," Nicholson says, "but I got to the point in my career where I wanted the work to have a greater impact. People with serious mental illness are not necessarily sitting home reading journal articles. I wanted it to make a difference."

In the last five years, Nicholson's project became WorkingWell, a digital platform of mobile tools that people with behavioral health conditions can use on the job to help them cope with challenges and develop successful routines. She collaborates with Chris Burns of Fort Point Design, an expert in

designing accessible digital tools and resources for individuals with behavioral health challenges and cognitive impairments, and neuro-diverse individuals. WorkingWell is accessible through a mobile app or on a computer or tablet, and is customizable for users with a wide range of abilities.

Studies show the most effective strategies for people with mental illness are those that provide in-person support — whether through an employment specialist or a case manager — to help the employee overcome difficulties as they arise. Those models are expensive and unfortunately uncommon, but Nicholson envisions WorkingWell as a kind of digital support system that can achieve similar results while being widely accessible.

With a few taps or clicks on the WorkingWell app, employees with mental illness can set goals for their workweek ("Have positive conversations with co-workers," "Complete tasks on time"), schedule recurring reminders ("Take meds," "Check in with supervisor"), and quickly reference the steps required to complete a task. Throughout the day, if they're feeling overwhelmed or angry, clicking the "Manage the Moment" button reminds them to use strategies that have worked for them in the past, like deep breathing or taking a quick break.

Each evening, users are prompted to "rate" their day as well as any progress they made toward their goals, and the coping strategies they used. In doing so, Nicholson hopes they will begin to recognize the patterns of behavior that help them succeed.

"People often get caught up in the day to day, and this encourages them to take a moment to reflect," she explains. "You want them to realize, 'Oh, I went to bed last night at 10 o'clock and look, the next day I had a better day.'"

In many ways, what WorkingWell offers — a toolkit for people balancing their mental health and workplace challenges — has never been more important.

JOANNE NICHOLSON, PROFESSOR OF
THE PRACTICE IN THE INSTITUTE FOR
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

SUPPORT FROM ALL SIDES

Every aspect of the WorkingWell app — from the language used to the five-star rating system — is informed by hundreds of hours of research, focus-group sessions and user testing. With federal funding from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research, Nicholson's team developed a prototype reflecting input from more than 350 stakeholders.

"It's very much based on user experience design," says Nicholson. "We consulted people with mental health conditions, providers who work with them, people who train employment specialists, and national and local experts."

Last year, with support from Brandeis Innovation, Nicholson's team applied for and was selected as a finalist in the MassChallenge HealthTech initiative — a highly selective international startup accelerator — which led to a working partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS). The project received additional funding and mentorship through the Brandeis SPROUT program, which helps students, faculty and staff bring their research and entrepreneurial ideas to life. To cap it off, this year Nicholson was named a fellow by the Brandeis I-Corps program, which receives funding from the National Science Foundation to accelerate the economic and societal benefits of research.

This wealth of connections and support has been a game changer for Nicholson and her team, who, in addition to funding, needed help identifying a business model that could sustain the platform moving forward.

"I'm a psychologist by training, and so the whole accelerator entrepreneurial world is completely foreign to me," Nicholson acknowledges. "Having mentors of this caliber has been incredible."



WHAT'S NEXT


At the request of their partners at DDS, Nicholson, Burns and the WorkingWell team are now hard at work creating a second prototype for employees with autism spectrum disorder, a disability that affects an estimated 1 to 2% of the American population. They're also working on their sales pitch, to great success: The team received the "best pitch" award at an April 2020 Massachusetts Innovation Nights event, and was invited to participate in the New England Innovation Awards competition this fall.

In March, the COVID-19 pandemic forced WorkingWell researchers to temporarily pause meetings with DDS and other partners. When work resumed, it was with renewed urgency, as state agencies acknowledged the increasing need for mental health resources that can be delivered virtually.

"DDS strives to make the services we provide as accessible and flexible as possible for our diverse consumer base," says Christopher Klaskin, an ombudsman and legislative director at DDS. "Partnering with WorkingWell has expanded that agenda. We are thrilled by their progress and look forward to our continued work on this innovative project."

In many ways, what WorkingWell offers — a toolkit for people balancing their mental health and workplace challenges — has never been more important, says Nicholson.

"That intersection of mental health and well-being and family life and work: We're all sitting in the middle of it now, there's no boundary," she points out. "What better time to be thinking about innovation at the interface of those?"



Attacking COVID-19 from every angle

PROFESSOR A.K. NANDAKUMAR HELPS
PROMOTE CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE
MEASURES ON A LOCAL, NATIONAL
AND GLOBAL SCALE

BY BETHANY ROMANO, MBA '17

AS THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC EVOLVED FROM A

geographically contained novel coronavirus to a global crisis, health economist and global health policy expert Professor A.K. Nandakumar assumed a critical role in COVID-19 response initiatives at the national, regional and global levels.

At the U.S. Department of State, where Nandakumar serves as chief economist at the Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator, they're adapting HIV/AIDS health care infrastructure for COVID-19 response. He's also supported USAID India to design a blended financing facility that can identify and scale innovative solutions from the private sector. He's helping the Rockefeller Foundation develop national testing plans, and contributed to an MIT project dubbed the "Pandemic Supermind." That's all in addition to his day job at the Heller School, where he directs the Institute for Global Health and Development and the MS program in Global Health Policy and Management.

Throughout these multifarious efforts, Nandakumar maintains a broad perspective of the pandemic and its economic impacts. He says, "When pandemics hit, people die in three ways. One, of course, is from the pandemic itself. The second is from health system collapse — people can't get critical medical care for other health issues because hospitals and the primary health care system are overwhelmed. The third is from economic collapse — people lose the ability to support themselves."

A successful strategy responds to all three dangers at once, recognizes trade-offs between each and minimizes loss of life. It's a gigantic balancing act.

STOPPING THE SPREAD

In the U.S., Nandakumar joined a group of experts helping the Rockefeller Foundation develop a nationwide testing and tracing strategy. The Rockefeller recommendations include widespread, rapid screening of asymptomatic individuals; a

national campaign to encourage mask use; and significant improvements to data infrastructure and contact tracing.

"We need to scale the nationwide screening test strategy to keep essential institutions and parts of the economy open and functional until there is a vaccine or a more effective treatment," said foundation president Dr. Rajiv Shah in a press release announcing the group's second testing strategy, released in July.

Nandakumar says, "We seem to have enough tests overall, but they're not deployed efficiently. We need guidance for how to test asymptomatic people in a smart, targeted way."

When it comes to initial efforts around contact tracing, Nandakumar suggests there's significant room for improvement. "People don't want to pick up the call, they don't want to give sensitive information out; there's a lack of trust. I recommend that we borrow what we're doing in low- and middle-income countries, where we've created a cadre of community health workers from within the communities themselves. We need to hire from within the community to do contact tracing."

STRENGTHENING HEALTH SYSTEMS

In his work with the State Department, Nandakumar built a global partnership to design and implement activity-based costing and management. This system (currently used in six countries) can generate information on a routine basis to optimize investments in health systems. This is particularly important today as the pandemic strains economies in low- and middle-income countries and impacts donor spending on health.

The vast U.S. investments to strengthen health systems in many countries are paying off, he says. "Over the past 15 years, we've invested billions of dollars creating labs, setting up surveillance systems, promoting health insurance, setting up robust supply chains for drugs. We're now seeing how this can be leveraged for COVID response. That's a big positive."

