

Research / Action

Diverse Data Samples Drive Social Change



Featuring:

Addressing human trafficking at home and abroad •
Education in a multicultural democracy • Advancing
positive youth development • Year in review

Shaping a
Better World
through
Research
& Action

**Wellesley
Centers for
Women**

Research \ Action Report

annual report 2021

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The Wellesley
Centers for Women
is a program of
Wellesley College

From the Executive Director

A world that is good for women is good for everyone.™

The Wellesley Centers for Women is an academic research and action institute at Wellesley College that is focused on women and gender and driven by social change. Our mission is to advance gender equality, social justice, and human wellbeing through high-quality research, theory, and action programs.

Production of this report was supported in part by the Mary Joe Gaw Frug Fund, an endowed gift to the Wellesley Centers for Women.

At the Wellesley Centers for Women, we envision a world of justice, peace, and wellbeing for women and girls, families and communities, in all their diversity around the globe. In order to move closer to achieving that vision, we need high-quality research based on data and sampling that represents all members of our global community.

Linda Charmaraman explains here how diverse data samples drive social change, through the lens of her work on youth, media, and wellbeing. By incorporating data from youth with diverse experiences, Charmaraman's research fills a gap in our understanding of how overlooked populations use technology in different ways. This helps us identify how parents, teachers, and other caring adults can support marginalized youth and help them thrive. The importance of considering diverse experiences is also a central facet of the work of **Sheron Fraser-Burgess**, a new visiting scholar at the Centers. Fraser-Burgess talks here about the central question that has propelled her work: How should a multicultural democracy educate its children for pluralism?

When we have better data on the experiences of marginalized people, we can take action to improve their lives in concrete ways. **Tracy R.G. Gladstone** received a new grant that will help prevent and treat depression in teens with disabilities, a population that has traditionally been underserved when it comes to mental health care. **LaShawnda Lindsay** received a grant from the National Science Foundation that will allow her to expand Black Girls Create, transforming how Black girls think about STEM through culturally responsive programming.

Diverse perspectives are also critical in the prevention of sexual exploitation. **Kate Price**, another visiting scholar who joined us this year, talks about her work to



humanize survivors of human trafficking, many of whom are poor kids, children of color, and foster care system-involved minors. We are also part of an international partnership with **Hon. Cynthia Blandford** and the University Consortium for Liberia to address human trafficking in Liberia. By working with the Liberian travel, tourism, and transportation sectors and utilizing the real-time knowledge of Liberian market women, we will build a foundation for effective local intervention. When we understand the culturally-specific challenges that Liberian trafficking victims face, we can design and implement culturally-situated policies and practices that work.

Finally, as some of you may know, **Open Circle** transitioned to a legacy program of the Wellesley Centers for Women this year. We are proud of the way that it launched social and emotional learning (SEL) into the national conversation, and SEL will continue to be central to our work as a key avenue to advance equity in education.

We believe in the power of data: to educate us about the world, to change our minds, and to drive social justice. Better research means better solutions to the critical problems facing our society today. Thank you for helping us shape a better world by harnessing the power of data. ■

Layli Maparyan, Ph.D.

Katherine Stone Kaufmann '67 Executive Director

Thank You

To our friends, supporters, funding partners, and colleagues—thank you for believing in our work. Your generosity supports **research that harnesses the power of data.**

We know there are many organizations worthy of your support during this unprecedented time, and we are so grateful that you have chosen to stand with us to improve the lives of women and girls, families and communities, in all their diversity around the world.

With you as our partner, we study the most pressing social issues and share our findings with policymakers, activists, and decision makers of all kinds so they can make evidence-based investments in policies, programs, and practices. **Better data means better solutions** to the critical problems facing our society today.

Thank you for making this work possible and for believing that **A World That Is Good for Women Is Good for Everyone.**[™]



2021

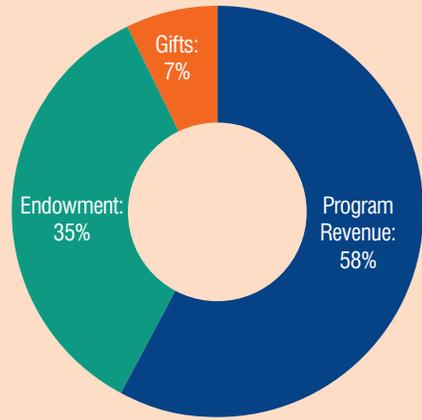
HIGHLIGHTS

from Fiscal Year 2021

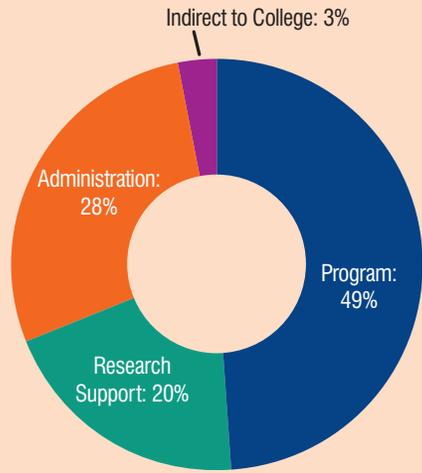
(July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021)

Fiscal Year 2021
Budget: \$5.5M*

*based on unaudited data



Revenue



Expenses

68

PUBLICATIONS
in book chapters,
journal articles,
and more

71

PRESENTATIONS
at virtual and
in-person events

109

MEDIA MENTIONS
and op-eds

38

ACTIVE RESEARCH PROJECTS

9

NEW RESEARCH PROJECTS

\$2.4M

IN GRANTS and contracts

1118

PRACTITIONERS & administrators
trained by the National
Institute on Out-of-School Time

175

PARTICIPANTS
from 93 institutions
trained by the National
SEED Project

715

GIFTS received

\$401K

IN DONATIONS

Humanizing Survivors of Human Trafficking

Kate Price, Ph.D., joined WCW as a visiting scholar in the summer of 2021. Over the next year, she will be completing a writing project on the commercial sexual exploitation of children in Appalachia.

