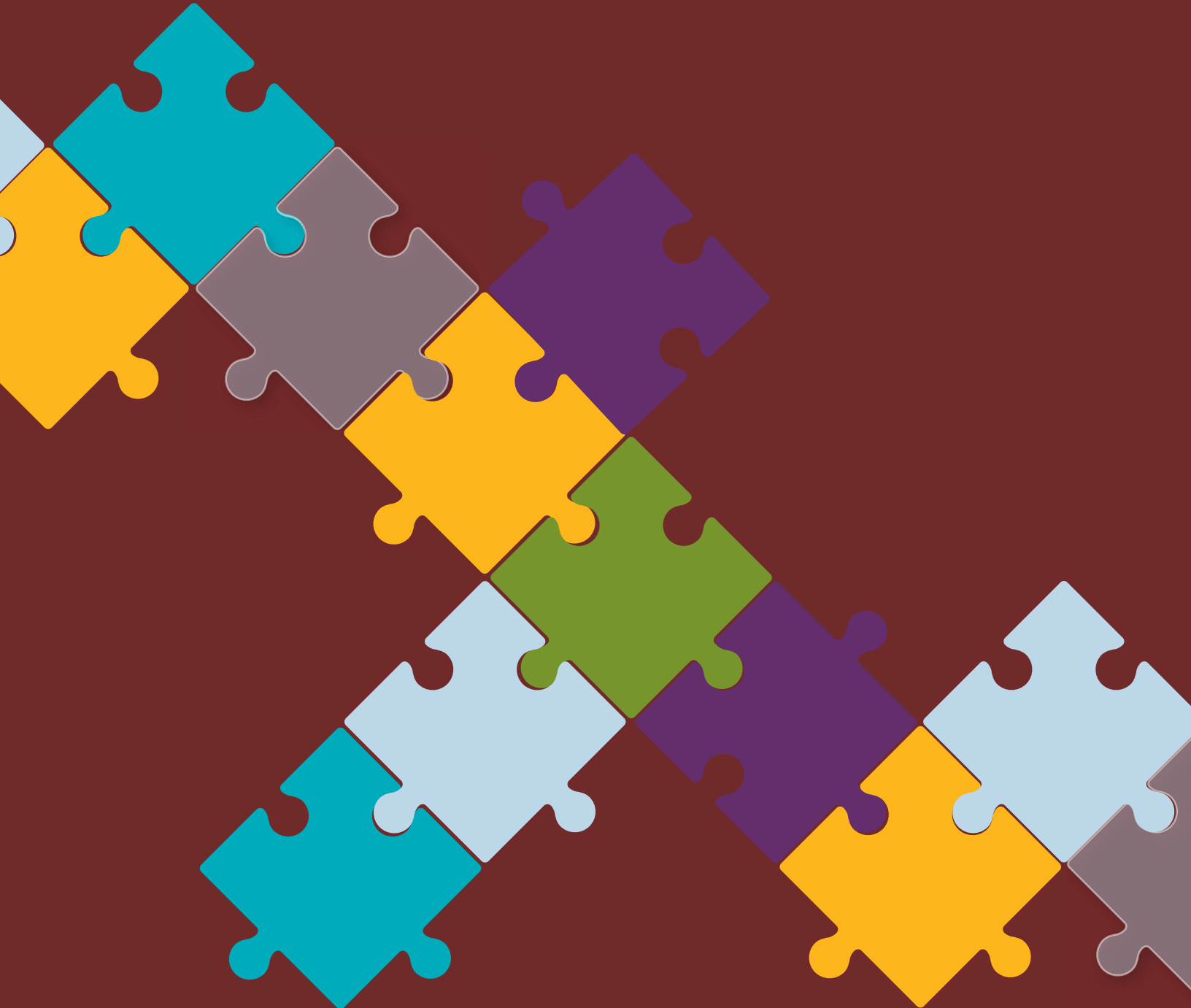


Annual Report 2021



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH CENTER



Annual Report 2021

Contributors

Interim Director.....Devon Brenner
Editor & Designer.....Emile Creel
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The SSRC reports to the Vice-President of Research and Economic Development Julie Jordan and the Vice President of the Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine Keith Coble.



Letter from the Interim Director



This year has seen change for the SSRC from the retirement of long-time Director Art Cosby to continuing the COVID-19 precautions. In this year of change, the scientists and staff of the SSRC have continued their meaningful work, and I am proud to serve as the interim director.

I come to the SSRC from the Office of Research and Economic Development, where I serve as an assistant vice president for outreach and initiatives. I have immensely enjoyed my time getting to know the SSRC better and gaining a deeper understanding of the center's work.

We extend our gratitude to Art Cosby for his years of leadership at the center. Dr. Cosby leaves behind big shoes to fill, but I have no doubt the SSRC will continue its long and proud tradition as a location for meaningful social science research for scholars on our campus and beyond.

In this year's annual report, you'll read about some of our newer projects like *Project ECHO for Childcare Providers* and one of our oldest continuous programs *MASEP*. I hope you share these stories and our other accomplishments with others and connect with us on our website, Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram.

Sincerely,
Devon Brenner, PhD

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About the SSRC

The Social Science Research Center (SSRC) was established at Mississippi State University (MSU) in 1950 to promote, enhance and facilitate social science research and related scholarly activities. The Center is organized with university-wide responsibilities and reports to the Vice President for Research and Economic Development and the Vice President for Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine. The Center offers a superior research environment with an impressive array of research opportunities and options, state-of-the-art facilities, laboratories and support units that enhance and expand both the scope and quality of social science research. The SSRC fosters a rigorous and independent research environment to ensure objective, relevant and unbiased analyses.

Individual scientists, or self-organized teams of researchers, provide the impetus and direction of funded research projects. They determine their research agendas and benefit from the SSRC facilities as they so choose. Research fellows and research associates, supported by an administrative staff and graduate and undergraduate research assistants, conduct both sponsored and unsponsored research projects. Funding for projects comes from a variety of sources including federal and state agencies, foundations, MSU

units and other public and private entities. The SSRC research portfolio usually exceeds \$10 million a year.

Research issues that social scientists face are now so profoundly complex that their solutions demand the combined resources of multiple disciplines, multiple professions and multiple institutions. From its origin, the SSRC has had a strong interdisciplinary emphasis. Scientists from a number of disciplines, both on campus and off, come together in the SSRC to work on common research problems. It is the norm to find various combinations of such diverse disciplines as psychologists, business professors, sociologists, social workers, geographers, historians, economists and political scientists joining together to bring to bear their expertise on various research problems.

The range of interdisciplinary involvement goes beyond the social sciences. The Center often becomes a place where social scientists team with colleagues from agriculture, engineering and other disciplines. The SSRC also forms partnerships, strategic alliances and collaborative agreements with entities such as state agencies, off-campus national-level research organizations and professional groups. These various interdisciplinary research enterprises provide a steady stream of innovative projects and creative investigations.

The organizational structure of the SSRC is purposely flat, with several internal research units, normally led by coordinators, reporting to the Director. Project directors operate with a great deal of autonomy and take full responsibility for the conduct of their projects.

Over the years, the SSRC has developed strong working relationships with faculty members and administrators in the College of Arts & Sciences, the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station, the Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine, the College of Business and the College of Education. In addition, it has established strong linkages with outside funding sources, including federal and state agencies, research entities and foundations.

The research faculty members in the SSRC are the driving force for the Center's activities. Together, they define the Center's goals, develop research agendas, prepare and submit proposals and conduct research. The SSRC maintains a small staff of full-time research faculty to support ongoing research activities. These individuals are normally affiliated with an academic department. Other faculty members hold joint appointments on a continual basis between academic departments and the SSRC. A third category of faculty members works in the Center on a periodic basis, depending upon funding of a particular grant or contract, or is supported via summer appointments while developing research proposals. In order to facilitate the efforts of the research faculty, the SSRC seeks to maintain collegial, cooperative relationships with academic departments and other campus entities.

The Center maintains a core staff of experts to assist in the financial and personnel aspects of preparing, submitting and administering research grants and contracts, as well as individuals who manage specific Center programs, such as the Mississippi Alcohol Safety Education Program (MASEP). Research associates and graduate and undergraduate assistants support research and administrative activities. In addition, the Center employs many individuals on an intermittent basis to serve the needs of the individual projects.

The continued success of the SSRC is clearly dependent upon the personnel who participate in its activities. Attracting bright, capable, energetic and entrepreneurial individuals and then encouraging their continued intellectual and professional growth is a key element in the SSRC organizational philosophy. By keeping bureaucratic requirements to a minimum, the SSRC seeks to create an environment that fosters, facilitates and enables innovative and creative research efforts.

Mission Statement

The SSRC conducts research to explore social, economic, political, human resource and social-environmental problems facing the state, nation and world. Scientists strive to present findings to a variety of constituents in a meaningful way to improve the health, safety and well-being of all people.

Statement of Goals

The SSRC strives to be a center of excellence for social science research that serves the entire university community. This collective ambition is reflected in our institutional goals:

- To contribute to the University's graduate and undergraduate programs by involving students in research projects through assistantships and other work arrangements.
- To conduct rigorous, objective and unbiased research on relevant social, economic, political, human resource and social-environmental problems facing the state, nation and world.
- To provide a vehicle for unique social research and public service programs that do not fit more traditional academic structures.
- To provide a support system for the University to plan, develop, secure funding for and conduct social research on problems of interest to the scientific community and to consumers of research findings.
- To provide a mechanism whereby existing social science research capabilities in the University can be matched with funding sources.

SSRC Facilities

The SSRC is currently located in the Mississippi Technology Center, in the Thad Cochran Research, Technology and Economic Development Park. The Mississippi Health Policy Research Center (MHPRC) is located at the CAVS E building in Canton, MS. In addition to the core space at CAVS E, the SSRC has access to state-of-the-art conference and meeting facilities.