“It is very clear that in every single country, the people who are most affected are marginalized, vulnerable populations. ... People have to work every day to feed their family. They do not have the luxury of working from home to ride out the situation.”

PROFESSOR A.K. NANDAKUMAR, DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT AND THE MS PROGRAM IN GLOBAL HEALTH POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

However, Nandakumar remains concerned about the virus’s disparate impact in low- and middle-income countries. He says, “It is very clear that in every single country, the people who are most affected are marginalized, vulnerable populations. In sub-Saharan Africa, the largest employment sector is informal. People have to work every day to feed their family. They do not have the luxury of working from home to ride out the situation.”

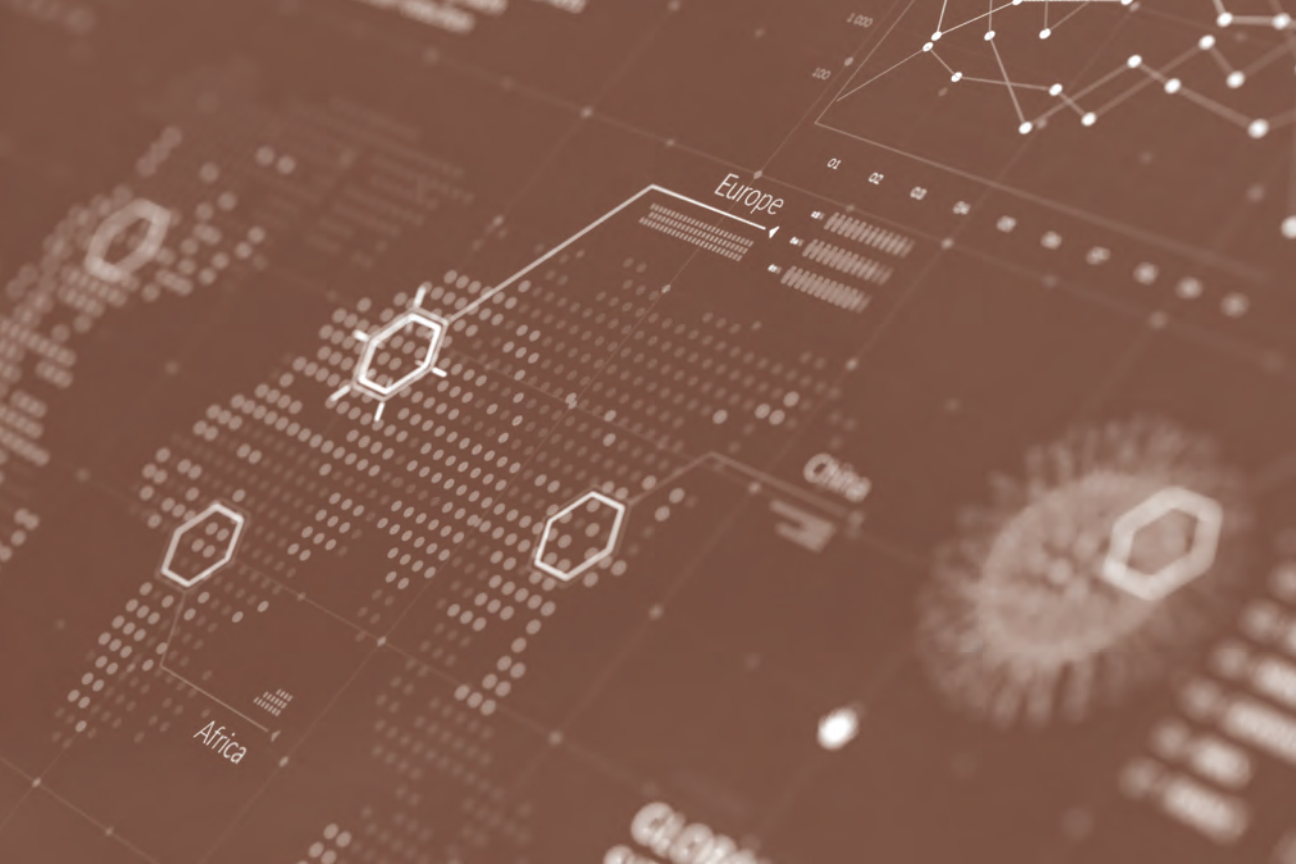
To that point, taking a sequential approach — first saving lives, then saving jobs — isn’t realistic in many of these countries. “From the outset, countries in sub-Saharan Africa have to work simultaneously on saving lives *and* saving jobs,” he says.

HARNESSING THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Harnessing the private sector and supporting businesses of every size isn’t just about saving jobs — it’s also critical to battling the pandemic itself, by producing equipment and drugs and keeping supply chains functional. “In a pandemic, you need a surge of response from the public sector and private sector,” says Nandakumar. “But the private sector needs some assurances before they can take action. They can’t go off and invest a bunch of money to develop a new testing protocol, vaccine or PPE supply chain if there won’t be demand for their products.”

On this issue, Nandakumar is experimenting with new ways to provide financing to private corporations that need capital to bring innovative coronavirus solutions to scale. He supported USAID India to develop a unique blended financing facility that matches \$5 million in public funds with \$100 million in private equity. This innovative idea catapulted from concept to approval by both the U.S. and Indian governments within four weeks, and already has \$150 million in private equity commitments.

“This kind of blended financing vehicle can solve key market failures. It’s completely unique, and I think this is the way forward,” says Nandakumar.



Sangita Patel, director of the health office at USAID India, says, “We are grateful to Dr. Nandakumar for his excellent collaboration, critical thinking and questions, which have allowed us to plant the seeds of an idea that will certainly grow into a robust financing facility in India to mobilize resources and talent in the fight against COVID-19, and provide learnings to other countries as well.”

LOOKING AHEAD

It’s clear that COVID-19 and its associated economic fallout will remain front and center for some time. When he was invited by the MIT Center for Collective Intelligence to participate in the Pandemic Response Supermind Activation, Nandakumar was eager to join 180 other experts for a three-week exercise intended to address long-term pandemic resilience.

“We know that a reactive stance is not good when you’re dealing with pandemics. And yet, there is no one body or group actively tracking emerging viruses and managing a pandemic preparedness plan for each country. I would love to see the U.S. government link the global health security and pandemic response offices together and put somebody in charge of coordinating that work.

“If you look back, every couple of years we encounter an unknown virus — none as bad as COVID-19 — but there’s been Ebola, SARS, MERS and so forth. We should continue to expect this going forward. And I believe we can become much better at managing it.”

PUBLICATIONS

PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES

Introducing Brandeis' first peer-reviewed academic journal

The first issue of *CASTE: A Global Journal on Social Exclusion* was published in February 2020. It includes a felicitation from the Dalai Lama and articles exploring many topics related to caste in South Asia and beyond, such as housing, health, feminism and slavery. Professor Laurence Simon serves as the journal's co-editor-in-chief.

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REPORTS

Institute on Assets and Social Policy report shows promise of cash transfers and child savings accounts

The report "Accelerating Equity and Justice: Basic Income and Generational Wealth" finds that a \$1,000 per month basic income would dramatically lower the poverty rate (especially for people of color), and that child savings accounts significantly increase the wealth of Black and Latinx families and put racial wealth equity in reach.

Acevedo-Garcia, D., Noeke, C., McArdle, N., **Sofer, N., Huntington, N., Hardy, E., Huber, R.**, Baek, M., and Reece, J. (2020). "The Geography of Child Opportunity: Why Neighborhoods Matter for Equity." Waltham, Mass.: diversitydatakids.org, Institute for Child, Youth and Family Policy, the Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University.