You're no stranger to WCW! What is your history with the Centers?

I was a project associate for the **Jean Baker Miller Training Institute**, an action project of WCW at the time, before earning my doctorate in 2019. During that time, I focused on applying Relational-Cultural Theory to my ongoing work on the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC). I published the WCW working paper,

decisions to prohibit the arrest and prosecution of sexually exploited children for prostitution. In addition to continuing my human trafficking research, I am a part of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children Child Sex Trafficking Advisory Council. I wanted to return because WCW is my “academic home.” Executive Director **Layli Maparyan**, Ph.D., and Senior Scholar **Jean Kilbourne**, Ed.D., both pushed me “out of the nest” to get

my Ph.D. sooner than I thought I was ready (and I'm so glad they did!). Senior Research Scientist **Linda Williams**, Ph.D., has also been a mentor and was my external dissertation committee member. I am honored to be a part of this robust community of thought leaders dedicated to gender-based, intersectional scholarship.

States with more children at risk for commercial sexual exploitation are simultaneously more likely to criminalize them.

Source: Price, Kate A., “Defining Worthy Victims: State-Level Legislative Decisions to Prevent the Criminalization of Commercially Sexually Exploited Children in the United States” (2019). *Graduate Doctoral Dissertations*. 515. https://scholarworks.umb.edu/doctoral_dissertations/515

“Longing to Belong: Relational Risks and Resilience of Commercially Sexually Exploited Children in the U.S.” Shortly thereafter, anti-CSEC advocates utilized this research to successfully prevent the Florida State Legislature from passing a provision that would have involuntarily detained CSEC victims while they were receiving mental and physical health services.

What have you been up to since you left, and why did you decide to return?

I earned my doctorate in sociology at the University of Massachusetts Boston. I wrote my dissertation on state legislative

Tell us about the project you'll be working on during your time as a visiting scholar.

My project is investigating and publishing my history of being a survivor of family-controlled CSEC, particularly child sex trafficking and child sexual abuse imagery. An immediate member of my family sexually exploited me from infancy to early adolescence in Northern Appalachia during the 1970s and early 1980s. *Boston Globe* reporter Janelle Nanos and I have been collaborating on this project for nearly a decade. We have interviewed nearly 100

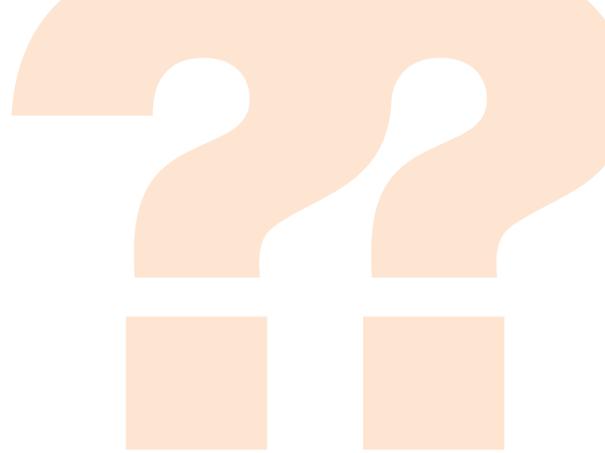
local officials, law enforcement, family members, friends, anti-human trafficking advocates, and journalists to corroborate the details of my trafficking history. This experience has been extremely difficult, but, ultimately, has helped me heal more deeply than I ever thought possible. The end products will be a feature *Globe Magazine* story and a book.

How have your personal experiences informed your research on CSEC?

I am extremely proud my research is survivor-led. Survivors need to be at the center of human trafficking research to inform how we design studies that incorporate their experiences navigating and, ultimately, surviving cycles of gender-based violence, dominance, and control that fuel juvenile and adult human trafficking. Further, most sexually exploited minors do not fit our current class-based, gendered, and racialized narrative of childhood being a time of “innocence.” For that reason, research needs to be survivor-centered so we can integrate their lived knowledge about the systemic interpersonal, economic, and health disparities and barriers that left them vulnerable to CSEC. These issues are important because histories of sexual abuse, neglect, and poverty are the leading risk factors for CSEC.

Why are victims of CSEC often arrested and prosecuted for prostitution, and what can be done to prevent that?

Many states, including Massachusetts, retain the right to arrest and prosecute



minors for prostitution. My research indicates that law enforcement and prosecutors advocate for this legislation so they can use the threat of arrest and/or prosecution as leverage if a sexually exploited minor is not being compliant in receiving support services or leaving their exploiter. This approach utilizes the very dynamics of dominance and control on which CSEC is predicated, which can retraumatize victims. These points are important because CSEC victims almost always have an extensive history of interpersonal trauma prior to and during exploitation. To prevent this threat of (or actual) arrest and/or prosecution for prostitution, we must pass trauma-informed legislation that provides wraparound CSEC-specific victim services as well as the appropriations necessary to provide this continuum of care. Healing trauma is a non-linear process that takes a lot of time.

What do most people not understand about CSEC?

In my experience, the biggest misconception about CSEC is that victims are either from abroad or are white girls kidnapped from leafy suburbs. However, poor kids, children of color, and foster care system-involved minors are the populations most vulnerable to CSEC. For example, my dissertation research indicates that states with more people living in areas of concentrated disadvantage—as measured by the percentage of those living in poverty, on

public assistance, unemployed, and other factors—are significantly less likely to pass legislation prohibiting the arrest and/or prosecution of sexually exploited minors for prostitution. Put simply, states with more children at risk for CSEC are simultaneously more likely to criminalize them. For that reason, addressing socioeconomic factors such as jobs, wages, comprehensive health-care, and housing, as well as strengthening the social safety net of mental and physical health services, is essential for preventing minors from being at risk of and criminalized for commercial sexual exploitation.

What do you hope will be the result of your writing project?