Special Collaborative Partnerships

In recent years, the productivity of the SSRC Scientists remains high and the support from extramural organizations is quite varied. Our research benefits from awards and partnerships from the following:

American Academy of Pediatrics
Annie E. Casey Foundation
Bezos Family Foundation
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
E Q Health Solutions
Education Services Foundation
Federal Motor Carriers
Flight Attendant Medical Research Institute
Harvard Law School
Harvard School of Public Health
National Institute of Justice
National Institute on Drug Abuse
National Institutes of Health
National Science Foundation
New York Sea Grant
Northern Gulf Institute
Rice Research and Extension Center at the University of Arkansas
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Southeastern Universities Research Association
Tec de Monterrey, Mexico

Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine
U.S. Agency for International Development
U.S. Department of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Commerce
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Department of Transportation
U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration
University of Applied Sciences VERN', Zagreb
University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences
University of Illinois
University of Kentucky
University of Split, Croatia
University of Tennessee, Health Science Center
University of Zagreb, Croatia
W.K. Kellogg Foundation
Walton Family Foundation
Prevention Research Center at Washington University in St. Louis

Within Mississippi, the SSRC has partnerships with and/or funding from the following:

Blue Cross & Blue Shield Foundation of Mississippi
The Bower Foundation
Center for Mississippi Health Policy
Center for Population Studies at University of Mississippi
College of Veterinary Medicine at Mississippi State University
Health Care Foundation of North Mississippi
Healthy Mississippi
Mississippi Alcohol Safety Education Program
Mississippi Area Health Education Center
Mississippi Attorney General's Office
Mississippi Association of Grantmakers
Mississippi Center for Education
Mississippi Center for Justice
Mississippi Department of Education
Mississippi Department of Human Services
Mississippi Department of Medicaid
Mississippi Department of Mental Health
Mississippi Department of Public Safety
Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services

Mississippi Department of Transportation
Mississippi Division of Public Safety Planning
Mississippi First
Mississippi Health and Advocacy Program
Mississippi Health Care Association
Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning
Mississippi Non-profits
Mississippi Office of Highway Safety
Mississippi Public Health Institute
Mississippi State Department of Health
North Mississippi Medical Center
Office of Research and Economic Development
Mississippi State Department of Health, Office of Tobacco Control
Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi
Preusser Research Group, Inc.
Public Health Program at Jackson State University
Tougaloo College
University of Mississippi Medical Center
William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation
Women's Foundation of Mississippi

SSRC Annual Impact

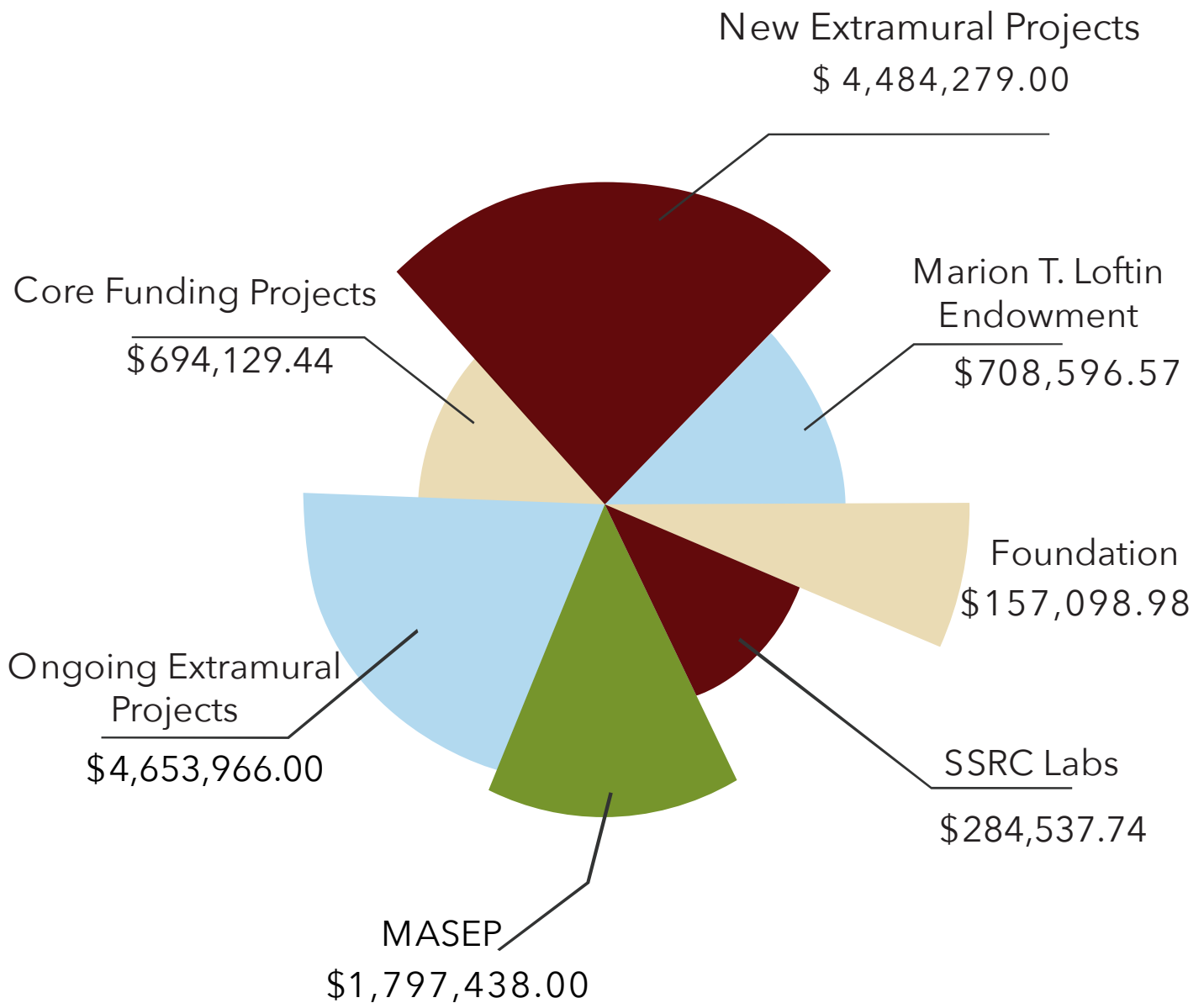
Publications **34**

New Projects **26**

Ongoing Projects **23**

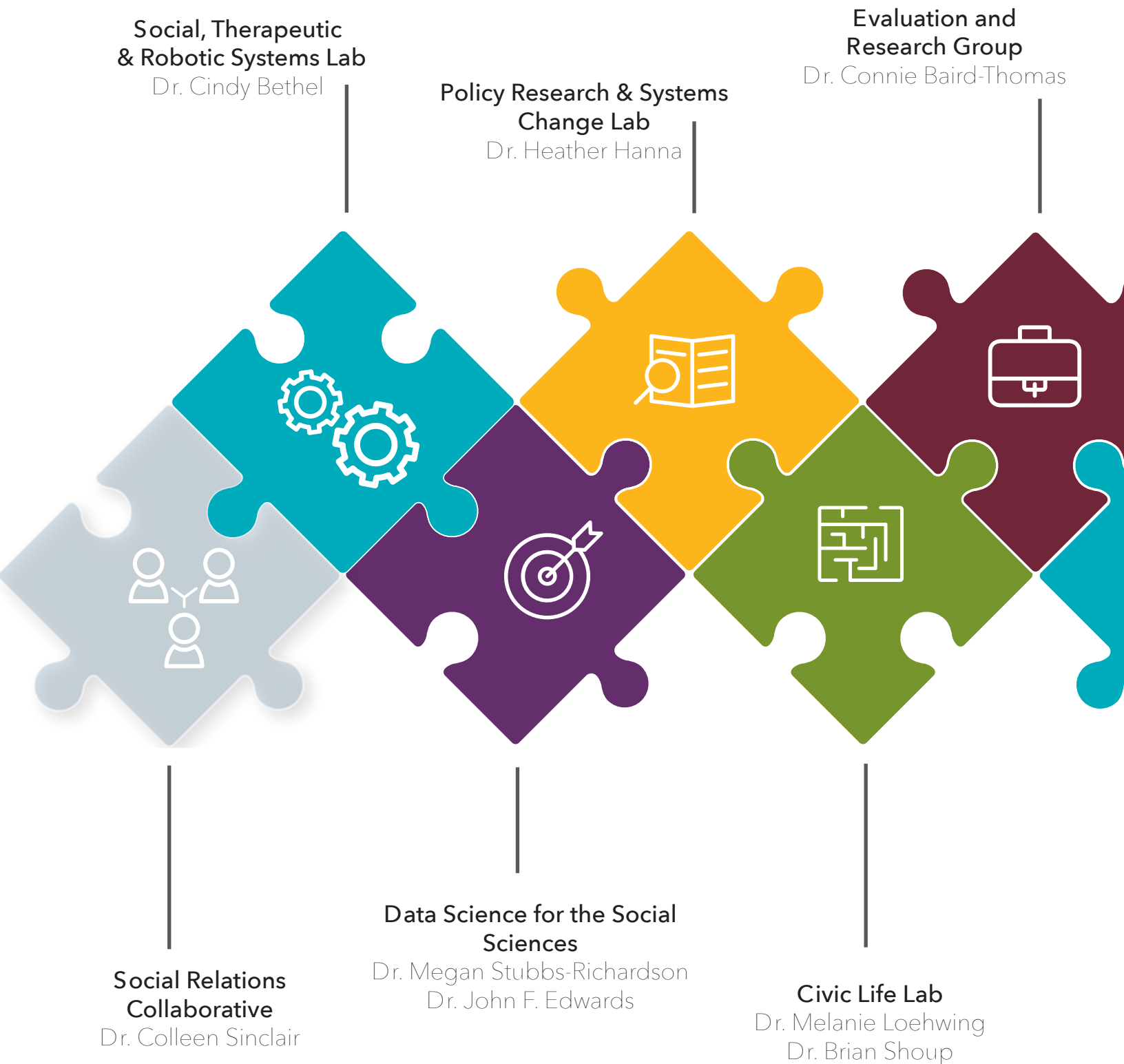
Presentations **48**

Total Funding:
\$12,780,045.73



Research Labs & Programs

The SSRC supports 12 unique laboratories and research programs conducting work on a range of topics.



**Mississippi Alcohol Safety
Education Program**

Billy Brister (ops.)
Dr. Angela Robertson (R&D)

Gender Impacts Lab

Dr. Kathleen Ragsdale
Dr. Mary Read-Wahidi

The Message Laboratory

Dr. Holli Seitz



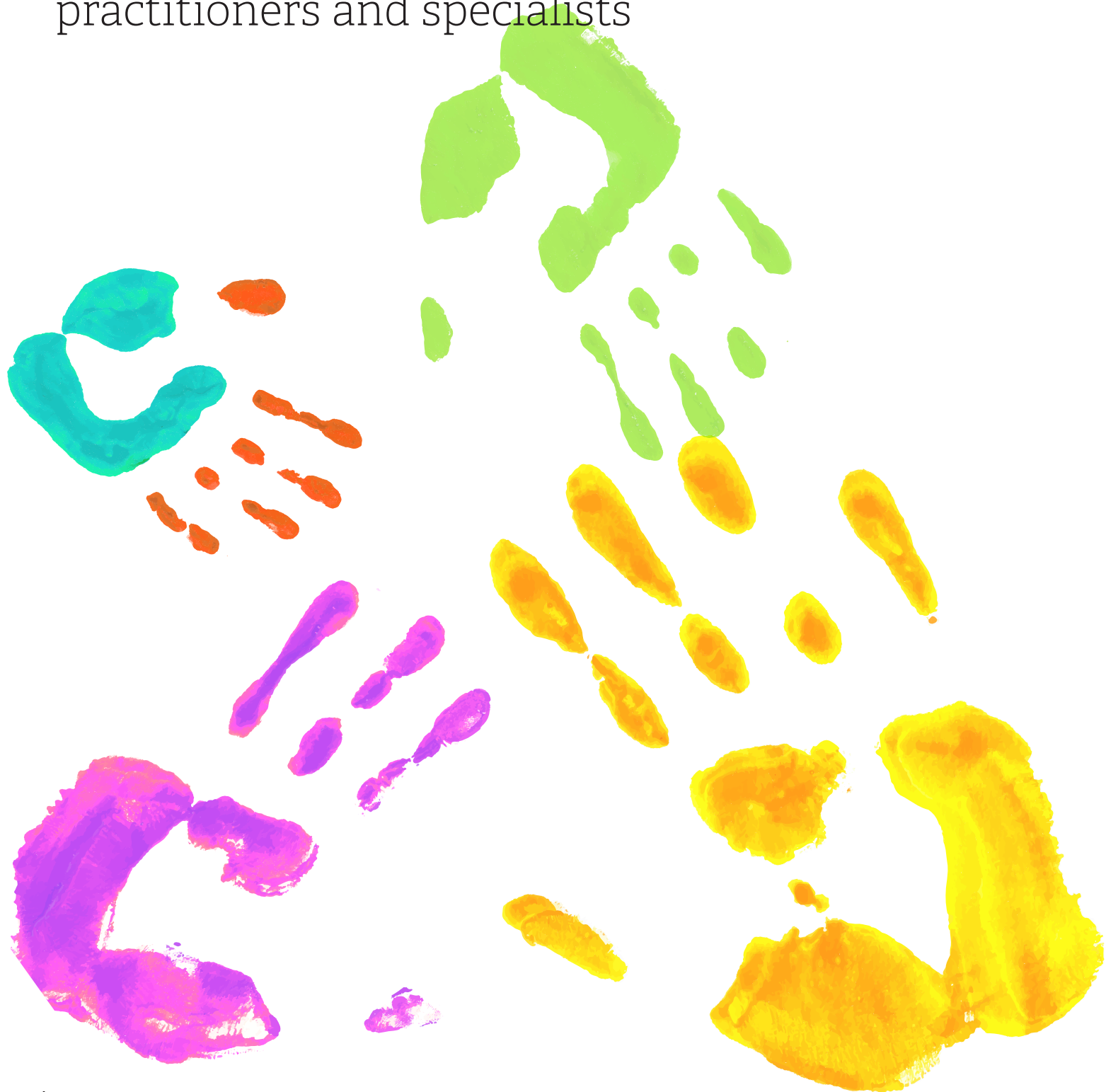
**Wolfgang Frese Survey
Research Laboratory**
Dr. John F. Edwards