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BOOK CHAPTERS

Boguslaw, J., Santos, J., and Tellez, T. (2019). "Culturally Effective Organizations: Revisiting the Role of Employers in Workforce Development." In King, C.T., and Hong, P.Y.P. (Eds.), "Pathways to Careers in Health Care." Kalamazoo, Mich.: W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, pp. 187-228.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Sampath, R. (2020). Book Review, "The Empire of Disgust: Prejudice, Discrimination and Policy in India and the U.S.," by Zoya Hasan, Aziz Z. Huq, Martha C. Nussbaum, and Vidhu Verma (Eds.). *CASTE: A Global Journal on Social Exclusion*. 1(1), pp. 244-246.

GRANTS

Senior Scientist Mary Jo Larson, PhD'92, receives \$3.8 million, five-year grant from the National Institutes of Health

Larson is the PI of "Trajectories of Non-Pharmacologic and Opioid Treatments for Pain in Association With Military Readiness, Opioid and Health Outcomes." The study builds on a prior grant and several papers, including one in the *Journal of General Internal Medicine* in October 2019, which found that non-drug therapies for chronic pain resulted in fewer long-term adverse effects, such as alcohol and drug use disorder and suicide attempts.

Rachel Sayko Adams (PI), Mary Jo Larson

"Integrating Signals of Suicide Risk From DOD and VHA Data to Improve Upon Suicide Risk Prevention Strategy for Combat Veterans"; Funder: NIMH; subcontract to Brandeis from University of Colorado

Diana Bowser (PI) "Preventing Opioid Use Among Justice-Involved Youth"; Funder: NIH; subcontract to Brandeis from Texas Christian University/NIDA

Diana Bowser (PI) "Strengthening the Humanitarian Response to COVID-19 in Colombia"; Funder: ELRHA (Enhancing Learning and Research for Humanitarian Assistance)

Mary Brolin (PI), Carol Prost "ReImagine North of Main"; Funder: Health Foundation of Central Mass.; subcontract to Brandeis from Fitchburg State University

Pamina Firchow (PI), Peter Dixon, Fiorella Vera-Adrianzen "Assessing Transformative Justice for Reconciliation in Colombia"; Funder: United States Institute of Peace

Gary Gaumer (PI) "Public-Private Partnerships in PEPFAR Countries"; Funder: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; subcontract to Brandeis from Cardno

**Jody Hoffer Gittell, Shyamal Sharma (Co-PIs),
Lainie Loveless** “Building a Relational Society”;
Funder: Topol Family Foundation

Traci Green (PI) “Drug Checking Pilot Evaluation”;
Funder: Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration; subcontract to Brandeis
from Massachusetts Department of Public Health

**Anita Hill (PI), Katie Chakoian-Lifvergren, Keith
Marple, Tauren Nelson** “Elevating With Urgency
the Public Discussion of Gender-Based Violence
in 2020”;
Funder: Collaborative Fund for Women’s
Safety and Dignity; subcontract to Brandeis from
Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors

**Pamela Joshi (PI), Erin Hardy, Kate Giannoni
Schneider** “Quality of Subsidized Child Care
Providers and Children’s Care Stability: Implica-
tions of Early Educational Opportunities”;
Funder: Administration for Children and Families; subcon-
tract to Brandeis from Boston University

Meelee Kim (PI), Dominic Hodgkin “Compre-
hensive Approach to Address Opioid Abuse:
Community-Based Recovery-Oriented System of
Care”;
Funder: Department of Justice; subcontract
to Brandeis from the Hancock County (Ohio)
Board of Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental
Health Services

**Peter Kreiner (PI), Robert Dunigan, Lee Panas,
Cindy Thomas** “Racial Disparities and the Role
of Prescriber Networks in the Development and
Sustaining of Buprenorphine Prescribing by Waiv-
ered Physicians for OUD Treatment in Massachu-
setts Communities”;
Funder: RIZE Massachusetts

**Mary Jo Larson (PI), Rachel Sayko Adams,
Nick Huntington, Grant Ritter, Natalie Moresco**
“Association of High-Risk Medications With
Health Outcomes and Early Attrition Among
Post-Deployment Soldiers With Pain”;
Funder: Uniformed Services University; subcontract
to Brandeis from Henry M. Jackson Foundation
for the Advancement of Military Medicine

**Sharon Reif, Constance Horgan (Co-PIs),
Margaret Lee, Grant Ritter, Maddy Brown**
“Piloting a Patient-Reported Outcome Measure
for Opioid Use Disorder Recovery in a Clinical
Setting”;
Funder: National Institute on Drug
Abuse (NIDA)

Thomas Shapiro (PI) “Evidence Toward a Racial
Equity Understanding of Post-Secondary Educa-
tion”;
Funder: Lumina Foundation

Donald Shepard (PI) “Economic Analysis of
Second Generation of Health Posts in Rwanda”;
Funder: Alere PTE Ltd/Abbott

Cindy Thomas (PI) “Expanding Medication-
Assisted Treatment: State Medicaid Technical
Assistance Opportunities”;
Funder: Arnold
Ventures; subcontract to Brandeis from Technical
Assistance Collaborative, Inc.

Cynthia Tschampl (PI) “Cost and Cost-Offset
Tools for Adult Dental Benefits”;
Funder:
Medicaid/Medicare/CHIP Services Dental
Assoc.; subcontract to Brandeis from
DentaQuest Partnership

David Weil (PI) “Fissuring or Productivity
Divergence? An Organizational Conception of
Outsourcing and Its Impacts”;
Funder: Alfred P.
Sloan Foundation

**David Weil (PI), Clemens Noelke, Kartik Trivedi,
Teresa Kroeger** “The Effects of Public, Private
and Social Institutions on Wages: An Exploratory
Study”;
Funder: Russell Sage Foundation

PRESENTATIONS

Constance Horgan gives talk at the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism's National Advisory Council: "Using Health Services Research to Improve the Delivery of Alcohol Services"

February 2020: In her presentation, Institute for Behavioral Health Director Horgan compared the changing health system to the evolution of the Ford Mustang, and discussed key issues for alcohol services, such as adapting to the "whole person" concept and identifying opportunities in a less siloed medical environment.

KEYNOTE ADDRESSES

Acevedo-Garcia, D. Keynote address presented at "UPWARD — Rising out of Poverty: Translating Research Into Action," conference sponsored by Waypoint, N.H., Concord, N.H., October 2019.

Cutcher-Gershenfeld, J. "Designing Reality: The Future of Work in the Third Digital Revolution." Keynote presented at National Academy of Arbitrators, New England Region, and the Charles T. Schmidt Jr. Labor Research Center, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, R.I., November 2019.

Eaton, S. "Getting to 'We': Educators as a Counterforce to Othering in a Polarized Nation." Keynote address presented at the Consortium for Excellence in Teacher Education annual conference, Brandeis University, Waltham, Mass., November 2019.

Gittel, J.H. "Transforming Relationships for High Performance." Keynote presented at Healthcare Communication Virtual Research Forum, sponsored by Academy of Communication in Healthcare, June 2020.

Mitra, M. "The National Research Center for Parents With Disabilities, Initial Findings Inform Next Steps." Keynote presented at the Association for Successful Parenting Conference, Seattle, November 2019.

HIGH-IMPACT CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Adams, R.S., Corrigan, J.D., and Dams-O'Connor, K. "Risk for Opioid Use Disorder Among Individuals With Traumatic Brain Injury." Presented at 2019 Addiction Health Services Research Conference, Park City, Utah, October 2019.