My intention is to be the woman I needed as a child. I want sexually exploited minors in my hometown area to know they matter, and what is happening to them is not their fault. I want to collaborate with local policymakers and officials to undo structural barriers and systemic discrimination that perpetuate CSEC in Appalachia. I want to work with local criminal justice agents and prosecutors to hold child sex abuse perpetrators, traffickers, and sex buyers to account, instead of blaming victims. I also want to raise awareness about the prevalence of intergenerational sex trafficking, particularly in poor communities. And I want to talk about the sexual exploitation of boys.

“My project is investigating and publishing my history of being a survivor of family-controlled commercial sexual exploitation, particularly child sex trafficking and child sexual abuse imagery.”

Male CSEC victims are often rendered invisible based on cultural misconceptions that males want sex all of the time and are only perpetrators of sexual violence.

Finally, I want people to be able to see that CSEC victims are all around us, hidden in plain sight. Multiple people recognized that something was wrong with me, but nearly everyone remained silent. A family friend recently told me she “almost said something once” to my exploiter because she suspected abuse. I also went to school in physical pain and with black eyes multiple times. Despite these warning signs, only one adult—my 7th grade teacher—ever approached me when I could not stop crying in her class. I did not have the words to explain what was happening, so I said nothing was wrong. But how I wish she would have kept asking questions. ▀



Kate Price, Ph.D., is a senior research associate at Advocates for Human Potential, a health and human services research and evaluation firm. Prior to her appointment as a visiting scholar at WCW, Price was a visiting scholar at the Women’s Studies Research Center at Brandeis University, where she worked on the same writing project.

International Partnership Aims to Prevent Human Trafficking in Liberia

Human trafficking in Liberia has long been a pernicious form of violence affecting women and children, especially those most economically vulnerable. It has been flagged as a critical issue by the United Nations, and has put a damper on business development and private sector investment in Liberia. In the U.S. Department of State's 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report, Liberia's status declined from its ranking the previous year, raising concerns. The government of Liberia has taken recent strides to address trafficking by forming an interagency commission on the matter. To bolster these efforts, WCW, with academic, NGO, and private sector partners, received funding from the U.S. Embassy in Monrovia to hold two workshops addressing the problem of human trafficking in Liberia.

"It takes a village to end trafficking, and it all begins with educating diverse stakeholders about the scale of the problem and how they can make a difference," said Executive Director **Layli Maparyan**, Ph.D. "With everyone working together—academia, the NGO sector, the private sector, government, and community-based organizations—we can turn the tide in Liberia."

In concert with its partners in the United States and Liberia, WCW will provide a valuable educational resource to students, professionals, and those who work in the markets in Liberia who have the power to deepen their awareness and take concrete actions that address trafficking. The program will be designed, developed, and delivered by WCW and the **University Consortium for Liberia (UCL)**—a nonprofit organization based in Atlanta, Georgia, that is dedicated to coordinating diverse academic efforts between Liberia and the global community.

Partners on the project include the University of Liberia and its new Gender



Hon. Cynthia Lynn Blandford, Founder and President of the UCL, (left) and WCW Executive Director Layli Maparyan (right) partnered to address human trafficking in Liberia.



"It takes a village to end trafficking, and it all begins with educating diverse stakeholders about the scale of the problem and how they can make a difference."

Studies Program; the Sustainable Market Women's Fund, a nonprofit organization in Liberia that focuses on improving the livelihoods of women who work in markets; as well as Brussels Airlines, the Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, and the Liberia Airport Authority. All are committed to reducing gender-based violence in Liberia.

"On behalf of the UCL Board, we are excited to collaborate with WCW and the leadership of Dr. Layli Maparyan, who is also a founding partner of the UCL," stated **Hon. Cynthia Lynn Blandford**, founder and president of the UCL.

The first two-day workshop, held virtually in early November 2021, focused on human trafficking in the travel and transportation sectors. It educated workers at all levels to

recognize the signs of trafficking, know how to respond and report, and understand how everyone can help end trafficking.

The second two-day workshop, slated for mid-spring 2022 in Liberia, will focus on human trafficking affecting women who work in the markets and their families.

A component of this workshop will be the development of a

community-based service-learning project on gender-based violence, which will link University of Liberia students and faculty with market women.

Because trafficking occurs in a complex social and cultural context and cannot be sustainably redressed in isolation, this project will help identify key factors and potential sites of intervention on which future anti-trafficking efforts can be built in local communities, aided by UCL partnerships. ■



Research Scientist Testifies at Hearing on Title IX Changes



“It is critically important for the Biden administration to change the Title IX rules promulgated by the prior administration not only to assure women’s equal access to education, but also to contribute to a change in the culture [regarding] sexual violence, physical abuse, and sexual harassment of women and girls.”

This year, the Biden administration began overhauling the Title IX rules implemented by the Trump administration on how colleges and universities respond to sexual misconduct. When the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights announced it would hold a hearing in June 2021 inviting comments on these rules, Senior Research Scientist **Linda M. Williams, Ph.D.**, was perfectly positioned to offer her input.

Williams recently completed a study of college responses to sexual assault on campus, along with colleagues **April Pattavina, Ph.D.**, **Alison Cares, Ph.D.**, **Nan Stein, Ed.D.**, and **Mary Frederick**, funded by the National Institute of Justice of the U.S. Department of Justice. She has a thorough understanding of procedures colleges have in place, challenges they face, and concerns held by Title IX coordinators across the country. She also has more than 40 years of experience studying gender-based violence.

On June 11, Williams testified at the virtual public hearing. “It is critically important for the Biden administration to change the Title IX rules promulgated by the prior administration not only to assure women’s equal access to education, but also to contribute to a change in the culture that, currently, at best minimizes and at worst encourages sexual violence, physical abuse, and sexual harassment of women and girls,” she said.

Williams noted that among other issues, the Trump-era regulations were misguided in their requirement that colleges hold live disciplinary hearings during which those who have been sexually assaulted and those accused of assaulting them present live testimony and can be cross-examined. Such a process is litigious and adversarial, and

creates an opportunity for more personal attacks than are present even in the criminal justice system, while pushing colleges to behave like that system.