Crime and Justice Unit
Dr. Angela Robertson

Mississippi Tobacco Data
Dr. Robert McMillen

Bridging Resources and Relationships:

How Project ECHO is connecting childcare practitioners and specialists



By: Emile Creel

Have you ever found yourself with a workplace question you'd like to take to someone with more expertise but have nowhere to turn?

Lisa Long, a former pre-school teacher and current Research Associate III, knows that feeling all too well, and she is excited a new project at the SSRC can provide support and connection for current child-care workers in the state of Mississippi.

Project ECHO for Childcare Providers (Project ECHO) is administered by the SSRC, the University of Mississippi's Graduate Center for the Study of Early Learning, and the University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC). Funding is provided by the Governor's Emergency Education Response Fund and Long acts as a facilitator in the group that connects Mississippi childcare providers with behavioral and healthcare specialists.

"When Project ECHO came along recently, I thought, I would have given my right arm to have participated in this and to have had the opportunity to share what I was seeing in the classroom with a specialist," Long said.

Using the ECHO model for childcare center directors and teachers is a first for all in the group, but the healthcare specialists are familiar with the frameworks. UMMC has coordinated several ECHO groups for primary care physicians across the state. The specialists in Project ECHO for Childcare Providers jumped at the chance to join this group because of how successful the other gatherings were.

"I've always liked the idea of the Project ECHO model, just in general, how you can train the trainer, bring resources to individuals that would not typically be able to get a hold of experts in certain areas and so whenever I heard about the Project ECHO geared towards childcare providers I thought that was

a great group of people to work with," said Rachel Tyrone, a speech-language pathologist on the project.

Project ECHO uses a nationally recognized framework that was developed by a physician, Dr. Sanjeev Arora, at the University of New Mexico School of Medicine, and it follows the model of a larger series of pediatric ECHOs offered by UMMC Children's of Mississippi in 2020 and 2021.

"As the Project ECHO founder, Dr. Arora, says, the model was created 'to ensure the right knowledge exists at the right place at the right time' particularly for rural and underserved communities in the US and around the world," said Long.

This particular group combines a speech-language pathologist, social worker, pediatric nurse practitioner, and child psychologist with early childhood education experts, the SSRC team, and childcare center directors and staff from eight Mississippi childcare centers across the state. The group has monthly Zoom sessions that follow the original Project ECHO framework, and SSRC staff provides guidance, structure and facilitation for each session, in addition to, circulating supplemental early childhood care and education resources via email throughout the month. On each monthly video chat, a childcare provider shares a child case study and questions from her own classroom, and specialists offer feedback and guidance, as well as short workshops on related topics.

The program is free for childcare providers and awards professional development contact hour



credits. Teachers also appreciate that they are able to gain information and strategies to support children in “real” time, virtually, without having to leave their childcare center.

Long says the group conversation has flowed well, a positive that she attributes partially to an effort to promote diversity and openness in the group.

“The intention of this model created by Dr. Arora is not just one sharing, one telling; it’s that all teach, all learn,” she said, “The childcare providers appreciate the opportunity to connect with specialists, but they also value coming together to share and learn from each other, as fellow childcare providers facing similar rewards and challenges in their respective settings.”

Along with a group that includes multiple races and ages, the SSRC staff encouraged open communication by emphasizing introductions and the goals of the call at the first meeting. The first session kicked off with the icebreaker question of: “Think of your favorite childhood teacher. Why was she/he your favorite?” to help participants begin to feel comfortable with each other and to reflect on the role teachers play in children’s earliest memories and experiences. The team wanted to start off with a group that could get into the necessary topics and share with openness.

The first cohort is now several months into their seven-month schedule. Each meeting has provided insight for the childcare centers and specialists as they bring up specific

topics and behavioral situations. Tyrone, who specializes in feeding and swallowing disorders, joined the group because of her connection to the SSRC through another project. Her experience with this ECHO has been very positive and a learning experience for her as well.

“One of the providers made a beautiful comment when we were discussing concerns for developmental

milestones. That it’s not as easily said as done in the childcare facilities because a lot of the times parents are worried about an early intervention referral plugging their children into the system and the stigma that can surround that. That was very influential for me as a therapist that we all need to stop and think about how to help parents be a part of the conversation, and that was a good reminder for us all,” said Tyrone.

Gigi Holder, a social worker with UMMC, saw the benefits of the model while working on other ECHOs with primary care providers. Now currently in the childcare group, she offers resources about behavioral issues. Being quick to point out a benefit of the group is that the childcare professional receives some input that may require a long implementation and other advice that might be a quick fix at the moment.

“They are engaged and seem to really take to the information that we provide to them. It’s not saying like ‘you have to do this.’ These are suggestions, and so it seems that overall it’s really well received,” said Holder.

This is particularly important for the directors and workers who may not have time in a given day to devote hours to one student but need a quick way to address an issue. Other solutions may be implements for a more long-term change. For example, one childcare practitioner might discuss a center worker

“It’s that all teach, all learn.” - Lisa Long

having issues with one child doing anything possible for attention like climbing on chairs when being told to sit or running away when asked to stand in line. Advice to the provider ranges from quick fixes to encourage the correct behavior at the moment to a long-term plan of praising the child for simple things like sitting or lining up so they are recognized for the good behavior and not the bad.

Tyrone notes that it is all a knowledge-sharing process and hopes that with differing opinions a unique solution is offered.

“I’m a big advocate for just the project ECHO model regardless of who’s the recipient. It’s a great way to share the information that we have as individuals wherever we’re working, we all have something to give, and we can all learn from each other,” said Tyrone.

In each monthly call, the specialists hope the topics they prepare continue to contribute to the discussion and build the providers’ toolkit for successful behavior in the centers.

“Just for the providers, the impact for them, my hope is that they’re able to gain concrete strategies that they can use in the classroom to better handle the challenging behaviors that they face, and I hope this encourages them to trust and reach out more to medical providers for outside resource and support,” said Michelle Cleveland, who provides support to Project ECHO from the SSRC.

Long and the SSRC team conducted a mid-project survey in late August to understand if goals of knowledge-sharing and learning had been met, and initial results were promising. At least one representative of each of the eight participating childcare centers responded to the survey and 100% of those surveyed said they would recommend Project ECHO for Childcare Providers to others who are working in early childcare settings. When asked how comfortable they felt interacting with the ECHO Specialist Team and other childcare providers, 93% said “very comfortable”. Eighty percent of respondents said participating in ECHO had improved their confidence in the classroom and 87% said they had shared information from ECHO sessions with other teachers or administrators working in their childcare center.

The team also plans to take what they have learned in this group on to future ECHO projects. Plans are being made to develop two more cohorts in early 2022.

In the end, however the groups continue to grow, Long’s goal will remain the same.

“The early years are one’s foundation for life and it’s critical to pay attention to what is happening for young children and support positive experiences and relationships with the adults in their lives,” said Long. ■

Increasing Your Gender Responsive Agricultural Development Capacity Course

Kathleen Ragsdale and Mary Read-Wahidi, co-directors of the Gender Impacts Lab at the SSRC, released a free online course on the importance of understanding gender equity in agricultural development this year.

The five-part course, titled “Increasing your Gender Responsive Agricultural Development Capacity” includes information on significant gender terms, the importance of gender responsive approaches and relevant case studies. The course is designed to teach users how to implement a gender mainstreaming framework in their field to benefit women, their work and the community as a whole. Developed from their work with the United States Agency for International Development’s Feed the Future Soybean Innovation Lab, the course features their research for the Soybean Innovation Lab as well as their research for the Innovation Lab for Fish.

Ragsdale and Read-Wahidi constructed this course to introduce researchers, students, extension agents and others working in the development sector to the importance of recognizing how gender responsiveness is impactful in their field.

“Everyone wants to see their projects have more – and a longer-lasting – impact, and the course gives them the platform to begin to think about ways that they can accomplish this,” said Read-Wahidi, an assistant research professor at the SSRC. “When you add gender responsiveness to your work, you have a payoff! And that payoff is that you will have better results and more impact.”

The gender mainstreaming framework is a strategy used in global development to look

at how laws, policies, cultural norms, and other areas of life impact men and women, boys and girls differently. Acknowledging how local culture, gender expectations, and hidden biases impact beneficiaries leads to better policies and development plans.

“It’s recognizing both the similarities and difference of women’s and men’s lived experiences, and how their lived experiences both shape and are shaped by their cultures and societies,” said Ragsdale, a research professor at the SSRC.

The five sections of this course are designed to break down the big ideas of gender responsiveness with real-world examples from research around the world showing how they can be practically applied.

“Our goal was to make this idea of ‘how do you actually do gender mainstreaming in agricultural development’ – which can be a bit daunting – into a kind of step-by-step guide for people from diverse disciplines to both continue to ‘do good work’ in agricultural development and to make their work, their results, their outcomes even more impactful and inclusive,” Ragsdale said.

The course is available for free through the Soybean Innovation Lab website. Total completion of the course is estimated to be 1 and 1/2 hours. Upon completion of the course, individuals will receive a certificate of completion from the Soybean Innovation Lab-University. ■

Visit www.tropicalsoybean.com/ and select the “On-Line Courses” tab at the top of the page.





Nutrition for Learning

Studying USDA school feeding programs

By: Emile Creel

"We hear the saying children are our future, and it's true, but there's so much complexity to that," said Sierra Nelson.

Nelson is a graduate research assistant working on the Research and Learning of the McGovern-Dole Food for Education Program in Africa funded by the United States Department of Agriculture - Foreign Agricultural Service (USDA-FAS). She understands that healthy, nourished children may perform better in school, and with better education, children are more empowered to be stronger citizens as adults.

The School Meals project takes a deep look at the implementation of the USDA-FAS funded McGovern-Dole school feeding program in six countries in Africa to determine what connections can be learned from areas the program's successes in providing

nutritious meals, improving educational outcomes, and building sustainability for school feeding in low income and food deficit countries.