Boguslaw, J. "Universal Basic Income and Universal Capital Accounts: The Role of Shared Capital." Session Chair, Beyster Symposium on Employee Ownership, sponsored by the School of Management and Labor Relations, Rutgers University; the Employee Ownership Foundation; and the Beyster Foundation for Enterprise Development, June 2020.

Burack, C., and **Haque, Z.** "Do After-School Robotics Programs Help Keep Girls in STEM?" Presented at the Society of Women Engineers annual conference, Anaheim, Calif., November 2019.

Derenoncourt, E., **Noelke, C.,** and **Weil, D.** "Do Wage Setting Shocks Propagate Through the Labor Market? Evidence From Private and Public Wage Policy Changes in the United States." Presented at the 2020 Annual Meeting of the American Economic Association, San Diego, Calif., January 2020.

Firchow, P. "Reclaiming Everyday Peace: Local Voices in Measurement and Evaluation After War." Invited book talk, presented at USAID - Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation, October 2019.

Gittel, J.H. Panelist, "Exploring Relationality in Organizational Scholarship: Past and Future, Convergences and Tensions." Symposium presented at Academy of Management Annual Meeting, Boston, August 2019.

Huber, R. "Caring On and Off the Clock: Measuring Care Costs and Work Supports Among Paid Care Workers With Dependents." Presented at Eastern Sociological Society 2020 Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, February 2020.

Kachoria, A., and **Nicholson, J.** "Improving Care Coordination Between Accountable Care Organizations and Community Partners: Early Findings From the Massachusetts Delivery System Reform Program." Presented at "Research and Relevance in State Health Policy Virtual State-University Partnership Learning Network Adjunct Meeting," sponsored by AcademyHealth, June 2020.

Lempereur, A. "Challenges and Scenarios for the Palestinian Leadership." Presented at online forum sponsored by Forward Thinking, May 2020.

Madison, M., Barnes, I., Cook, E., and Turpin, N. "Ellen Garrison, Mary Anderson and Edmonia Highgate: African Womanists/Black Feminists: Rootedness of Revolution." Presented at the Association of African American Museums 2019 Annual Conference, Jackson, Miss., August 2019.

Melchior, A., and **Burack, C.** "Supporting Students in STEM: The Long-Term Impacts of Afterschool Robotics Programs." Presented at the National STEM Education Research Summit, organized by the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, N.C., October 2019.

Meschede, T. Panel chair, "Not Only Unequal Paychecks: Occupational Segregation, Benefits and the Racial Wealth Gap." Panel presented at the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management Fall Research Conference, Denver, November 2019.

*“We have a
responsibility
to reduce child
poverty by half
because we
know how to
do it.”*

DOLORES ACEVEDO-GARCIA, SAMUEL F. AND ROSE B. GINGOLD PROFESSOR OF
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL POLICY; DIRECTOR, INSTITUTE FOR CHILD,
YOUTH AND FAMILY POLICY

Mitra, M., Reif, S., Adams, R.S., Nicholson, J., and Thomas, C.P. “Intersecting Research on Opioid Misuse, Addiction and Disability.” Presented at Disability Statistics Compendium, Washington, D.C., February 2020.

Noelke, C. “Child Opportunity Index 2.0: Measuring Equitable Access.” Presented at a webinar hosted by the Children’s Hospital Association, April 2020.

Rosenfeld, L. “Health Literacy Environment, Assessment and Action.” Featured speaker at 2020-2021 University of Maryland Baltimore President’s Symposium Project on Health Literacy and Social Determinants, June 2020.

Sampath, R. Moderator, “The DWD Context — Regional Convergences and Divergences.” Presented at International Congress on Discrimination Based on Work and Descent Tackling Casteism, Antigypsyism and Contemporary Forms of Slavery and Other Analogous Forms of Discrimination, New York City, September 2019.

Shepard, D.S. “Cost-Effectiveness Analysis of Results-Based Financing in Zimbabwe: A Controlled Pre-Post Study.” Presented at International Health Economics Association Congress, University of Basel, Basel, Switzerland, July 2019.

Weil, D. “Strategies for Confronting Wage Theft.” Presented at “Celebrating the Centenary of the International Labor Organization and the Future of Women’s Labor Rights,” sponsored by Yale University/ILO, New Haven, Conn., October 2019.

Weil, D. “Who’s Responsible Here? A New Framework for Labor Policy.” Presented at the Urban Institute/Aspen Institute Future of Work Initiative, New York City, January 2020.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Acevedo-Garcia, D. “Why Neighborhoods Matter: Health Equity Applications of the Child Opportunity Index.” Annual Steven L. Putterman, MD, Memorial Lecture, sponsored by UMass Medical School Department of Family Medicine and Community Health, Worcester, Mass., September 2019.

Loya, R. “CSAs: A Growing National Movement.” Presented at “Building Support for Children’s Savings Accounts in Washington,” sponsored by Washington State Budget and Policy Center, Washington Asset Building Coalition and the Seattle Foundation, Seattle, November 2019.

Santos, J., and Gantla, S. “Empowerment Economics — Framework for Financial Capability and Community Wealth-Building.” Presented at Neighborhood Partnerships Conference, Salem, Ore., October 2019.

WEBINARS

Bowser, D. Panelist, “Economic Impact of an Outbreak.” Webinar sponsored by Boston College MS in Applied Economics, May 2020.

Dassin, J. Panelist, “A Collective Voice: What Impacts Can Scholarships Achieve.” Webinar sponsored by Education Sub-Saharan Africa, April 2020.

Loya, R. “Investing in the Future of Our Community: A Case Study on Funders’ Motivation for Supporting Children’s Savings Accounts.” Webinar sponsored by Asset Funders Network, January 2020.

Soroui, S., and Santos, J. “Segmented Immobility and Intersectionality in Healthcare Labor Markets.” Webinar sponsored by the Labor and Employment Relations Association, June 2020.

AWARDS AND HONORS

Associate Professor Pamina Firchow receives the 2020 Conflict Research Society (CRS) Book of the Year Award

CRS says Firchow's book, "Reclaiming Everyday Peace: Local Voices in Measurement and Evaluation After War," has radical policy relevance and offers an "elegant and simple solution" to the complex problems associated with evaluating everyday peace.

APPOINTMENTS TO PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS, JOURNAL EDITORIAL BOARDS, REVIEW COMMITTEES

Joan Dassin '69 served as an external reader for the Schwarzman Scholars Program in China.

Pamina Firchow was appointed to the 2020 United States Institute of Peace's Conflict Prevention and Fragility Working Group.

Jody Hoffer Gittel was appointed guest editor for the *Human Resource Management Journal's* Special Issue on Relational Perspectives on Human Resource Management.

Anita Hill was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Anita Hill received the Sankofa Freedom Award from the Tulsa (Okla.) City-County Library's African-American Resource Center and the Tulsa Library Trust.

Maria Madison was named to the steering committee of Community Health Network Area 17 (CHNA 17). Established under the direction of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Office of Healthy Communities, the CHNAs are coalitions made up of representatives from public, nonprofit and private sectors.

Monika Mitra was appointed an advisory editor of the "Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Global Public Health" in 2019.

Monika Mitra was named co-editor-in-chief of the *Disability and Health Journal*, beginning August 2020.

Joanne Nicholson was named International Advisory Board chair at the Ludwig Boltzmann Gesellschaft Open Innovation in Science Center, Vienna, Austria.

Joanne Nicholson was appointed Deputy Chair of the Steering Committee for the Prato International Research Collaborative for Change in Parent and Child Mental Health.