Williams pointed out that the criminal legal system is rarely effective in achieving justice for victims of sexual assault. Requirements for colleges to adopt criminal justice-like procedures have a chilling effect on reporting and help-seeking; few complaints move forward, and the safety of students and their access to an education is further jeopardized. A criminal justice model also does not make sense for colleges, whose mission is to educate not adjudicate.

In the course of their research on 969 colleges across the U.S., Williams and her team spoke to dozens of Title IX coordinators, many of whom felt strongly that the way they

handle sexual assault cases—including sanctioning—should be in part an educational process. In her testimony, Williams noted that addressing complaints by holding hearings and cross-examinations does not fit with that mission

of education, and it is also inconsistent with how colleges handle other violations of student conduct codes.

“Educational institutions must be held responsible for ensuring safe campuses that are conducive to learning and thriving for all their members, and most institutions take this responsibility very seriously,” said Williams. “Decisions to amend these policies must consider rigorous, peer-reviewed research to ensure that women are given equal access to education.”

To read Williams’ full testimony, visit www.wcwonline.org/researchandaction



Diverse Data Samples Drive Social Change

When a social science researcher begins to plan out a study, they often need to find a sample of research subjects from whom to gather data. Maybe they need people to take a survey; maybe they need to observe a group's interactions. But how do they find these people?

Many use “convenience sampling,” a method of taking a sample from a group that is easy for them to contact or reach. They might send an email to their university department looking for participants, or post something on their Facebook page that's visible to their family and friends.

The problem is that samples drawn from these networks tend to be homogeneous and not representative of the general population. If you're a straight, white, cisgender woman, it's likely that many of the people you know are too. And if you work at a major research university, it's likely that the sample you gather will be heavily white, college-educated, and economically

“...when you draw your data from a non-diverse sample of people, your results will not represent the larger population in terms of gender, race and ethnicity, or social class.”

advantaged. Convenience sampling has been a major concern in social science departments for a long time because of its over-reliance on WEIRD populations: Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic. But most of the world is not WEIRD, and when you

draw your data from a non-diverse sample of people, your results will not represent the larger population in terms of gender, race and ethnicity, or social class.

Failure to recruit and retain study participants that represent the larger population is a social justice issue and an equity issue. We need culturally sensitive programming and support services tailored to vulnerable groups, but we cannot do that without robust data on those groups.

In my field of digital media and adolescent wellbeing, most research to date has been conducted on white and college samples. In addition, most research on cultural, racial, and economic differences focuses on access to the internet, mobile phones, and favorite social media sites, rather than how youth from different marginalized groups actually use technology.

This deepens the knowledge gap in understanding how overlooked populations—such as racial/ethnic

minorities, sexual and gender minorities, and other vulnerable adolescent populations—may be not only accessing digital media in different ways but also using and repurposing it to subvert dominant mainstream narratives. Unlike the more passive mainstream media of the 20th century like television, social media allows users to mold their identities as they choose what to post and who to connect with. Given that this identity-building piece is so unique to this medium, using a sample that doesn't exemplify diverse identities silences important voices that would help us better understand these digital worlds.

Luckily, it is possible to do better sampling that yields more generalizable data. In my research, I've found that school- and community-based partnerships can help me reach more diverse samples in terms of racial and ethnic minorities, sexual and gender minorities, economically disadvantaged youth, and neurodiverse youth. When you sample students from a public school system with high participation rates (80% or higher), your data will likely reflect the demographic diversity of those communities. Because I often focus on how subgroups of youth are affected differently by social technology, I require a minimum threshold of diversity in my samples; therefore, I intentionally seek out and partner with school systems and communities that reflect the diversity in our state and in our country.

That being said, researchers can also use oversampling and purposive sampling methods to recruit members of subgroups that are underrepresented in the general population, so that their voices and perspectives are not lost in the shuffle. This could include seeking out schools that specialize in neurodiverse students if you want to examine differences in cognitively diverse students, or community-based organizations that focus on LGBTQ+ youth in order to find more transgender students in your study of gender-diverse youth. These extra steps may require additional time and resources to reach your pool of potential participants, but may be the most essential step on a journey to understand how experiences are truly divergent across subgroups and microcultures.



Young LGBTQ+ adolescents were significantly more likely than heterosexual peers to report that they join online communities to feel less alone.

Source: Charmaraman, L., Hodes, R., & Richer, A. M. (2021). Young Sexual Minority Adolescent Experiences of Self-expression and Isolation on Social Media: Cross-sectional Survey Study. *JMIR Mental Health*, 8(9), e26207. <https://doi.org/10.2196/26207>

When it comes to my research, having diverse samples has opened up new avenues of knowledge that I would never have otherwise had access to. Since 2011, my research team has run the **Media & Identity Study**, a groundbreaking investigation of how media shapes the lives of youth nationwide, particularly through online social networks. It examines the role of televised media, social media, and civic engagement in influencing how young people form their racial, ethnic, cultural, gender, sexual, and political identities.

From the beginning, a key goal of the Media & Identity Study was to recruit diverse, hard-to-reach populations of youth across the United States to participate. We were interested in expanding beyond those who are typically included in research studies, to those whose voices are not usually heard. In order to find these voices, we developed a method for engaging them using online surveys and social media itself to effectively reach 48 U.S. states and 26 other countries outside of the U.S. In the first iteration of the project, an unprecedented 51% of the research participants were from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups.

This was the first time a large media study of this kind represented such diversity. For instance, we managed to recruit more Asian American adolescent and young adult participants compared to any prior study related to social media use. This meant that

for the first time, we could make meaningful group comparisons between this subgroup compared to other racial/ethnic groups, such as the unique narratives of Asian Americans trying to maintain privacy, avoid stigma, and avoid losing face by limiting negative expressions of emotions on social media. In another example of how the wide range of participants provided critical information about how different groups are using social media differently, we found that both young women and men of color were more likely to report venting on Facebook when having a bad day, compared to their white counterparts, suggesting that people of color may be using online social networks in a strategic way.