"To invest in school feeding is to invest in each child; they are helping to build their future economy and build up their country," said Nelson.

But just like the complexity of building a strong future, there is a complexity in looking at these programs says Gina Rico Méndez, the lead principal investigator on the project.

Rico Méndez, an assistant research professor at the SSRC, first learned of the research project from Mississippi State University's International Institute. Because of her expertise conducting complexity-aware monitoring and evaluation activities in developing countries, she knew she wanted to apply for this project.

Rico Méndez utilized existing relationships between the International Institute and the SSRC to connect with researchers in MSU's departments of agricultural economics, food science, nutrition and health promotion, and anthropology and middle eastern cultures.

The working groups compiled a proposal seeking to answer three distinct research questions to address the needs of the McGovern-Dole learning agenda: 1) What kinds of partnerships with the private sector and/or host country governments are the most effective at ensuring program sustainability? Among successful partnerships, who are the key players, and what are their roles? In what contexts do private sector and/or government partnerships work best, and which contexts may be more challenging? 2) How do local/community procurement and nationally sourced models compare with international food procurement sources? How this comparison can speak to issues related to farm productivity (including financial management, input efficiency, and profitability), employment, and agricultural markets. And 3) How do school meal interventions and the nutritional aspects of these meals in pre-schools and primary schools influence educational outcomes in students?

The MSU team structured its work into three components with corresponding working groups. Component 1 (led by Rico Méndez) seeks to address partnerships by considering information from four countries: Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Sierra Leone. Component 2 (led by Drs. Daniel Petrolia and Will Davis from the Department of Agricultural Economics) seeks to increase understanding of procurement models for school feeding using a comparative perspective (international compared to local procurement) in Burkina Faso, Rwanda, and Kenya. Component 3 (led by Dr. Terezie Tolar-Peterson from the Department of Food Science, Nutrition and Health Promotion) seeks to improve knowledge about the effects school

feeding has on educational outcomes using performance data from Tanzania and Senegal.

In addition to the faculty that joined the project, Rico Méndez highlights the diversity and range of graduate and undergraduate researchers assisting on each question as a strength to the development of the work.

"Each working team has at least one graduate student. I view this as a training opportunity for my students' career development. I also have three great undergraduate students. One from Venezuela, one Turkmenistan, and the other from the States. It's a great opportunity for them to get to know other geographies and viewpoints," said Rico Méndez.

The six-hundred-thousand-dollar award was granted in March, and implementation began in April. Since the beginning of the project, researchers have been collaborating with USDA-FAS and in-country partners to obtain access to McGovern-Dole program performance data, the main source of information for the project. Researchers learned a great deal of how the programs perform in each country by having conversations about data structure, data collection procedures and program performance.

The McGovern-Dole team works with organizations like nonprofits, cooperatives, and the United Nations World Food Program to reduce hunger and improve literacy in selected low income and food deficit countries. These partners carry out implementations, in collaboration with other non-profits, national and local governments, and communities to meet the McGovern-Dole educational and nutritional goals.

Additionally, each implementing partner has a set budget and guidance to implement the school meal program in their region. An important portion of the budget allocated for each phase of the program, per country, includes a set amount of commodities

procured from American farmers. Ultimately the program seeks to build capacity for self-reliant school feeding, once programs transition from using foods donated by international partners exclusively to a model of local procurement.

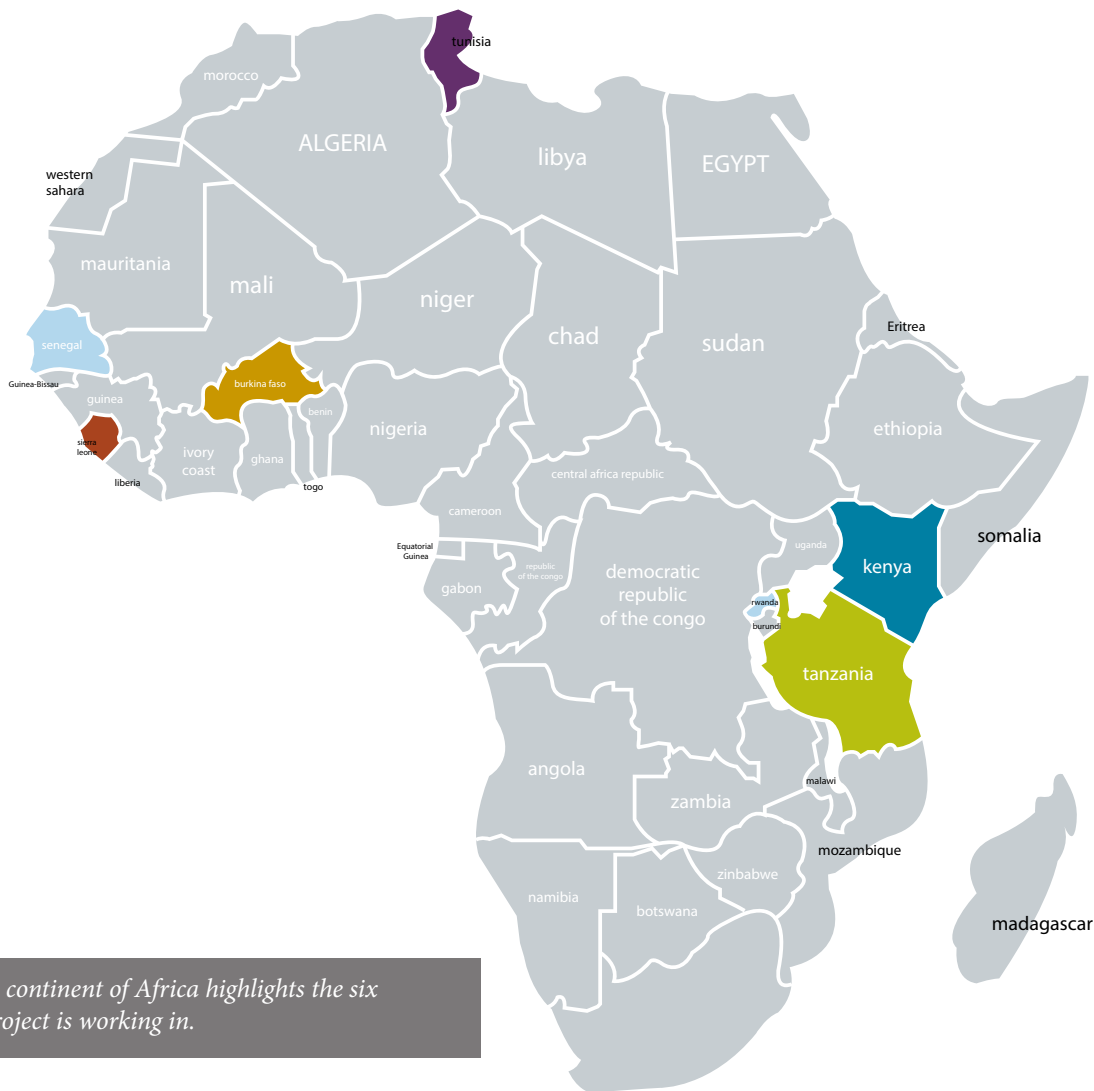
“Traditionally, humanitarian aid responds to an immediate need with commodities because of the immediate needs that a crisis demands. Instead of providing commodities for humanitarian aid, the McGovern-Dole program provides US produced commodities to low income and food deficit countries as a means to develop capacity for school feeding in places benefiting from the program.” said Rico Méndez.

Rico Méndez’s team had to build

relationships with each agency and make contacts with schools, partners, governing bodies, and community groups. This process took time, but she believes the reward will be a deeper knowledge of each of the programs.

“It’s not just about the context of the cities and schools and places where they’re doing the school feeding. There’s also the political context of the countries and how that can impact what you can expect in support. The importance of context overall, and how these different projects are working is amazing,” said Nelson.

As they faced unplanned encounters, Rico Méndez is quick to point to the continued support of MSU units like the International Institute, Office of Research and Economic



Development, and the SSRC's own support staff.

"Jennifer Flannagan, our SSRC business manager, has been critical to me as a first-time principal investigator. She's an amazing resource, and I think it's important to highlight how valuable all the administrative staff are when it comes to this type of complicated work that brings together so many people from different units," said Rico Méndez.

Rico Méndez provides oversight for the entire project as lead principal investigator and has opened communication channels with the implementing partners of McGovern-Dole in the six countries of interest for this work. Her team will seek to learn about the sustainability of the partnerships and what lessons can be learned and carried forward from these individual programs.

In Sierra Leone for example, the team is studying how the government has successfully developed a national school feeding law, building on the McGovern-Dole implementation case. Here the team will learn more about their processes, outcomes, and analyze evaluations of the programs.

Currently, the research team is sorting through available data and conducting interviews from the private sector and host country governments to gain a greater understanding. Once these pieces are analyzed the team will be better able to develop reports from what they have gathered.

"I'll be indexing some of the interviews, and we aren't doing a flat-out evaluation like the implementers have. We're looking at what elements make them (i.e., each school feeding program) really efficient and trying to determine what elements that are missing that could make them more efficient. We focus on the things that will make them sustainable in the future because the point is that the USDA and partners will not be in these countries forever. They are laying the foundation and groundwork for school feeding and literacy," said Nelson.

Rico Méndez explains that the learning aspect is something that drew her to this project because she wants to see the work go beyond simple evaluation of what succeeded and failed. She hopes their work will help impact ongoing and future school feeding policy and programs.

"When we are talking about monitoring, evaluation, and learning, we are doing the learning part, and even from evaluation, there are some lessons that emerge. What we do is take all that and just dig in a little bit more," said Rico Méndez.

In the coming months, the team will continue working to decipher the lessons, so they can build solid reports on what they have learned. ■



Launching to New Lanes

Developing an online version of MASEP

By: Bethany Deuel

When Director of Operations Billy Brister first joined the Mississippi Alcohol Safety Education Program (MASEP) team as a field staff specialist in 2004, the program was run on pencil, paper and VHS tapes.

Brister now oversees the vast reach of the MASEP organization, coordinating with the 43 classroom locations and liaisons from 612 courts across the state of Mississippi as well as maintaining strong relationships with law enforcement. From his point of view, however, none of this is work.

"I have people ask me all the time when I'm going to retire," Brister said. "I tell them I'll retire when this turns into a job."

Since its creation in 1972, MASEP has existed as Mississippi's court-mandated program for first-time DUI offenders. In the years following, MASEP has evolved in countless ways to better serve the state of Mississippi.

One major way MASEP has seen change is in the curriculum used in the courses. While the original MASEP curriculum was developed as simply an education program, extensive research on the program itself and changing trends motivated MASEP to progress past just education and into an intervention program. Now operating on the 6th edition, the MASEP curriculum has been expanded beyond solely educating participants about the effects of drug and alcohol use, but to addressing and identifying substance abuse and mental health issues.

For the past 13 years Angela Robertson, research professor and coordinator of research and development at MASEP, has been an integral part of these changes as she evaluates both the efficacy of the program itself and national trends in substance abuse to continually update the curriculum. In recent years, this has meant greater attention to opioid abuse as well as the effects of mixing drugs, including prescription drugs.

“Our goal is to identify those people who have substance abuse or mental health issues, bring that to their attention, and strongly encourage them to seek treatment,” Robertson said about these new changes.