Joanne Nicholson was named to the Advisory Board of a Simmons University research project funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, titled "Retooling the Librarian Workforce: Innovative Post-Master's Certificate Program for Developing Inter-Professional Informationists (IPI)."

Joanne Nicholson was named to the Advisory Board of a Rutgers University research project funded by the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute, titled "Comparative Effectiveness of Perinatal Psychiatry Access Programs."

David Weil was named a Distinguished Fellow of the Labor and Employment Relations Association in May 2020.

SPECIAL AWARDS FOR PUBLICATIONS

"The Professionalization of Cyberinfrastructure Personnel," a paper by Berente, N., et al., including **Joel Cutcher-Gershenfeld**, received the Workforce Track Best Paper Award at the Association for Computing Machinery/Practice and Experience in Advanced Research Computing 2019 Conference, held in Chicago, July 28-Aug. 1, 2019.

Serah Nthenge received a Distinguished Dissertation Award from Villanova University for her dissertation "Perinatal Experiences of Women With Physical Disabilities."

"Sustaining and Spreading Quality Improvement: Decreasing Intrapartum Malpractice Risk," a paper by **Palmira Santos, PhD'01**, **Anju Joglekar** and **Kristen Faughnan**, et al., received the Writing Excellence Award from the American Society for Healthcare Risk Management.

CAREER ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Ilhom Akobirshoev, PhD'15, received the New Investigator Award from the Disability Section of the American Public Health Association.

Hussaini Zandam and **Eun Ha Namkung** were selected for the National Institute for Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research-sponsored Young Investigators Panel at the American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine (ACRM). They presented their research at ACRM's 2020 Annual Conference in October 2020.

FELLOWSHIPS

Janet Boguslaw was a 2019-2020 Louis O. Kelso Fellow and Wawa, Inc. Fellow at the Institute for the Study of Employee Ownership and Profit Sharing, School of Management and Labor Relations, Rutgers University.

Pamina Firchow was awarded a 2020 Fulbright grant to Colombia to work on her NSF-funded research projects and teach in the peacebuilding master's program at the Universidad de los Andes in Bogotá.

CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEES

Rachel Sayko Adams, PhD'13, was named to the International Planning Committee for the 14th World Congress on Brain Injury, to be held in Dublin, Ireland, in March 2021.

OTHER RECOGNITION

Sandy Ho was named a 2020 Champion of Pride by *The Advocate* magazine.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

OP-EDS

Anita Hill published an op-ed in *Variety* on May 13, 2020, “Anita Hill: Why a Safe Working Environment Also Includes Protections Against Abuses.”

Pamela Joshi, PhD’01, authored an April 22, 2020, op-ed in *The Conversation*, “Taking Advantage of Unpaid Leave Can Increase the Chances That Workers Will Face Economic Hardship.”

Robert Kuttner’s op-ed, “What America Can Do to Fight Mass Unemployment,” was published in *The New York Times* on April 20, 2020.

Ari Ne’eman published an op-ed in the March 23, 2020, issue of *The New York Times*, titled “‘I Will Not Apologize for My Needs:’ Even in a Crisis, Doctors Should Not Abandon the Principle of Nondiscrimination.”

David Weil authored the following op-eds:

- “Call Uber and Lyft Drivers What They Are: Employees,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 5, 2019.
- “Why Americans Don’t Know About Their Right to Paid Sick Leave” (with M. Patricia Smith and Chris Lu), *Newsweek*, May 4, 2020.

HIGH-PROFILE MEDIA COVERAGE

Lurie Institute Visiting Scholar Ari Ne’eman on NPR during COVID-19

March 23, 2020: In “People With Disabilities Say Rationing Care Policies Violate Civil Rights,” Ne’eman says, “Our civil rights laws don’t go away in the midst of a pandemic. ... We don’t suddenly replace the ADA or other civil rights laws with generalized utilitarianism the moment things get difficult.”

Stuart Altman appeared on the Feb. 25, 2020, edition of WBUR’s CommonHealth, “How 2020 Democrats’ Health Care Plans Would Rock Hospital Budgets in Mass.”

Janet Boguslaw's report, "Building the Assets of Low- and Moderate-Income Workers and Their Families: The Role of Employee Ownership," was cited in a Jan. 20, 2020, Center for American Progress article, "Building Workers' Wealth in Cities and States: State and Local Policies to Support Employee Ownership and Broad-Based Profit-Sharing."

Joseph Caldwell was quoted in a Nov. 13, 2019, article in Politico, "The Health Care System Isn't Ready to Replace Aging Caregivers."

Joel Cutcher-Gershenfeld was interviewed on the Aug. 26, 2019, edition of the CityScope podcast, "Fab Labs and Maker Spaces in the New Economy."

Susan Eaton's research was discussed at length in a July 8, 2019, *Washington Post* article, "What Black Students Who Were Bused Said About Their Experiences."

Jody Hoffer Gittel appeared on the May 8, 2020, edition of "COVID Chronicles With Jenny Rudolph," a podcast sponsored by the Center for Medical Simulation, Harvard Medical School.

Traci Green's work with the Police Assisted Addiction and Recovery Initiative was discussed in a Dec. 24, 2019, article in *The Boston Globe*, "Mass. to Open Monitoring Centers for Drug Users Who Overdose."

Anita Hill was a speaker at Fortune's Most Powerful Women Summit, held in Washington, D.C., in October 2019. Her remarks were covered in an Oct. 22, 2019, segment on CNN, "Anita Hill Says Voters Need to Press 2020 Democrats on Gender Violence."

Andrew Kolodny was quoted in the following:

- A Sept. 9, 2019, article in *The Guardian*, "OxyContin Maker Filing for Bankruptcy May Shed Light on Wrongdoings."

- An Oct. 1, 2019, article in *The New York Times*, "D.E.A. Let Opioid Production Surge as Crisis Grew, Justice Dept. Says."

- A Nov. 25, 2019, article in *The New York Times*, "A 'Rare Case Where Racial Biases' Protected African-Americans."

Robert Kuttner discussed his book, "The Stakes: 2020 and the Survival of American Democracy," on Public Radio Tulsa on Sept. 6, 2019.

Monika Mitra was quoted in a Nov. 26, 2019, article in CtWatchdog, "Most OB-GYN Practices Fall Short in Caring for Women With Disabilities."

Clemens Noelke was quoted in an April 12, 2020, *Al Jazeera* article, "Could Coronavirus-Induced Recession Be More Deadly Than Disease?"

Sharon Reif, PhD'02, was quoted in a Jan. 16, 2020, Vox piece, "Methadone Can Help People Beat Opioid Addiction — If They Can Afford It."

The **Sillerman Center for the Advancement of Philanthropy's** Social Justice Funder Opportunity Brief, "Equity, Inclusion and Diversity in Arts and Culture Philanthropy," by **Maryse Pearce, MBA/MPP'18**, and **Susan Eaton**, was discussed in a Jan. 15, 2020, *Inside Philanthropy* article, "With a Music Prize, A Philanthropist Takes on Inequities in Creative Youth Development."

David Weil was quoted in the following:

- A Dec. 20, 2019, WBUR segment, "Holiday Hustle: Riding Along With an Amazon Flex Driver."

- A Feb. 26, 2020, article on Marketplace, "NLRB Rule Could Make It Harder for Millions of Workers to Organize."

- An April 14, 2020, article in *The Boston Globe*, "Coronavirus Pandemic Shines a Light on Gig Workers' Scant Protections."

- An April 16, 2020, segment on CNBC, "What It's Like to Be a Delivery Person During the Coronavirus Pandemic."