We found a similar story in our study funded by the National Institutes of Health that, among other things, examines unique online experiences for LGBTQ+ youth. In addition to finding community online, LGBTQ+ youth use social media to access



Linda Charmaraman, Ph.D., is a senior research scientist at WCW and founder and director of the Youth, Media & Wellbeing Research Lab. Her research interests include technology and adolescent health, digital citizenship, and how social identities (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, political affiliation) affect wellbeing.



Charmaraman (center) and her former Wellesley College student interns Huiying B. Chan '16 (left) and Budnampet Ramanudom '18 (right) co-authored a book chapter on how and why women of color use social media to create virtual communities.

resources about sexual orientation, sexual identity, and sexual health; to identify LGBTQ+ spaces near where they live; to identify LGBTQ+-friendly physicians, therapists, and other care providers; and to get involved in LGBTQ+ activism. In general, we've found that the benefits of digital media may be especially salient for adolescents from underrepresented or stigmatized backgrounds.

This research gives us a better understanding of how we—as families, schools, and communities—can best support marginalized groups so that they can thrive, both online and offline. And that knowledge wouldn't be possible without diverse data samples that reflect the lived experiences of a wide variety of people. ▀

Education in a Multicultural Democracy

In the fall of 2021, **Sheron Fraser-Burgess, Ph.D.**, a class of 1987 Wellesley College alumna, joined WCW as a visiting scholar from Ball State University. Over the course of this semester, she'll explore how womanism—an intellectual, social, and cultural movement that grew out of Black women's recognition of a culturally distinct approach to thinking about social problem solving—has evolved among Caribbean women in higher education in the last decade.

Tell us about your background.

My story begins with my parents, who were Jamaican immigrants to the United States and came of their own initiative to serve in Christian ministry in an African American community in Miami, Florida. There were difficult years, but my mother modeled discipline, love, and loyalty and they both prioritized our education. The decision to attend Wellesley College catapulted me into an environment that was the epitome of self-determination and immersed me in an academic culture that felt very comfortable—although it was a significant adjustment in so many other ways.

I returned to Miami after graduation to support my parents in their ministry and to teach high school English classes and middle school reading for the next eight years. Racial, social, and economic disparities were inescapable during that time in the late

1980s and early 1990s. It became clear to me that my way of making sense of the world was not adequate given my experiences. As an immigrant, I believed in fulfilling the American dream, and meritocracy was an essential tenet of that. But the families I knew seemed caught in a vicious cycle of disadvantage despite their aspirations and work ethic.

I eventually began a graduate program in philosophy at the University of Miami. A program in Western analytic philosophy may not have been the ideal place to acquire a critical understanding of institutionalized racism! However, being deeply immersed in the philosophical systems that are the foundations of Western/Eurocentric thought and the theories that have perpetuated racism over time showed the extent of their staying power and their role in perpetuating, as the eminent political theorist Charles Mills describes, the myth of white supremacy.

How have you combined philosophy and education in your current role?

As professor of social foundations of education and multicultural education, I teach undergraduate students who are teacher candidates about the ethical, socio-political, and historical implications of schools being nested within the broader U.S. society. I also teach ethics and philosophy of education for doctoral and master's students to

“The question that has propelled my intellectual and academic journey since graduate school, and that has been refined since then, is: How should a multicultural democracy educate its children for pluralism?”

equip them to navigate their work as ethical agents. I get to create for my students the environment of critical thought and provide the theoretical and philosophical frameworks for analysis that were missing from my former interpretation of the world.

Why is it important to view schools within a societal and cultural context?

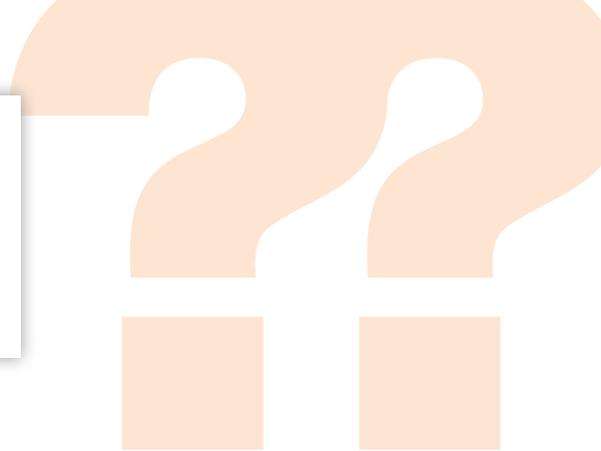
The question that has propelled my intellectual and academic journey since graduate school, and that has been refined since then, is: How should a multicultural democracy educate its children for pluralism? Each of these terms has weighty ethical, political, and other philosophical commitments with which we must reckon that relate to viewing schools within a societal and cultural context.

Particularly in a democratic society, schools instrumentally have the obligation to prepare future citizens to help sustain a form of government that is, definitionally, by and for the people. The North American context,





In September, Fraser-Burgess joined WCW Executive Director Layli Maparyan in a conversation about the evolutions of womanism from the 1960s and 1970s to today. Watch the program at wcwonline.org/WomanismEvolutions



and particularly the United States, poses several challenges because of British colonialism that was succeeded by the march of empire and manifest destiny. Succeeding political regimes perpetuated chattel slavery and Native American genocide, settler colonialism, and economic imperialism. Fostering a critical civic literacy about this history of trouble and triumph is essential.

Tell us about your project working with social studies teachers to broaden their curricula.

The project, Anti-Racist Social Studies Curricula for Civic Engagement, was developed in 2020, after the racial reckoning that followed in the wake of George Floyd’s murder. African American community members and a school board representative partnered with Ball State University faculty to transform their public school social studies curricula from a Eurocentric/Anglo American focus.