Robertson believes she has accomplished her goal of showing the value of her work through the tangible impact it has had on course participants.

“The newer version had even lower rates of recidivism. I think I’ve demonstrated that making these changes is important,” Robertson said. “I want to be able to say to legislators and judges and the community that MASEP is an effective program and we can demonstrate that it is.”

While MASEP evolved steadily over those 50 years, COVID-19 brought changes impossible to navigate in the Spring of 2020. Beginning in March all MASEP courses were shut down for nearly three months, preventing DUI offenders from getting their drivers licenses back. The capacity limitations for in-person MASEP classes around the state, in addition to health issues that kept many participants at home forced the MASEP team to launch into a new project they had long considered: creating an online platform for MASEP classes.

Kathleen Gresham, project coordinator within the research and development department of MASEP, was soon the head of development for the online course. With 12 years of online teaching experience and experience developing the 5th and 6th curriculum editions for MASEP, Gresham was the most

qualified individual to lead this project.

Gresham coordinated with the entire MASEP team as she reviewed technology options and wrote operational instructions, constantly running ideas by Brister and Robertson and even having some of the instructors be test students. In the end, she said nearly all the staff had taken a turn being “enrolled” in the online MASEP class.

Throughout the six months of development, there was no shortage of difficult issues for Gresham to manage with her team. The foremost obstacle in development was finding a way to remain consistent with the current MASEP curriculum and the format of the in-person courses. Gresham was challenged with finding an online program where essential group-based elements could be sustained.

“There were a lot of components to the whole thing because the live classes have a lot of interaction. There was a big challenge of looking at the available technology and figuring out how to deliver the same program with as much fidelity as possible while still working within the confines of a remote distance setup,” Gresham said.

Gresham found that the video call platform Zoom would work best for course meetings, while participants could turn in homework on an open-source classroom software called Moodle. Like in-person courses, the online class would be led by two instructors. The primary instructor who facilitates the class is traditionally an individual who works in psychology or social work. The secondary instructor is someone with a law enforcement background who can maintain safety throughout the class.

Another major obstacle was formatting the program to be as user-friendly as possible for the diverse individuals enrolled in MASEP.

“In the beginning a lot of it was researching those technological options and looking at the capabilities of our population,” Gresham

said. "Given that we work at the university, we all have both access to technology and are all used to using it. That's not the case for a huge chunk of the population going through MASEP."

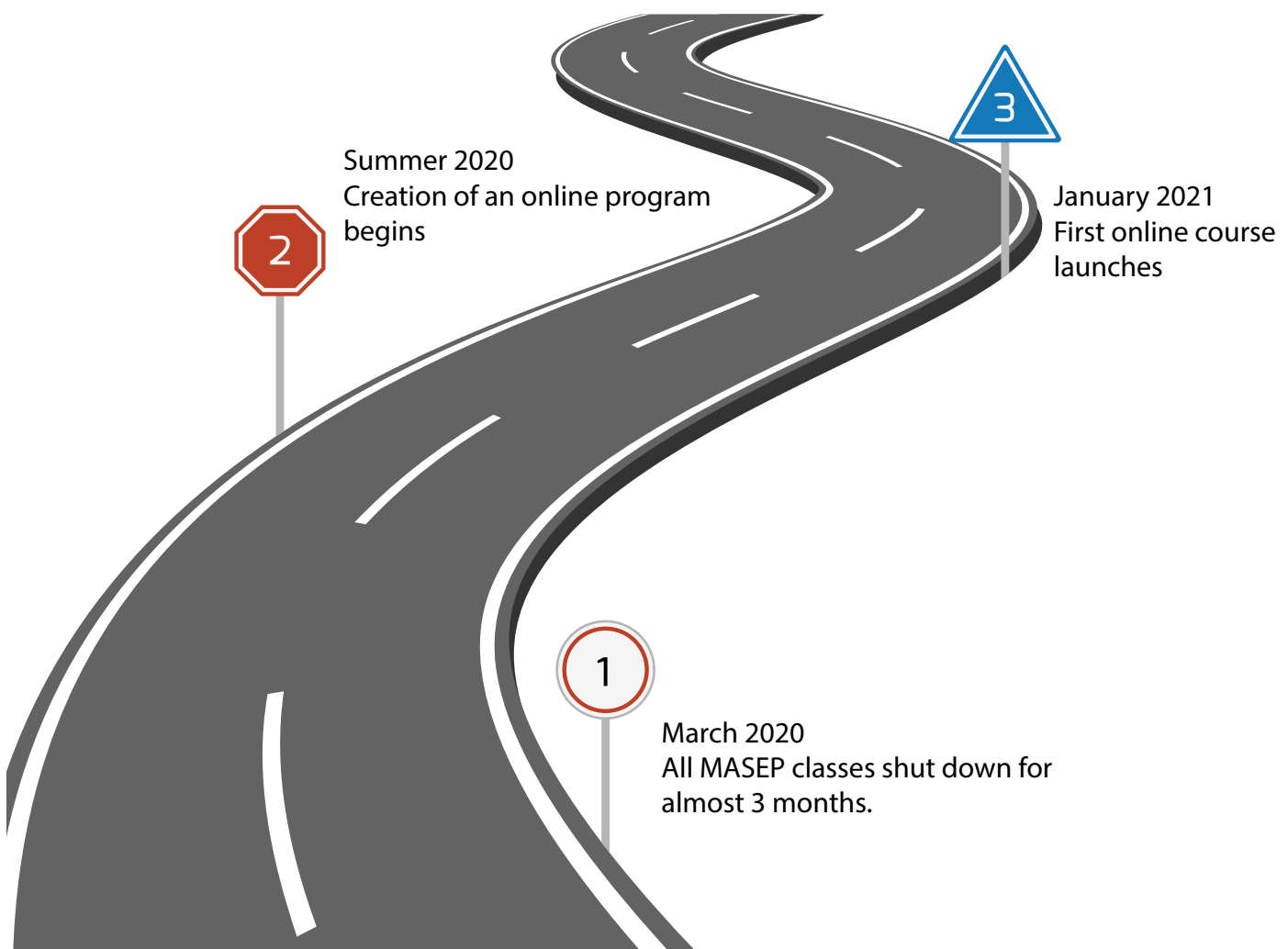
Robertson said through the years she has seen the full range of income and education in MASEP users from individuals who cannot read, to those with graduate degrees. With a poverty rate of nearly 20%, Mississippi ranks number one in the United States in poverty, meaning many individuals required to take MASEP have no computer or internet access and low computer literacy.

When the first online course was launched in January of 2021, Brister found that, despite the months of development, unforeseen issues arose.

"During the development, the biggest challenge was trying to think of all the possibilities of what might go wrong and what needed to be overcome. Since it's been implemented, it's been dealing with those who don't have the technology or the computer skills necessary," Brister said.

The lack of computer literacy on the user end was much greater than expected, leading Gresham to develop a computer literacy test for individuals to complete as part of the application process before they are accepted into the online course. Admittance to the online course is limited to those with a computer and webcam and secure internet access who have a true need to be online, such as a health concern or living out of state.

Shawn Word, jail administrator for the Oktibbeha County Sherriff's office and



MASEP instructor, noted firsthand some of the limitations of operating online. After teaching in-person MASEP courses for four years, Word found it challenging to have a strong connection with participants in the online course. This also led to participation issues as users dealt with distractions that arose as they were taking the course from home.

Word also noted, however, the increased inclusivity of the online courses. Even offenders convicted of a DUI in Mississippi who live out of state must complete the MASEP course, and the online option has made that more manageable.

“I really like it because it gives you the ability to keep doing the class regardless of whether you live in Mississippi,” Word said.

With several online classes completed smoothly, the Research and Development team is ready to launch into the evaluation of the online curriculum.

“As a scientist, I am very interested in demonstrating whether an online class is equally as effective as an in-person. I’d like to scale up and have more online classes and evaluate them,” Robertson said.

The first step in the evaluation process is surveying the participants themselves on their understanding of the course material. Participants are asked to complete one survey before leaving their MASEP course and another 90 days following to track their comprehension of the steps to DUI prevention.

“The idea of our curriculum is to teach people about what the stages of change are and educate them about where they are in the process. The hope is that through the different activities that educate and motivate them and give them underlying reasons to want to change, that we will move them further in that process towards making a change,” Gresham said.

The most important element of evaluation, however, is the recidivism rate of DUI convictions in MASEP participants. The data, given to MASEP by the state, is best studied beginning at nine months after course completion, and is tracked for years afterwards. The ongoing goal of MASEP is to decrease the recidivism rate with each new curriculum development.

Looking to the future, there are vast opportunities for MASEP. If the online course proves to be efficacious, MASEP could potentially be marketed in other states across the country, growing the sustainability of the program as a whole.

“We’ve always had it in the back of our minds that we’d like to expand beyond Mississippi. As far as we are aware, we are the only DUI intervention program in the country operating under the auspices of a university,” Gresham said. “Because of that, we’re really interested in taking this to the national stage. What I built was intended with the idea of being able to do that type of expansion.”

While the MASEP team considers future opportunities, the goal of the organization will always be to increase driver safety in Mississippi through education and intervention. This is how Brister sees lives change.

“We’re changing people’s lives by making them look in the mirror and see what they’re doing to themselves and to their families and helping them change the way they do things,” Brister said. “We’re changing lives and we’re also saving lives.” ■

For more information on the online program, visit www.masep.org/masep-online-program/.

Wolfgang Frese Survey Research Laboratory

In the past year, the Wolfgang Frese Survey Research Laboratory (SRL) collected data for nine research projects. As part of its continued response to the global health pandemic, the SRL conducted its third COVID-19-related survey. These latest data were collected on behalf of the National Institutes of Health. Aside from its work related to the global health pandemic, the SRL collected data for a wide range of research topics. The laboratory collaborated with Mississippi State University's Precision Agriculture Program to measure the personality characteristics of highly skilled unmanned pilots of fixed wing aircraft and drones to determine the degree to which certain personality traits may be related to the skillful piloting of unmanned aircraft. The SRL also worked with the Department of Human Services to determine the average cost of providing childcare in Mississippi so that parents who are eligible for child care subsidies have access to the same level of child care provided to parents who are not eligible for assistance. Additionally, the SRL collected data for the Mississippi Charter Schools Authorization Board to better understand parents' attitudes and opinions about charter schools. Along with several other projects, the SRL continued its work in collecting client satisfaction data for two state agencies that provide critical services to Mississippians in need. This year, the SRL completed its 20th annual client satisfaction survey for the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services and its 5th annual client satisfaction survey for the Mississippi Department of Mental Health.

This year marked Dr. John F. Edwards' fourteenth year directing the SRL, with Laura Grandfield as Laboratory Manager, Amanda Gochanour as Research Associate, Izzy Pellegrine as Project Manager, and Ashleigh Andrews as Shift Supervisor. The SRL welcomed two new shift supervisors, Eniko Marcus and Cy Johnson. The laboratory also employed a staff of more than 50 telephone interviewers. Additionally, Dr. Wolfgang Frese continued to lend his expertise in survey methodology as Emeritus Research Professor.

Mississippi COVID-19 Survey

The SRL administered a telephone-based survey for a nationwide research effort by the National Institutes of Health titled, "Community Engagement Alliance." The purpose of this research was to measure the target populations' health conditions and attitudes toward COVID-19 vaccines. This telephone-based survey focused on members of three minority groups in the state of Mississippi: Black Mississippians, Latinx Mississippians, and members of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. The SRL secured a total of 800 completed surveys from the three respondent groups.