HOSTING A LARGE EVENT/CONFERENCE WITH EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

The **MA Program in Conflict Resolution and Coexistence (COEX)** presented an online forum, “COVID-19 Lessons From the Korean Peninsula and Beyond: Enhancing National, Regional and Global Cooperation,” on May 8, 2020. Panelists included Dr. Jerome Kim, director of the International Vaccine Institute, and Dr. Michael VanRooyen, director of the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative. Yonghyon Kim, Consul General of the Republic of Korea in Boston, presented the opening remarks.

Joel Cutcher-Gershenfeld co-organized a COVID-19 webinar series for the Labor and Employment Relations Association that drew over 1,400 participants. Topics included “Dealing With COVID-19 Issues in the Workplace: Jobs, Safety, Pay, Benefits and More”; “Virtual Dispute Resolution During the COVID-19 Pandemic”; “On the Front Lines in the COVID-19 Pandemic”; “Low Wage and Gig Work During the COVID-19 Pandemic”; “Meatpacking Industry and COVID-19”; and “Employment and Unemployment During the COVID-19 Pandemic.”

The **Institute for Child, Youth and Family Policy** co-hosted, with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM), a national convening of over 100 policy experts and practitioners in November 2019. The event discussed implementing the NASEM Roadmap to Reducing Child Poverty in a way that ensures racial/ethnic equity and addresses the disproportionate rates of poverty among children of immigrants and Black, Hispanic and Native American children. In addition to organizing and co-hosting the event, ICYFP Director **Dolores Acevedo-Garcia** and Senior Scientist **Pamela Joshi, PhD ’01**, served as panelists.

The **Lurie Institute for Disability Policy** presented its annual Lurie Distinguished Lecture in November 2019. Paul Shattuck, director of the Life Course Outcomes Research Program, A.J. Drexel Autism Institute, Drexel University, presented “Using Population Data to Inform Autism Policy in the U.S.”

The **Lurie Institute for Disability Policy** hosted the following webinars:

- March 2020, “Today’s Little People Parenting Perspective: Parenting From Newborn to Young Adults,” with Laura Stout, Kelly Lee and Francisca Winston.
- April 2020, “Supporting the Lives of Children of Disabled Parents,” with Kara Ayers and Erin Andrews, Disabled Parenting Project.
- June 2020, “Long-Term Services and Supports Coordinator: A Promising Practice to Advance Independent Living Philosophy and Recovery Principles Within Integrated Care,” with Dennis Heaphy, Disability Policy Consortium, and Bill Henning, Boston Center for Independent Living.

In September 2019, the **Massachusetts Health Policy Forum (MHPF)** brought together over 300 health policy leaders to discuss “Addressing the Opioid Crisis in Small and Rural Communities in Western Massachusetts” at UMass Amherst. The issue brief, co-authored by MHPF Executive Director **Michael Doonan, PhD ’02**, and **Constance Horgan**, director of the **Institute for Behavioral Health**, was produced in collaboration with the **Brandeis-Harvard NIDA Center to Improve System Performance of Substance Use Disorder Treatment** and the **Opioid Policy Research Collaborative**.

The **Relational Coordination Research Collaborative (RCRC)**, under the leadership of Executive Director **Jody Hoffer Gittel**, organized and hosted the Ninth Annual RCRC Roundtable, “Designing the Future: The Science of Intentional Change,” held in Denver, October 2019.

RCRC held a series of webinars during early 2020, including:

- February 2020, “Addressing Social Determinants of Health: A Multi-Stakeholder Coordination Challenge,” with Bill Gunn, NH Region 1 Integrated Delivery Network; Erin Fair Taylor and Sally Retecki, Care Oregon; and **Shyamal Sharma**, Visiting Research Scholar, RCRC.
- June 2020, “Organizational Resilience in the COVID-19 Crisis and Beyond,” with Kenny Cole, Ochsner Health; Rushika Fernandopulle, Iora Health; Alice Andrews, Value Institute for Health and Care; Heather Gilmartin, Denver/Seattle Center for Innovation, Veterans Health Administration; and **Jennifer Perloff, PhD’06, Institute on Healthcare Systems**.

The **Sillerman Center for the Advancement of Philanthropy**, under the leadership of Director **Susan Eaton** and Assistant Director **Sheryl Seller ’11, MA’13**, designed, organized and hosted a major convening of the nation’s University-Based Philanthropy Serving Organizations in collaboration with United Philanthropy Forum. Susan Eaton delivered welcoming remarks at the gathering, held at the Ford Foundation, New York City, in August 2019.

RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS TO A POLITICAL PLATFORM, POLICY PROPOSAL OR GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE/COMMITTEE

Dean David Weil named to National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine committee: “Contingent Work and Alternate Work Arrangements”

The committee is tasked with measuring the size of the workforce in traditional employment compared to those doing contingent work or gig work to better understand the implications for wages, working conditions and pathways of opportunity.

In April 2020, **Dolores Acevedo-Garcia**, director of the **Institute for Child, Youth and Family Policy (ICYFP)**, was invited to serve on the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) COVID-19 Health Equity Advisory Group. This body advises Commissioner Monica Bharel and DPH on health equity issues related to and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and provides suggestions on solutions to be implemented at all levels.

ICYFP’s Child Opportunity Index was cited extensively by multiple witnesses, including Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, in the House Oversight Committee’s hearing on proposed changes to the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule, held on Feb. 5, 2020.

Responding to a policymaker’s request, **Pamela Joshi, PhD’01**, conducted an analysis of eligibility expansion of the Family and Medical Leave Act and the implications for racial/ethnic equity for a House Workforce Protections Subcommittee hearing on Feb. 11, 2020.

Rebecca Loya, PhD’12, presented “Employment Capital and Financial Well-Being: Can Non-Income Employer-Provided Benefits Be Leveraged for Financial Health?” at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Financial Well-Being Research Conference on Nov. 13, 2019.

Monika Mitra presented “Pregnancy Complications and Outcomes Among Women With Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities” at the Pregnancy and Maternal Conditions That Increase Risk of Morbidity and Mortality Workshop, sponsored by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, May 2020.

In April and June 2020, **Kate Giapponi Schneider, PhD’16**, and **Pamela Joshi, PhD’01**, wrote two policy memos detailing cost and implementation options of child care subsidy tele-reauthorization for their state research partner, the Massachu-

setts Department of Early Education and Care, that provided timely guidance to the state during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Gail Strickler, MMHS'94, PhD'07, Peter Kreiner, et al. authored "Opioid Prescribing Behaviors — Prescription Behavior Surveillance System, 11 States, 2010-2016," which was published in the Centers for Disease Control's *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report Surveillance Summary*, 69(1), Jan. 31, 2020.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In May and June 2020, **Joel Cutcher-Gershenfeld** and **Maria Madson** each served as facilitators at internal professional development workshops on "Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Social Impact Operations" for staff and leadership of the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition.

Marion Howard, MA'04, professor emerita, began the second phase of her research project, "Forgotten Voices: Ocean Identity and Heritage of the Raizal People of Colombia's San Andres Archipelago," in September 2019. The purpose of Phase 2 is to apply the knowledge gained from local participatory research to advance indigenous rights and impact social policy.

Tufts Health Plan Foundation awarded a two-year, \$100,000 grant to Waltham Connections for Healthier Aging (Connections), led by **Walter Leutz, PhD'81,** professor emeritus. Connections' aim is to make aging services and activities in Waltham, Mass., more inclusive of immigrant, low-income and isolated seniors, and the organization will use the grant to offer an online Senior Civic Academy and a Healthy Aging Summit.