The project, which is partially supported by the Library of Congress and its Teaching with Primary Sources grant, is a multi-year initiative within the local school district for grades 6-12 social studies teachers. It aims to deepen understanding of anti-racism and generate curricula and pedagogies that promote racial equality and civic engagement (participation in democracy) among students through using primary source documents.

In short, an anti-racist curriculum is a curriculum and pedagogy that promotes the civic literacy required to identify and understand racism in the past and present a) through the study of racially diverse people’s perspectives and experiences; and b) by promoting deep thinking about ways to dismantle racism through democratic processes, while promoting human rights.

How did you become interested in womanism, and how does it tie into your other work?

There is a chronological sequence here that relates to my own self and intellectual development as a scholar. I am very much a recovering traditional liberal democratic theory proponent. Despite knowing about the racism of the early architects of liberal democratic philosophy, I have been so enamored of their ideas about the inherent worth of human beings, which aligns with my faith and the idea of their being made in the image of God. The inconsistency between their ideals and flawed founding policies did not dislodge their prominence in my syllabi until I was gently challenged by two African American doctoral students, David Humphrey and Camea Davis. In addition to attending a conference on womanist theological ethics at Vanderbilt in 2017 and reading David Humphrey’s dissertation that interviewed self-identified womanists, it launched me on an intense journey of exploring the foundations and expansion of womanism as a system of thought by comparison. That led me then to WCW Executive Director **Layli Maparyan’s** two volumes, *The Womanist Reader* (2006) and *The Womanist Idea* (2012).

My recent womanist scholarship reflects my journey of engaging womanist thinking with traditional Eurocentric philosophical ideas of “modernity.”



Sheron Fraser-Burgess, Ph.D., is a scholar-activist and academic philosopher of education who studies the ethical, epistemological, and political implications of cultural identity and social positionality. She is a 1987 graduate of Wellesley College. Since 2005, she has been a Ball State University education professor for teacher candidates, administrators, and Ph.D. students.

As a scholar-activist, why is WCW’s focus on research and action a natural fit for you?

It is a great fit because research, in its most formal sense, offers a best-known picture of the world and allows for the documentation of the status quo as well as ways to establish that interventions are working—that the problems that we identify are better because we acted.

How did your time as a student at Wellesley influence the direction of your career?

Wellesley inculcated a doctrine of self-determination alongside an unwavering commitment to service, “non ministrari sed ministrare.” I wrestled with reconciling these ideas for many years. While serving as a teacher and campus minister, it was difficult to feel that I was making a difference beyond the individual lives that I touched. I do still think that I am serving now, but through empowering others with the ways of thinking about their lives and those of others to contribute to affirming the significance and worth of each human being. In a democratic republic, teachers are some of the most influential and powerful citizens; equipping them to educate students to be contributing citizens is important work. ■

New Grant to Prevent and Treat Depression in Teens with Disabilities

Teens with disabilities are up to five times more likely to suffer from mental, emotional, and behavioral health disorders than those without disabilities. In particular, they are more likely to be anxious and depressed, which when left untreated, can make their transition to adulthood more difficult.

Many teens with disabilities and their families receive “care coordination services” from a state Maternal and Child Health Bureau agency. These services help these young people get the medical care and social services they need, but usually do not provide mental health treatment or offer preventive mental health interventions.

Now, Senior Research Scientist **Tracy Gladstone**, Ph.D., and researchers at the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) have been awarded nearly \$7 million from the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) to assess whether an enhanced care coordination program called CHECK, which includes a tailored mental health treatment component, achieves better outcomes than a standard state agency care coordination program.

“This new approach, of integrating behavioral health care into care coordination services for youth with intellectual and

developmental disabilities, will offer access to mental health care for a population that has traditionally been underserved, which has huge public health implications,” said Gladstone. “An organized approach to early identification and treatment offers a

significant opportunity to prevent the onset of mental health disorders and improve the lives of teens with disabilities.”

The researchers will engage 780 teens ages 13-20 who have intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families and will follow their health and experiences within the health care system for 24 months. Recruitment will include teens living in urban and rural areas and will be inclusive of all racial and ethnic identities. Half of the enrolled participants will receive care coordination with CHECK and half will receive traditional care coordination services from the state agency in Illinois. Those enrolled in CHECK will be assessed to determine what level of mental health support they need, and then will receive care tailored to meet their needs.

Throughout the two-year study, the researchers will track how teens feel and their health behaviors by asking questions about anxiety and depression and about health, health habits, functioning, ability to manage health care, and self-efficacy. The team also will track how satisfied teens, parents, and health care providers are with the care coordination experience.

“The results of this study will help us understand which care coordination models work best,” said Gladstone. “We hope that this will lead to improvements in how we identify and treat depression and anxiety in teens with disabilities, and potentially reduce barriers to mental health care.”

Gladstone’s partners on the study include Benjamin Van Voorhees, M.D., MPH, UIC professor and head of pediatrics at the UIC College of Medicine; Kristin Berg, Ph.D., UIC associate professor of disability and human development; Rebecca Feinstein, Ph.D., UIC research assistant professor; Michael Gerges, M.A., LCPC, executive director of the CHECK program; Michael Msall, M.D., professor of pediatrics at the University of Chicago; and Cheng-Shi Shiu of the University of California, Los Angeles. ■

“The results of this study will help us understand which care coordination models work best. We hope that this will lead to improvements in how we identify and treat depression and anxiety in teens with disabilities, and potentially reduce barriers to mental health care.”



Senior Research Scientist Studies “New Normal” in Child Care

“The first few months of the pandemic brought into the spotlight how hard—near impossible—it was to both work from home and care for young children.”

Starting in March 2020, many Massachusetts parents found themselves working from home and caring for their young children at the same time. When child care reopened that summer, new health and safety guidelines raised costs and made fewer slots available. Many child care centers and family child care homes closed, and fewer educators were available to care for and educate young children.