Personality Traits of Remote Aircraft Pilots

Projections indicate that there will be a critical shortage of unmanned pilots for air, ground, and marine vehicle navigation by 2025. A better understanding of the personality traits associated with the skills and proficiencies of unmanned pilots may improve the pilot selection process and aid in assisting trainers in remediating piloting deficiencies. The SRL worked with the Precision Agriculture Program at Mississippi State University to explore whether measures of personality characteristics can help identify individuals who would be best suited for piloting unmanned craft, thereby improving pilot retention.



2021 Childcard Market Rate Interviews

On behalf of the Mississippi Department of Human Services' Child Care Payment Program, the SRL interviewed 625 directors of child care facilities throughout the state of Mississippi to determine the average cost of providing childcare. The Department of Human Services requires these data to assure its subsidy rates are high enough to cover the actual cost of providing childcare so that parents who are eligible for child care subsidies have access to the same level of child care provided to parents who are not eligible for assistance.

2020 Mississippi Charter School Survey

The SRL worked with the Mississippi Charter Schools Authorization Board to administer the 2020 Charter School Survey. This survey is a repeat measure of a survey administered in 2019. The survey respondents include approximately 250 parents who have a child attending a charter school and 400 parents who have a child eligible to attend a charter school, but not enrolled in one. The purpose of this project is to provide the members of the Authorization Board with a better understanding of parents' attitudes and opinions regarding charter schools.

2020 Mississippi Social Climate Survey of Tobacco Control

On behalf of the Tobacco Control Unit at the Social Science Research Center, the SRL administered the Mississippi Social Climate Survey of Tobacco Control. Results from this survey assist researchers in better understanding the degree to which people in Mississippi live in smoke free homes, work in smoke free environments, understand the health risks of using tobacco, and talk to their children about tobacco use. This telephone-based survey of the general public included a representative sample of 1,500 adults residing in the state of Mississippi. Funding for this research was provided by the Mississippi State Department of Health.

2020 Mississippi Vocational Rehabilitation Client Satisfaction Survey

For the twentieth consecutive year, the SRL conducted telephone-based interviews with approximately 1,000 individuals who received vocational rehabilitation services from the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS) during the past 12 months. MDRS uses these data to support its ongoing efforts in program evaluation and development.

2020 Mississippi Department of Mental Health Consumer Satisfaction Survey

For the fifth consecutive year, the SRL conducted the Consumer Satisfaction Survey for the Mississippi Department of Mental Health (MDMH). Using paper-based survey booklets, the SRL surveyed approximately 3,000 individuals who had received mental health services from one of the department's mental health programs. This survey measures consumers' opinions regarding the quality of services provided by MDMH.

Mississippi Stakeholders Survey of Children's Wellbeing

On behalf of the Children's Foundation of Mississippi, the SRL conducted a survey of Mississippi professionals working in multiple occupational sectors that involve the care of, or advocacy for, children. This survey included measures of stakeholders' opinions about child-focused services and interventions. The survey questionnaire was developed as part of a collaborative effort between the Children's Foundation of Mississippi and the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health. Using both web and telephone modalities, the SRL secured 439 completed surveys from a non-probability sampling frame with wide geographic distribution across the state of Mississippi. Findings from this survey were used to draft policy briefs and design future interventions that will improve the wellbeing of Mississippi's children.

Survey of Attitudes Toward Clinical Trial Participation in Mississippi Communities

The SRL partnered with biomedical researchers from The University of Mississippi Medical Center to better understand the barriers toward participation in pediatric clinical trials. A telephone-based survey was designed to measure the prevalence of barriers experienced by caregivers of children with common medical conditions such as asthma, obesity, prematurity, and neurodevelopmental conditions. The survey respondents included a representative sample of households with children under the age of 18 from two geographic strata: Rural (n=300) vs. Urban (n=300), as defined by the Rural-Urban Commuting Area (RUCA) Codes published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service. The results of this survey will drive future efforts to maximize participation in pediatric clinical trials across the state of Mississippi and assist in the development of targeted strategies to improve clinical trial designs.



Grants & Contracts

New Projects

Bethel, C. (2021, June). "A Competency-aware Multi-agent Framework for Human-machine Teams in Adversarial Environments," U.S. Air Force Office of Scientific Research.

Gardner, S. (2021, March). "RED Report" Mississippi Department of Public Safety.

Hanna, H. & Baird-Thomas, C. (2020, November). "HRSA Early Childhood Developmental Health System: Implementation in a High Need State," Health Resources and Services Administration, University of Mississippi Medical Center.

Hanna, H. (2021, March). "Mississippi Department of Human Services Market Rate Survey," Mississippi Department of Human Services.

Hanna, H. & Long, L. (2021, April). "Project ECHO for Childcare Providers," Governor's Emergency Education Response, North Mississippi Education Consortium.

McMillen, D. (2020, July). "Pathfinder Year 22," Office of the Provost, Mississippi State University.

McMillen, R. (2020, August). "Smoke-Free Policy Disparities and Outcomes in Rural Communities in Southern States," University of Kentucky College of Nursing, National Institutes of Health.

McMillen, R. (2020, July). "Data Sets," American Academy of Pediatrics, Flight Attendant Medical Research Center.

McMillen, R. (2020, July). "Surveillance and Evaluation Services for the Mississippi Comprehensive Tobacco Control Program," MSDH.

McMillen, R. (2020, November). "Smoke-Free Policy Disparities and Outcomes in Rural Communities in Southern States," The University of Kentucky College of Nursing and National Institutes of Health.

McMillen, R. (2020, December). "ABC to Quit," Massachusetts General Hospital.

Porter, B. (2020, July). "Highway Analytics Project," The Mississippi Office of Highway Safety, Mississippi Department of Public Safety.

Porter, B. (2020, October). "Analysis Contract with Mississippi Office of Highway Safety Year 2," The Mississippi Office of Highway Safety, Mississippi Department of Public Safety.

Ragsdale, K. (2020, July). "Innovate 4 Fish Feed the Future Fish Innovation Lab, Fish First Zambia," U.S. Agency on International Development.

Ragsdale, K. & Read-Wahidi, M. (2021, February). "Feed the Future Soybean Innovation Lab 2.0: Scaling for Success," University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, U.S. Agency on International Development.

Ragsdale, K. & Read-Wahidi, M. (2020, November). "US Aid Soy Year 8," University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, U.S. Agency on International Development.

Read-Wahidi, M. (2020, November). "GRADA FIL Year 2," U. S. Agency of International Development.

Read-Wahidi, M. & Ragsdale, K. (2020, October). "Mississippi First's Choose Your Method Campaign Evaluations," Teen Health Mississippi, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Rico Mendez, G., Gardner, S., Petrolia, D., & Tolar-Perterson, T. (2021, April). "Complexity-Aware Research and Learning of the McGovern Dole School Meals Programs in Africa," United States Department of Agriculture-Foreign Agricultural Service.

Robertson, A., Baird-Thomas, C., & Gardner, S. (2020, July). "MERC-19 Project Evaluator," Mississippi Department of Mental Health.

Robertson, A. (2020, July). "Mississippi Co-occurring Re-entry Program FY 19," Mississippi Department of Corrections, U.S. Department of Justice.

Seitz, H. (2020, October). "Advancing Undergraduate Research in Applied Communication Science," MSU Office of Research and Economic Development Undergraduate Research Program.

Seitz, H. (2020, July). "Preventing Opioid Misuse In the SouthEast (PROMISE) Initiative," Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

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Seitz, H. (2020, August). "Growing Strong Schools, Families and Communities - Mississippi State University Extension Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program," U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Stubbs-Richardson, M. (2020, July). "RAPID: Analyses of Emotions Expressed in Social Media and Forums During the COVID-19 Pandemic," Mississippi State University.

Walker, B. (2021, February). "Mississippi Kids Count Data Partnership, 2021," Children's Foundation of Mississippi, The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Ongoing Projects

Baird-Thomas, C. (2020, June.) "Medicaid Access Project Evaluation," Mississippi Health Advocacy Program.

Baird-Thomas, C. & Southward, L (2019, April). "Vroom Outreach Project, " Bezos Family Foundation.

Bethel, C. (2019, October). "CHS: Large: Collaborative Research: Participatory Design and Evaluation of Socially Assistive Robots for Use in Mental Health Services in Clinics and Patient Homes," National Science Foundation.

Gardner, S. (2019, July). "Episcopal Community Services MindSet Program Evaluation," Episcopal Community Services.

Gardner, S. (2019, July) "The Alliance Evaluation," Community Foundation for Mississippi.

Gardner, S. (2020, January) "DYS 2019 Report," Mississippi Department of Human Services.

Gardner, S. (2020, February) "2019 DMC Report," Department of Public Safety.

Gardner, S. (2020, April) "Division of Youth Services Annual Report," Department of Human Services.

Hanna, H., Baird-Thomas, C. (2019, September.) "HRSA Early Childhood Developmental Health System: Implementation in a High Need State," University of Mississippi Medical Center, Health Resources and Services Administration.

McMillen, D. L. (2019, July) "Pathfinder, Yr 21," Office of the Provost, Mississippi State University.

McMillen, R. (2019, July). "Data Sets," American Academy of Pediatrics, Flight Attendant Medical Research Center.

McMillen, R. (2019, July.) "Surveillance and Evaluation Services for the Mississippi Comprehensive Tobacco Control Program," Mississippi State Department of Health.

Porter, B. (2020, May.) "Analysis Contract with Mississippi Office of Highway Safety," Mississippi Office of Highway Safety, Mississippi Department of Public Safety.

Seitz, H. (2020, July). "Preventing Opioid Misuse In the SouthEast (PROMISE) Initiative," Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Ragsdale, K. & Read-Wahidi, M. (2019, September). "Focus 4 Teens Evaluation, Year 5," Mississippi First, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Ragsdale, K. & Read-Wahidi, M. (2019, November.) "GRADA FIL Year 1," USAID.

Ragsdale, K. & Read-Wahidi, M. (2019, November.) "USAID Soy Year 7," University of Illinois U.S. Agency for the International Development.

Robertson, A. (2019, July) "20th Circuit Adult Drug Court Treatment Enhancement Project," Madison County Court, SAMHSA.

Robertson, A. (2019, July.) "Asthma Control Program Evaluation Year 3 Extension," Mississippi State Department of Health, CDC.

Robertson, A. (2019, October.) "Evaluation of the Second Chance Act Re-Entry Program for Adults with Co-occurring Substance Abuse and Mental Health Disorders Competitive Grant," MS Department of Mental Health, U.S. Department of Mental Health.

Robertson, A. A., Fountain, B., & Baird-Thomas, C (2018, September). "Advancing, Inspiring, Motivation for Community Health through Extension (AIM for CHANGE)," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Walker, B. (2019, August) "Economic Impact of Mississippi Grants & Philanthropy," Louisiana State University, Mississippi Association of Grantmakers.