In October 2019, **Joanne Nicholson** was an invited panelist and disability scholar at the Massachusetts premiere screening of "Orchestrating Change," a film about the Me2/Orchestra, the

world's only orchestra for people living with mental illness. The screening and panel were sponsored by Mass Humanities and the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Joanne Nicholson, in collaboration with colleagues from the Harvard Countway Library at Harvard Medical School, launched the Mental Health Bridges website in spring 2020. The website, funded by the National Library of Medicine/National Institutes of Health, focuses on online health literacy skills for individuals with mental illness and co-occurring physical health conditions.

Rajesh Sampath was a guest speaker at Harvard Hillel, Cambridge, Mass., in August 2019. His talk was titled "The Philosophy of Judaism, Antisemitism and Derrida's Deconstruction."

Laurence Simon, along with Mark Brimhall-Vargas, Brandeis' chief diversity officer and vice president for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, co-chaired the task force that led to Brandeis President Ron Liebowitz's announcement that caste discrimination would be incorporated into the university's non-discrimination policies — making Brandeis the first university in the United States to do so. The decision received praise from presidents of universities in India, the former chief economist of the World Bank, major figures in philosophy and social policy around the U.S. and abroad, and the Dalai Lama. *Inside Higher Ed* covered the university's decision in its Dec. 20, 2019, article "Prohibiting Caste Prejudice on Campus," in which Simon was quoted.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

PUBLICATIONS

Dembo, R., Mitra, M., Akobirshoev, I., and Manning, S. (2019). "Symptom Sequelae Following Violence Against Youth With Disabilities." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. Published online Nov. 26, 2019.

Ma, S., Shepard, D.S., Ritter, G.A., Martell, R.E., and **Thomas, C.P.** (2020). "The Impact of the Introduction of Generic Aromatase Inhibitors on Adherence to Hormonal Therapy Over the Full Course of Five-Year Treatment for Breast Cancer." *Cancer*. Published online June 2, 2020.

Powell, R.M., Parish, S.L., **Mitra, M.,** and **Nicholson, J.** (2020). "Responding to the Legal Needs of Parents With Psychiatric Disabilities: Insights From Parent Interviews." *Law and Inequality: A Journal of Theory and Practice*. 38(1), pp. 69-114.

Reisner, S.L., Sava, L.M., Menino, D.D., Perrotti, J., Barnes, T.N., Humphrey, D.L., **Nikitin, R.V.,** and Earnshaw, V.A. (2020). "Addressing LGBTQ Student Bullying in Massachusetts Schools: Perspectives of LGBTQ Students and School Health Professionals." *Prevention Science*. 21(3), pp. 408-421.

Shields, M.C., Ritter, G.A., and Busch, A.B. (2020). "Electronic Health Information Exchange at Discharge From Inpatient Psychiatric Care in Acute Care Hospitals." *Health Affairs*. 39(6), pp. 958-967.

Stuurman, Z. (2020). "Policing Inequality and the Inequality of Policing: A Look at the Militarisation of Policing Around the World, Focusing on Brazil and South Africa." *South African Journal of International Affairs*. 27(1), pp. 43-66.

PRESENTATIONS

Jeffers, M., and **Stewart, S.** "Measuring Micro-Advancements: A Group-Based Trajectory Analysis of Healthcare Workers' Career Pathways." Presented at the Association for Public

“If the U.S. is going to get through this pandemic with the least amount of fatalities possible, we must work together to protect everyone. Ableism has no place now or ever.”

ROBYN POWELL, PhD’20, IN THE APPEAL

Policy Analysis and Management Fall Research Conference, Denver, November 2019.

Kharisma, D.D. “Elderly Outreaching and Social Protection Reform During COVID-19: A Proposal From Indonesia.” Presented at international webinar on “The New Normal: Elderly Life and Care Post COVID-19,” hosted by the Ministry of National Development Planning, Indonesia; Asian Development Bank; and the Economic Research Institute for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and East Asia, May 2020.

Kreider, B. “Labor’s New Kids on the Block: Can Immigrant Worker Centers and Unions Collabo-

rate to Improve Low-Wage Work?” Presented at the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management Regional Student Conference, Washington, D.C. (virtual), April 2020.

Kroeger, T., and Wright, G. “The Role of Entrepreneurship on the Racial Wealth Gap.” Presented at the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management Fall Research Conference, Denver, November 2019.

Mazel, S., Hennig, S., Zisman-Ilani, Y., and Nicholson, J. “Exploring Mothers’ Perceptions of Substance Use and Substance Use Treatment.” Presented at 2019 Addiction Health Services

Research Conference, Park City, Utah, October 2019.

Powell, R. "Supporting Disabled Parents and Their Families: Perspectives and Recommendations From Parents, Attorneys and Child Welfare Professionals." Presented at Practice and Research Together (PART) Canada (virtual), May 2020.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Sam Hyun, MPP'21, joins Sen. Ed Markey for conversation on discrimination: "We are in this together"

April 14, 2020: Hyun, a member of the Massachusetts Asian American Commission, joined Sen. Markey on Facebook Live to discuss coronavirus-driven racism against Asian Americans and the need to stand up against discrimination toward all marginalized groups.

PhD candidate **Benjamin Kreider** co-organized "The Impact of COVID-19 on African American Workers," a webinar hosted by the International Labor Organization Office for the United States and the Washington, D.C., chapter of the Labor and Employment Relations Association. Fifty attendees from the U.S. House of Representatives, Department of Labor, universities and embassies participated.

Robyn Powell, PhD'20, appeared on the Nov. 25, 2019, edition of WNYC's *The Takeaway*, "Why Disabled Workers Can Get Paid Less Than Minimum Wage."

Robyn Powell, PhD'20, published an op-ed in *The Appeal* on March 25, 2020, titled "The Coronavirus Pandemic Has Brought Out Society's Alarming Disregard for People With Disabilities."

Robyn Powell, PhD'20, helped organize a May 6, 2020, call in which Sen. Elizabeth Warren spoke with Massachusetts residents with disabilities about COVID-19.

Ziyanda Stuurman, MA SID'20, published an op-ed in the July 15, 2019, edition of the *South Africa Mail & Guardian* titled "Military Intervention Is Not a Crime-Fighting Solution."

Ziyanda Stuurman, MA SID'20, was a guest speaker on South African radio station SA-FM in a June 2, 2020, discussion of the deaths of George Floyd and Collins Khosa and police brutality in South Africa.

AWARDS AND HONORS

PhD student **Fernanda Escobar, MPP'15**, was appointed to the advisory panel of the Board of Directors of the Midas Collaborative, which helps to advance the financial security of low- and moderate-income residents across Massachusetts.

Fernanda Escobar, MPP'15, received funding from the Feinstein International Center at the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Tufts University, for "Psychological Support for Deported Immigrant Kids and Their Families in San Miguel, El Salvador, Fellowship Program." The program aims to bring students from the psychology program of Gerardo Barrios University in San Miguel to provide psychological therapy to deported immigrant children and their families.

Benjamin Kreider was elected a board member of the Washington, D.C., chapter of the Labor and Employment Relations Association.

Alexander Lebovitz, MPP student, received a Rappaport Public Policy Summer Fellowship from the Harvard Kennedy School.

PhD candidate **Ruslan Nikitin** was awarded a competitive Social Networks and Health Fellowship from the Duke Network Analysis Center at Duke University, Durham, N.C.