Thanks to support from WCW’s Harold Benenson Memorial Research Fund, Senior Research Scientist **Wendy Wagner Robeson**, Ed.D., explored this “new normal” of child care by interviewing 25 Massachusetts families with children under the age of five. She looked at how these families were accessing child care during the pandemic, their experiences and perceptions of the multiple dimensions of child care, and the implications

for parents’ daily lives as well as their employment, economic mobility, work hours, and advancement.

“It was surprising to me to learn that the families in this study sent their children back to care as soon as it reopened,” said Robeson. “I expected that fears about COVID and issues of affordability and accessibility might cause families to delay their return. But the first few months of the pandemic brought into the spotlight how hard—near impossible—it was to both work from home and care for young children.”

The results of Robeson’s study reinforce the need for a more flexible work culture, affordable and accessible child care options, and federal and state funding specifically for child care.

Read more about this study at wcwonline.org/researchandaction ■



Big Sister Boston Recognizes NIOST Research Associate

Big Sister Boston is recognizing 70 individuals and groups throughout its 70th anniversary year for their enduring commitment to believing in girls. Among the honorees is **Kathryn (Katie) Wheeler**, Ed.D., a research associate at the **National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST)**.

“I’m honored and flattered to be recognized by Big Sister,” said Wheeler, whose expertise at NIOST is in programs that

empower girls. “It’s an inspiring organization that pays attention to the unique needs of girls and connects them to a broad spectrum of women mentors.”

Wheeler has been a supporter and advocate of Big Sister since the 1990s. As founding director of the Girls’ Coalition of Greater Boston, which brought together researchers, funders, and practitioners at organizations focused on girls, Wheeler worked closely with Big Sister. In more recent years, she supported Big Sister in the early stages of the development of Our Big Futures, a program for ages 14-24 that provides coaching, support, and resources

to achieve sustainable financial independence via career development and/or college success.

“What’s inspiring about Big Sister is that they take research on girls done by organizations like WCW and say, ‘What does this mean for girls’ needs, and how does it affect our programming?’ They work hard to ensure that the relationships between girls and their mentors are meaningful for both the girls and the women,” said Wheeler. “I strongly believe in their work, and as my parenting life evolves, I’m hoping to one day become a Big Sister myself.” ■

Black Girls Create Seeks to Transform How Black Girls Think About STEM

Black Girls Create, the culturally responsive maker program designed by Research Scientist **LaShawnda Lindsay**, Ph.D., in 2018 will reach more girls with a new grant from the National Science Foundation. In collaboration with Spelman College, Lindsay will lead a two-year feasibility study that seeks to explore how engagement in Black Girls Create affects middle school girls' STEM interest, STEM confidence, and racial and gender identities.

Black Girls Create addresses issues of equity, inclusion, and relevance for Black girls by providing a curriculum and a learning environment that incorporates girls' cultural and intellectual histories and expands the meaning and purposes of STEM learning. It focuses on making, which can involve traditional craft and hobby techniques, such as sewing or woodworking,

and often incorporates digital technologies in either manufacturing or design.

Culturally responsive making is an emerging field in both research and practice in informal STEM learning environments. For Black Girls Create, culturally responsive making is defined as tapping cultural knowledge and maker technologies to

“Acknowledging and incorporating participants' culture helps them create meaningful connections to academic subjects—particularly when they are members of underrepresented groups who may believe that certain subjects are unrelated to their current or future lives.”

engage Black girls in creating, designing, and producing artifacts related to a particular concept, theme, or person. Decades of research show that situating learning within Black students' cultural context and connecting academic subjects to their cultural knowledge produce better academic outcomes.



“Culture is the mechanism through which people learn how to be in the world, how to behave, what to value, and what gives meaning to their lives,” said Lindsay. “Acknowledging and incorporating participants' culture helps them create meaningful connections to academic subjects—particularly when they are members of underrepresented groups who may believe that certain subjects are unrelated to their current or future lives.”

Tips to Boost Youth Engagement in Learning



Engaging youth in learning is critical to supporting the achievement of desired youth outcomes. Research has found important links between levels of youth engagement and student achievement and persistence

in school. Increasing youth engagement is also an effective way to improve school climate.

The **National Institute on Out-of-School Time** (NIOST), through its four decades of work with afterschool programs, has learned how programs can successfully promote engagement in learning.

“We've worked with out-of-school time (OST) programs around the country, and along the way we've discovered some specific approaches programs can use that are very effective in boosting engagement,” said NIOST Director **Georgia Hall**, Ph.D. “In the OST

field, youth engagement is extremely important when it comes to achieving positive outcomes.”

Program staff can spark passion by frequently interacting with youth, inspiring interest and enthusiasm in what they're doing. It is important to offer activities that involve youth in cooperative learning, match their interests, and are appropriately challenging.

Programs can also encourage agency by offering choices between activities and involving youth in program-planning and decision-making. They can acknowledge achievement by providing opportunities for youth to be recognized for their efforts and accomplishments. Finally, programs can allow time in the schedule to explore and complete activities fully.

“It's rewarding to see afterschool programs find success through these approaches,” said Hall. “Programs use NIOST's assessment tools to improve their practices which support youth engagement, and then document progress toward improving youth outcomes. Data is a powerful way to improve outcomes and make a difference.”

Open Circle's Enduring Legacy of School Transformation



After 34 years of operation, **Open Circle** transitioned to a legacy program of the Wellesley Centers for Women at the end of June 2021. In the years since its founding, it has transformed hundreds of schools across the United States into communities where students feel safe, cared for, and engaged in learning. It also put social and emotional learning, or SEL, on the map, kickstarting a culture shift and spurring U.S. schools to put more emphasis on the emotional wellbeing of not only students, but the entire school community.

In 1987, **Pamela Seigle**, M.S., founded Open Circle with funding from Grace W. and Robert S. Stone, committed supporters of the emotional wellbeing of children. Open Circle was one of the first programs to define the field of SEL, offering both a high-quality SEL curriculum and SEL professional development.