Walker, B. (2020, January.) "Mississippi Kids Count Data Partnership," Children's Foundation of Mississippi- The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Publications

Peer Reviewed & Book Chapters

Bolstad, C. J., Porter, B., Brown, C. J., Kennedy, R. E., & Nadorff, M. R. (Forthcoming). The relation between pet ownership, anxiety, and depressive symptoms in late life: Propensity score matched analyses. *Anthrozoös*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08927936.2021.1926707>

Crosbie, E., Snider, K., McMillen, R., Hartman, J., Alvarez, F., Dahir, V. (2020). Expanding Smoke-free Communities: Attitudes and Beliefs Surrounding Smoke-Free Casinos and Bars in Washoe County, Nevada. *Journal of Hospital Management and Health Policy*, 4. <http://dx.doi.org/10.21037/jhmhp-20-78>

Dursa, E. K., Cao, G., Porter, B., Culpepper, W. J., & Schneiderman, A. I. (In Press). The health of Gulf War and Gulf era veterans over time: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' Gulf War Longitudinal Study. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*.

Guttmann, K., Huber, M., Seitz, H., Flibotte, J., & Demauro, S. (2021, January). Goals of care discussions and moral distress among neonatal intensive care unit staff. *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpainsymman.2021.01.124>

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Jacobson, I. G., Adler, A. B., Roenfeldt, K. A., Porter, B., LeardMann, C. A., Rull, R. P., & Hoge, C. W. (In Press). Combat experience, new-onset mental health conditions, and posttraumatic growth in U.S. service members. *Psychiatry: Interpersonal and Biological Processes*.

LeardMann, C. A., McMaster, H. S., Warner, S., Esquivel, A. P., Porter, B., Powell, T. M., Tu, X. M., Lee, W. W., Rull, R. P., & Hoge, C. W. (April, 2021). Comparison of posttraumatic stress disorder

checklist instruments From Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition vs Fifth Edition in a large cohort of US military service members and veterans. *JAMA Network Open*, 4(4), e218072. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2021.8072>

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McCall, W. V., Porter, B., Pate, A. R., Bolstad, C. J., Drapeau, C. W., Krystal, A. D., Benca, R. M., Rumble, M. E., & Nadorff, M. R. (In Press). Examining suicide assessment measures for research use: Using item response theory to optimize psychometric assessment for research on suicidal ideation. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sltb.12791>

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Robertson, M. N., Downey, L. H., Seitz, H. H., Hardman, A. M., & Buys, D. R. (2021). Rural adults' perceived role of family members in prescription opioid misuse prevention: Implications for family-based approaches. *Journal of Rural Health*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jrh.12565>

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Stubbs-Richardson, M. (2020, August). Responses to bullying among high-school students through the lens of general strain theory. *Sociological Spectrum*, 40:5, 362-380. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02732173.2020.1799275>

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Stubbs-Richardson, M. & May, D. C. (2020, September). Social contagion in bullying: An examination of strains and types of bullying victimization in peer networks. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*. DOI: 10.1007/s12103-020-09572-y.

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Surbhi, S., Brooks, I. M., Shuvo, S., Zareie, P., Tolley, E. A., Cossman, R. E., Leak, C., Davis, R. L., Stewart, A. J., & Bailey, J. E. (2020, July 15). A Mid-South Chronic Disease Registry and Practice-based Research Network to Address Disparities. *The American Journal of Managed Care*. 26(7): e211-e218. <https://doi.org/10.37765/ajmc.2020.43764>

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Walker, C. S., Walker, B. H., Brown, D. C., Buttross, S., & Sarver, D. E. (2021). Defining the role of exposure to ACEs in ADHD: examination in a national sample of US children. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 112, 104884. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2020.104884>

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Gardner, S. & Love, T. (2021). An Assessment of Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Mississippi's Juvenile Justice System: 2020 Report. Mississippi Department of Public Safety, Office of justice Programs.

Rico Méndez, G., Stubbs-Richardson, M., Mohanty, S. & Cosby, A. (2021). Implications of Social Media on Disaster Response: Commentary on the Flint Twitterverse. In T. Thornton Neaves, A. D. Williams, K. M. Simon & J. F. Sklarew (Eds.), *Managing Challenges for the Flint Water Crisis* (pp. 1-17). Westphalia Press.

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Robertson, A. A., & Gresham, K. (August 2020). 20th Circuit Adult Drug Court Treatment Enhancement Project, Year 1 Progress Report. Report to the Substance Abuse and mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Social Science Research Center, Mississippi State University.

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Yigit, I. A., Brown, D. C., Walker, B. H., Pellegrine, S. E., Baird-Thomas, C., Hanna, H. L., Buttross, S. (2021, May). Perceived Barriers to Developmental Screening among Children Ages 0-5: Results from a Statewide Survey of Health Care Providers in Mississippi. *Journal of the Mississippi State Medical Association*, <https://digital.cenveomobile.com/publication/?m=63060&i=705391&p=6&ver=html5>

Presentations

Baird-Thomas, C. (PI), Walker, B., Anreddy, S., C., Stouffer, Long, L., Bell, L., McCown, J., and Brown, D., (2021, January 28). Learn about data for Mississippi's Families and Children. Staff from the W.K. Kellogg Mississippi Data project conducted a virtual Presentation (90 minutes) of our website, data products produced (briefs, factsheets & county-level infographics), GIS maps, and Tableau dashboards. [Virtual Presentation]. Mississippi and Louisiana W.K. Kellogg grantees to access and utilize the information available to them.

Brown, A., & Seitz, H. H. (2021, May). Changing the minds of climate change deniers: Effects of message theme and source. [Paper Presentation]. International Communication Association 71st Annual Conference (virtual conference).

Brown, D. C., Lariscy, J., & Walker, B. H. (2021, May). State-Level Trends in Lifespan Variability in the United States, 1960-2014. [Paper Presentation]. Population Association of America.

Cash, R. A., Walker, B. H., & Sarver, D. E. (2020, October). ADHD and obesity: Understanding health behaviors that modify risk. [Paper presentation]. Mississippi Psychological Association.

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Gardner, S. (2021, January 13). Child Health and Development. [Presentation]. Institute for the Advancement of Minority Health's Blue Table Talk.

Garrett, G. & Hemphill, T. (2021, June). Oh, Behave! Creating a Behavior Support Toolbox. [Presentation] Early Childhood Specialized Boot Camp Training on behalf of the Child Health and Development: Mississippi Thrive! project.

Long, B. (2021, June) Serve and Return: How to Build Young Children's Brains. [Presentation]. 2021 High Quality Director's Child Care Institute on behalf of the Child Health and Development: Mississippi Thrive! project.

Long, B. & Long, L. (2021, June). Social-Emotional Support of Young Children during Challenging Times. [Presentation]. 2021 High Quality Director's Child Care Institute on behalf of the Child Health and Development: Mississippi Thrive! project.

Long, B., Long L., & Poole, C. (2021, June). Implicit Bias in Early Childhood. [Presentation]. Early Childhood Specialized Boot Camp Training on behalf of the Child Health and Development: Mississippi Thrive! project.

Long, B., Love, T., & Martin, H. (2020, November 10). Supporting Early Childhood Development: Turn Everyday Moments into Brain-Building Moments. [Virtual presentation]. Mississippi Parent Training and

Information Center for the Child Health Development Project: Mississippi Thrive!

Long, B., Love, T., and Martin, H. (2021, January). Supporting Early Childhood Development: Turn Everyday Moments into Brain-Building Moments. [Webinar]. Mississippi Parent Training and Information Center (MSPTI) for the Child Health Development Project: Mississippi Thrive!.

Long, B. & Martin, H. (2021, June). Be a Part of Vroom. [Presentation]. Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV). Given on behalf of the Child Health and Development: Mississippi Thrive! project.

Long, L. (2020, July). BRAIN BUILDING: Supporting Early Childhood Development. [Virtual Presentation]. MIECHV Healthy Families Mississippi Home Visitors.

Long, L. (2020, August). MIECHV Healthy Families Mississippi Training: How to build young children's brains by using Serve and Return interactions. [Virtual Presentation]. MIECHV Healthy Families Mississippi Home Visitors.

Long, L. (2020, September). MIECHV Healthy Families Mississippi Training: How to build young children's brains by using Serve and Return interactions. [Virtual Presentation]. MIECHV Healthy Families Mississippi Home Visitors.

Presentations

- Long, L. (2020, December 3 and 9) Brain Building: Supporting Early Childhood Development. [Virtual Presentation] Mississippi Department of Education Pre-K and KG Professional Development training platform.
- Long, L. (2021, January) You have what it takes to help your children thrive, and we have the tools: The Child Health and Development Project, Mississippi Thrive! [Recorded Presentation]. "Informed in 5" social media presentation for the Mississippi Parent Training and Information Center.
- Long, L. & Love, T. (2021, June). Brain Building: Supporting Early Childhood Development and Brain Architecture Game. [Presentation]. 2021 High Quality Director's Child Care Institute on behalf of the Child Health and Development: Mississippi Thrive! project.
- Martin, H. (2020, July). Be a Part of Vroom: Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program. [Virtual Presentation]. MIECHV Healthy Families Mississippi Home Visitors.
- Martin, H. (2020, December). Introduction to Vroom®. [Virtual presentation]. Mississippi Family Support Partnership and Bezos Family Foundation.
- Martin, H. (2021, January). Do you see what I see? The power and opportunity in Perspective Taking from Mind in the Making. [Virtual presentation]. Forum for the Future conference.
- Martin, H. (2021, January). Vroom Brain Building Moments® with Serve and Return. [Virtual presentation]. Mississippi Department of Education Pre-K and Kindergarten Professional Development training platform.
- Martin, H. (2021, January). Making Connections with Vroom® and Mind in the Making. [Virtual Presentation]. Early Childhood Coalition of Tupelo/ Lee County.
- Martin, H. (2021, June). Vroom®. [Presentation]. 2021 High Quality Director's Child Care Institute on behalf of the Child Health and Development: Mississippi Thrive! project.
- Martin, H., & Poole, C. (2020 July 28). Learn the Signs, Act Early. [Virtual panel]. La Leche League of Jackson Metro Mississippi.
- McMillen, R. (2020, August). Knowledge, attitudes and practices related to COVID-19 in Mississippi. [Presentation]. American Academy of Pediatrics' Tobacco Consortium Summer Virtual Meeting.
- McMillen, R. Vaping: The Knowns, the Known Unknowns, and the Unknown Unknowns. (2021, February 4). [Invited Speaker]. EnrichMS 2021 Virtual Vaping Summit. www.eventcadence.com/e/2021_Virtual_Vaping_Summit
- McMillen R. (2021, May 27). The Social Climate of Tobacco Control: Child Care Doctor Counseling. [Virtual Presentation]. UMMC Cancer Center & Research Institute.
- McMillen, R. Vaping: A Path to Better Health: Chronic Disease Prevention and Management. (2021, June 23-25). [Invited Speaker]. 1st Annual Virtual Symposium.
- Poole, C. (2021, June). Oh, Behave! Creating a Behavior Support Toolbox. [Presentation]. 2021 High Quality Director's Child Care Institute on behalf of the Child Health and Development: Mississippi Thrive! project.
- Poole, C. & Anreddy, S. (2021, April). Mapping Mississippi's Early Childhood Resources. [Presentation]. Mississippi Programs of Hope Second Quarter Advisory Council Meeting.
- Porter, B. (2020, November). Psychometric Testing of the Brief MSPSS and C-PTGI-SF. [Presentation]. Canadian Armed Forces Directorate Research Personnel and Family Services. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.
- Ragsdale, K., Read-Wahidi, M.R., & Kolbila, R. (2020, August 28). SIL's Multi-Crop Thresher Initiative: Promoting Gender Equity and Ownership [Virtual presentation]. SIL Multi-Crop Thresher Webinar Symposium. USAID and the Feed the Future Soybean Innovation Lab.