Food insecurity causes unique stress in mothers, long-term effects for children:
Maia Hyary, PhD'20

BY KAREN SHIH

For families that are food insecure — without regular access to affordable, nutritious food — mothers experience a unique stress burden. This is especially true for single mothers, who are twice as likely to be food insecure.

“Mothers are typically the managers of food in the household. They go shopping, they manage



the budget, so they take on the stress and responsibility. If they have limited resources, that stress increases,” says Maia Hyary, PhD'20. “Mothers in food-insecure households adopt coping mechanisms to protect their

children. They'll forgo their own medications and eat less healthy food to feed their children first.”

These behaviors, combined with the biological consequences of stress-driven cortisol production, can lead to weight gain and poor health outcomes. Research shows a correlation between food insecurity and obesity in women, particularly mothers.

For her dissertation, Hyary examined two key questions: How does maternal stress affect the relationship between food insecurity and maternal weight? And how does maternal stress affect a child's likelihood of being food insecure as an adult?

She used a nationally representative longitudinal data set from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, focusing on stressors such as family disruption, mental and physical health, financial stress, lack of emotional and practical support, and changes to household composition.

She hypothesized that stress would exacerbate weight gain among food-insecure mothers. But she found that particular stressors had the opposite effect: Mothers who became food inse-

During COVID-19, “mothers are taking on more household chores and child care in addition to working full time. ... That makes these policy changes more critical than ever.”

MAIA HYARY, PHD’20

cure over a two-year period and whose number of at-home children decreased, possibly as a result of state removal or informal arrangements with family members, lost more weight than mothers with no changes in food security status or at-home children. Another key stressor was falling behind on bills, which made food-insecure mothers less likely to gain a significant amount of weight.

“This study suggests that the correlation between food insecurity and obesity may not be as prevalent among mothers experiencing dire financial conditions. The combination of maternal stress and the inability to purchase sufficient food contributes to significant maternal weight loss,” Hyary says.

She also found a direct relationship between food insecurity in childhood and adulthood. If a food-insecure mother borrowed money from friends or relatives, her children were twice as likely to be food insecure in adulthood as children in food-insecure households whose mothers did not borrow money.

Hyary recommends that policymakers expand two federal benefit programs as children get older and have increased nutritional needs: WIC (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children) and SNAP (Supplemental

Nutrition Assistance Program). Food-insecurity resources should also be widely distributed in pediatric and OB-GYN offices.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Hyary’s dissertation research and recommendations are particularly relevant. Recent studies from the Urban Institute and Northeastern University show food insecurity has risen as much as double pre-pandemic levels.

In addition, “there’s disproportionate stress for all mothers during the coronavirus pandemic. Mothers are taking on more household chores and child care in addition to working full time, so that increases stress levels, even more so in income-limited households,” she says. “That makes these policy changes more critical than ever.”



Revealing health disparities for people with disabilities:
Ilhom Akobirshoev, PhD'15

BY KAREN SHIH

Ilhom Akobirshoev, PhD'15, research scientist at the Lurie Institute for Disability Policy, received Heller's Early Career Investigator Award in 2020,



honoring his work on pregnancy and birth outcomes for women with disabilities, and his collaborations with Heller researchers in global and behavioral health. A native of Tajikistan, he focused initially on maternal and child

health before adding a focus on disability when he came to Heller for his doctorate in 2010 and joined Lurie in 2013.

HOW DID YOU BECOME INTERESTED IN DISABILITY POLICY, AND WHAT ARE YOUR MAJOR PROJECTS TODAY?

The most vulnerable populations are close to my heart. They are the ones who need interventions and the attention of policymakers. Disability was a natural fit. Now my interest is the intersectionality of disability and maternal and child health, disability and race and ethnicity, and other disparities.

Right now I'm working on a National Institutes of Health-funded project, looking at birth and pregnancy experiences and outcomes for women who are deaf and hard of hearing (DHH).

Women with disabilities have the same rights and aspirations to have children. From a social justice perspective, you expect women with any disability to have equal access to health care services and the same attention from health care providers, to make sure they have a happy and healthy pregnancy and childbirth experience. In an ideal world, low birth weight and preterm birth would be spread across different types of populations equally. But DHH women are at a much higher risk for those outcomes. Through qualitative interviews with patients and health care

“We know there are health care disparities based on race and ethnicity, and disparities because of disability. If a child has both, we try to learn: How do the two risks add to each other?”

ILHOM AKOBIKSHOEV, PhD’15

providers, we found that there were literacy, communication and training issues.

We’ve published four papers so far, including in *Obstetrics & Gynecology* (aka The Green Journal), the leading journal in the field. And we’ve also helped develop guidelines for providers, especially OB-GYNs, to inform them about adverse pregnancy risks for DHH patients and how providers can work to prevent those. We’re partnering with the American College of Obstetrics to distribute these guidelines, and we’re also trying to educate medical schools about the importance of training students with increased exposure to patients with disabilities.

WHAT ARE SOME OTHER STUDIES YOU’RE LEADING RIGHT NOW?

I’m working on a grant-funded project looking at the health care experiences of children in Boston. We know there are health care disparities based on race and ethnicity, and disparities because of disability. If a child has both — a disability and is part of a minority population — we try to learn: How do the two risks add to each other?

We found that having a disability and being from a minority group has a compounding effect on the adverse health care outcomes for children in Boston. Boston is the mecca of the best hospitals in the nation, but these children are not benefiting from these stellar health care institutions. These are the children who are most in need, so if there

are any programs created to reduce health care disparities, these kids should be the first target.

We partnered with the Boston Public Health Commission on this work, and three of their staff members are co-authors on the paper that is being published. We’ve presented our findings at two conferences, and they’re disseminating our study through their website.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS AT HELLER?

This is very close to my heart — we want to break the silos and combine our comparative advantages.

We’re partnering with Professor A.K. Nandakumar, director of the Institute for Global Health and Development at Heller and chief economist at the Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator, looking at how HIV and disability relates to intimate partner violence in sub-Saharan Africa.

In addition, I’m also part of the INROADS project (Intersecting Research on Opioid Misuse, Addiction and Disability Services), with the Institute for Behavioral Health. We are looking at emergency department visits for opioid use disorder among deaf and hard-of-hearing adults.

We hope that studies such as these will continue informing policy and decisions to reduce disparities based on disability type.

HELLER
RESEARCH
BY THE
NUMBERS

RESEARCH ACTIVITY
JULY 1, 2019 -
JUNE 30, 2020

166

NEW PROPOSALS

81%*

FUNDING HIT RATE

170

ACTIVE PROJECTS

TOTAL FUNDING:

\$19.1

MILLION

FUNDERS INCLUDE: CENTERS
FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND
PREVENTION, NATIONAL
INSTITUTES OF HEALTH, U.S.
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE,
W.K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION,
WORLD BANK

*BASED ON PROPOSALS WITH
DECISIONS AS OF 6/30/2020

NEW FACULTY AND SENIOR RESEARCHERS

TRACI GREEN
PROFESSOR AND DIRECTOR,
OPIOID POLICY RESEARCH
COLLABORATIVE, INSTITUTE
FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

PAMINA FIRCHOW
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
OF COEXISTENCE AND
CONFLICT; CO-FOUNDER,
EVERYDAY PEACE
INDICATORS

JOSEPH CALDWELL
DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY
LIVING POLICY CENTER,
LURIE INSTITUTE FOR
DISABILITY POLICY

SANGEETA TYAGI
SENIOR SCIENTIST,
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AND MANAGEMENT

415 SOUTH STREET
WALTHAM, MA 02453-2728
781-736-3820
HELLER.BRANDEIS.EDU

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