“At its core, Open Circle has always been about relationships, and the important role relationships play in students’ capacity to learn—socially, emotionally and academically,” said Seigle at a celebration of Open Circle held in June. “Open Circle’s legacy is a powerful one that will continue to ripple out and impact the educators, students, and families it has touched as well as the people who have contributed to its development.”

While it was in operation, Open Circle reached over 360 schools, 90 districts, and 16 states across the U.S. It also reached educators and students as far away as China and Uganda. In 2013, its highly effective program was recognized by CASEL in its exclusive Guide to Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs.

Over the years, Open Circle enjoyed the talented leadership of many visionary individuals, including **Kim Comart**, J.D., **Kristen Handricken**, Ed.M., **Nancy MacKay**, **Nova Biro**, M.B.A., and **Kamilah Drummond-Forrester**, M.A., CAGS. Many donors and funders made Open Circle’s work possible, including Grace W. and Robert S. Stone, Barbara and Patrick Roche and Roche Bros., the NoVo Foundation, the Boston Public Health Commission,

and the Morningstar Family Foundation, whose support over the years advanced Open Circle’s programming.

Katherine S. Kaufmann, M.S.W., Ed.D., the daughter of Grace W. and Robert S. Stone and a member of WCW’s Council of Advisors, said, “My parents would be extraordinarily proud—as am I—that social and emotional learning is today part of the national conversation about what kids need in their schools in order to learn optimally and to provide a framework for their mental health for years to come. Open Circle surely played a critically important role in leading the way to that national conversation.”

WCW will continue to incorporate SEL into many aspects of its work. In particular, Senior Research Scientist **Linda Charmaraman**, Ph.D., will continue work funded by the Morningstar Family Foundation on the development of digital wellbeing lessons for middle schoolers that will combine digital citizenship and SEL. She plans to pilot the program in 2022.

“Transformation is always in process, and if we trace the thread, we can always see how the end of one thing opens up beautiful new vistas elsewhere,”

said WCW Executive Director **Layli Maparyan**, Ph.D. “So it is with Open Circle, whose teachings and principles about the value of our emotions and social connections are now embedded in so many children and adults, families, schools, and communities that will now evolve in new ways as a result. The world is a better place because of Open Circle.”

“The world is a better place because of Open Circle.”



A teacher at a Dorchester, MA, elementary school leads an Open Circle meeting.



Teachers participate in a lesson during Open Circle Classroom Teacher Training.



Two Open Circle trainers, Jen Dirga (center left) and Sallie Dunning (center right), traveled to Uganda in 2014 to train teachers, youth, and parents in rural primary schools and communities.



Nancy MacKay (left) and Kamilah Drummond-Forrester (right) pose with participants during a 2016 Open Circle Train-the-Trainer program.



Open Circle students pose for a photo.



An elementary school teacher trained in Open Circle reads to a class.



Boston Public School teachers pose with their Open Circle Curriculum binders during a 2017 Classroom Teacher Training.

NEW ON Our Blog

Read the Women Change Worlds blog to learn about connections between our work and current events, hear from Wellesley College students who work with us, and read about issues in a way that puts women's perspectives and concerns at the center of the discussion.

National Student Parent Month is Coming to an End, But Our Work Carries On

September 2021



Autumn Green, Ph.D., explains why the experiences of student parents are at the center of her work.

Internship Reflection: Building Knowledge Together About Our Digital Worlds

September 2021



Wellesley College alum **Rachel Hodes** shares highlights from their experience working in our **Youth, Media & Wellbeing Research Lab**.

What Could Be More American Than Critical Race Theory?

July 2021



Layli Maparyan, Ph.D., and **LaShawnda Lindsay**, Ph.D., discuss how critical theory drives us toward a society that is more equal for everyone.

OUR WORK in the World

A selection of recent media coverage, publications, and presentations

MARCH 2021

Gail Cruise-Roberson, co-director of the **National SEED Project**, co-authored the article, "Examining Systems and Self for Racial Equity," on addressing internalized, unconscious biases in education for *School Administrator*, a magazine published by the School Superintendents Association.



APRIL 2021

Senior Research Scientist **Jennifer Grossman**, Ph.D., gave a virtual presentation to the National At-Home Dad Network on how to talk with your kids about sex and relationships.



Nan Stein, Ed.D., senior research scientist, was quoted in *CNET* in an article that explored how teen girls are using social media to call attention to sexual harassment in their schools.



MAY 2021

Harvard University's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences awarded the Centennial Medal to Senior Research Scientist **Peggy McIntosh**, Ph.D., for her decades of work naming and breaking down systems of privilege and oppression through her papers on white privilege and founding of the **National SEED Project** in 1986.



JUNE 2021

The op-ed, "Oregon is Finally Counting Student Parents. Other States Should Follow," by **Autumn Green**, Ph.D., research scientist, was published in *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*.

Sari Kerr, Ph.D., senior research scientist, authored an essay for a symposium on immigration and economic recovery after COVID-19 hosted by the Center for Growth and Opportunity at Utah State University. In the essay, she shared findings from her research and urged policymakers to address obstacles that may bar immigrant entrepreneurs from fully contributing to the U.S. economic recovery.



SEPTEMBER 2021

Research by Senior Research Scientist **Linda Charmaraman**, Ph.D., was featured in *The New York Times* in an article on Instagram use and wellbeing for teens and tweens.



NOVEMBER 2021

Wellesley alumna and NPR Senior Correspondent **Linda Wertheimer**, a member of the WCW Council of Advisors, moderated a virtual panel hosted by WCW with fellow alumnae **Shelly Anand**, J.D. (also a WCW Council member), **Lindsey Boylan**, MBA, and **Charlotte Newman**, MBA. The panelists shared their experiences speaking up against workplace harassment, discrimination, and labor abuse and discussed ways to advance equity in the workplace.

Read more at wcwonline.org/womenchangeworlds



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