Presentations

Ragsdale, K., Read-Wahidi, M.R., Marinda, P., Pincus, L., Torell, E. & Kolbila, R. (2021, February 23-26). Using the Household Hunger Scale to explore food insecurity among smallscale fishers, processors, and traders at Zambia's Lake Bangweulu: Fish4Zambia Results. [Poster Presentation]. 2021 Women and Gender in International Development Conference, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA. <https://www.fishinnovationlab.msstate.edu/newsroom/2021/03/fish4zambia-team-presents-2021-women-and-gender-international-development>

Read-Wahidi, M.R., & Ragsdale, K. (2020, August 26). Focus4Teens Evaluation Project - Lessons Learned: Qualitative Assessments with Mississippi Delta Parents, Teens, Health Providers and Youth-Serving Organizations. [Virtual presentation]. Learn. Grow. Evolve. Increasing Access for Mississippi Delta Teens – Focus4Teens Virtual Partnership Meeting.

Read-Wahidi, M.R. (2021, May 19). USDA-funded gender and development seminar. [Invited Virtual Speaker]. Texas A&M University.

Settle, Q. & Seitz, H. H. (2021, June). Using experiential learning to help undergraduates understand the science of science communication. [Poster presentation]. 67th Annual

North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture Conference.

Seitz, H. (2020, August 14). Using communication science to address today's pressing health issues. [Virtual presentation]. Mississippi State University Alumni Association Bulldog Bites series.

Seitz, H. (2020, October). Correcting Scientific Misinformation. [Seminar presentation]. Department of Agricultural Economics, Mississippi State University, Starkville, MS.

Seitz, H. (2020, November). Communicating for Behavior Change. [Presentation]. Office of Nutrition Education Statewide Training, Mississippi State University Extension Service, Starkville, MS.

Seitz, H. H. (2021, January). Using communication science to promote cancer prevention and detection. [Presentation] Grand Rounds at Cancer Center and Research Institute, University of Mississippi Medical Center, Jackson, MS.

Seitz, H., Robertson, M. N., Steen, J., & Buys, D. (2020, November 19-22). Development and pretesting of prescription opioid misuse prevention messages: Results and implications for practice. [Virtual paper presentation]. National Communication Association 106th Annual Convention.

Sinclair, C. (2021, April). How to Avoid Becoming a Misinformation Super Spreader. [Invited Presentation]. John C. Culver Public Policy Center at Simpson College.

Stouffer, C. (2020, December 11). How to navigate and report program information using the Tobacco Reporting and Progress System (TRAPS), data portal. [Recorded Presentation]. Office of Tobacco Control New Directors Training. Virtual presentation (3-hour), recorded for future viewing.

Stouffer, C. (2021, January 13). How to navigate and report program information using the Tobacco Reporting and Progress System (TRAPS), data portal. [Virtual Presentation]. Office of Tobacco Control New Program Training for Enrich MS staff and Division Director.

Stouffer, C. (2021, January 21). How to navigate and report program information using the Tobacco Reporting and Progress System (TRAPS), data portal. [Virtual Presentation]. Office of Tobacco Control New Program Training for CATCH staff and Division Director.

Walker, B. H., & Brown, D. C. (2021, May). Rural-Urban Differences in Lifespan Variation in the United States. [Paper Presentation]. Population Association of America.

Awards & Recognitions

Cindy Bethel:

- Dr. Cindy Bethel is general co-chair for the ACM/IEEE International Conference on Human-Robot Interaction. The conference will be held virtually March 9-11. Learn more about the conference at humanrobotinteraction.org/2021/.

Emile Creel:

- Emile Creel, SSRC communication coordinator, was recognized with a Certificate of Merit at the Public Relations Association of Mississippi Annual State Conference for the 2019 Annual Report.

Sayantani Dutta:

- Sayantani Dutta, a graduate research assistant in the STaRS Lab, placed 3rd in the 2021 Human-Robot Interaction International Conference elevator pitch competition. Read about Sayantani's pitch at <https://bit.ly/3dIQOvI>.

Sheena Gardner:

- Dr. Sheena Gardner and Dr. Randy Little, a professor in the agricultural economics department, will receive funding for a William M. White Special Project Award.

Heather Hanna:

- Dr. Heather L. Hanna served on the Mississippi Campaign for Grade Level Reading (CGLR) Advisory Board. Mississippi CGLR is a statewide effort to ensure all children read on grade level by the end of third grade.

Robert Kolbila:

- Gender Impacts Lab Graduate Research Assistant Robert Kolbila was awarded a scholarship to attend the 2021 Women and Gender in International Development Conference. An initiative of Virginia Tech's Women and Gender in International Development Program, the conference was held virtually February 23-26.
- Robert Kolbila placed 3rd in the Arts and Humanities category at the MSU Graduate Student Research Symposium.

- Robert Kolbila and Taylor Ray's wins at the Graduate Student Research Symposium were announced on the MSU newsroom. Read the story at <https://bit.ly/3wrcO6W>.

Bradley Long:

- Bradley Long, Tiara Love, and Callie Poole were selected as members of the Maternal & Child Health Community Coalition, sponsored by the Institute for the Advancement of Minority Health.

Tiara Love:

- Bradley Long, Tiara Love, and Callie Poole were selected as members of the Maternal & Child Health Community Coalition, sponsored by the Institute for the Advancement of Minority Health.

Robert McMillen:

- Dr. Robert McMillen was featured in the UMMC Cancer Control, Epidemiology & Disparities Research newsletter. Read the newsletter at <https://bit.ly/3dWxzQR>.

Callie Poole:

- Callie Poole was selected as a member of the Mississippi Act Early State team as a partner with the Institute for Disability Studies at the University of Southern Mississippi. The Institute for Disability Studies has been awarded funding by the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to address the need for an increased coordinated system of care and family engagement to help mitigate the impacts of COVID-19.
- Bradley Long, Tiara Love, and Callie Poole were selected as members of the Maternal & Child Health Community Coalition, sponsored by the Institute for the Advancement of Minority Health.
- Callie Poole was selected as a Mississippi State Health Assessment & Improvement Committee member. She serves as a member of the Social Determinants of Health workgroup.

Awards & Recognitions

Kathleen Ragsdale:

- The Fish4Zambia Quick Start Project, lead by Dr. Kathleen Ragsdale (PI), Dr. Mary Read-Wahidi (co-PI), and others outside the SSRC, was highlighted in the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Fish Year 1 Annual Summary Report. The 20-page report was submitted to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and is available at fishinnovationlab.msstate.edu/sites/www.fishinnovationlab.msstate.edu/files/2020-08/FINAL%20Y1%20Annual%20Report%20Summary.pdf
- Dr. Kathleen Ragsdale and Dr. Mary Read-Wahidi were featured on Agrilinks for work with the Soybean Innovation Lab and a second time for work with the Fish Innovation Lab. Find the articles at <https://bit.ly/3uju7F2> and <https://bit.ly/2R0J3tq>.
- Dr. Ragsdale and Dr. Read-Wahidi's work with Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Fish was featured in two news items on the Lab's website. Read at <https://bit.ly/3wlo678> and <https://bit.ly/3rVbHZR>.
- Dr. Kathleen Ragsdale and Dr. Mary Read-Wahidi were invitee attendees at the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Fish External Advisory Board Meeting. The two-hour event - which was held on October 21 - was led by Dr. Mark Lawrence (FIL Director, Mississippi State University) and Dr. Elin Torell (FIL Deputy Director, University of Rhode Island). The FIL External Advisory Board members include Dr. Bryan McCoy (Director, FirstWave Group; CEO, Yalelo), Dr. Michael Phillips (Director, CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-Food Systems; Director of Aquaculture and Fisheries, WorldFish), Dr. Melba Reantaso (Aquaculture Officer, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), Dr. Rohana Subasinghe (Director, FutureFish), and Dr. Karen Veverica (Former Director, Auburn University E.W. Shell Fisheries Research Center).
- Dr. Kathleen Ragsdale has been invited to join the PLOS ONE Editorial Board. Ragsdale will serve as an editor for the disciplinary area of Social and Behavioral Sciences.

- Dr. Kathleen Ragsdale and Dr. Mary Read-Wahidi were featured on Agrilinks for work with the Soybean Innovation Lab and a second time for work with the Fish Innovation Lab. Find the articles at <https://bit.ly/3uju7F2> and <https://bit.ly/2R0J3tq>.

Taylor Ray:

- Taylor Ray, a graduate research assistant with the Data Science for the Social Sciences Lab, placed 1st in the Physics, Mathematics, and Computational Sciences/Engineering category at the MSU Graduate Student Research Symposium.
- Robert Kolbila and Taylor Ray's wins at the Graduate Student Research Symposium were announced on the MSU newsroom. Read the story at <https://bit.ly/3wrcO6W>.

Mary Read-Wahidi:

- Dr. Kathleen Ragsdale and Dr. Mary Read-Wahidi were featured on Agrilinks for work with the Soybean Innovation Lab and a second time for work with the Fish Innovation Lab. Find the articles at <https://bit.ly/3uju7F2> and <https://bit.ly/2R0J3tq>.
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Awards & Recognitions

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- Dr. Kathleen Ragsdale and Dr. Mary Read-Wahidi were featured on Agrilinks for work with the Soybean Innovation Lab and a second time for work with the Fish Innovation Lab. Find the articles at <https://bit.ly/3uju7F2> and <https://bit.ly/2R0J3tq>.

Holli Seitz:

- Dr. Holli Seitz was recognized with an Honors Faculty medallion at the Shackouls Honors College annual awards ceremony on April 24.
- Dr. Holli Seitz, director of The Message Laboratory, received the 2021 Excellence in Research award from the MSU Department of Communication.

Colleen Sinclair:

- Dr. Colleen Sinclair was interviewed live on Al Jazeera English on July 29th. Dr. Sinclair wrote a blog for Psychology Today based on her interview with Al Jazeera English. The blog can be found at psychologytoday.com/us/blog/unpacking-social-relations/202008/the-source-misinformation-matters.
- Dr. Colleen Sinclair was asked by the Federation of American Scientists to submit questions to Senator Roger Wicker's office to be used in the Congressional Hearing on Misinformation that occurred on October 28.
- Dr. Colleen Sinclair and Dr. Megan Stubbs-Richardson authored a story for Domestic Violence Awareness Month on the MSU news page that was shared by Mississippi Free Press, The Clarion-Ledger, and the Meridan Star.

Read the story here msstate.edu/newsroom/article/2020/10/opinion-domestic-violence-awareness-month-raises-question-why-does-she.

- Dr. Colleen Sinclair was interviewed by the Sun Herald as part of a story on social media use. Read the article at www.sunherald.com/article247161409.html.
- Dr. Colleen Sinclair was interviewed by NewsNation as part of a story on how to avoid online shopping scams. Watch the interview at <https://youtu.be/WjEkDY23s-I>.
- Dr. Colleen Sinclair met with staffers from the House of Representatives Committee on Science, Space, and Technology to discuss the state of the science regarding online misinformation and radicalization on March 5th.
- Dr. Colleen Sinclair's talk at Simpson College was covered in an article in the Des Moines, Iowa, Business Record. Read the story at <https://bit.ly/3uvEFLm>.

Megan Stubbs-Richardson:

- Dr. Colleen Sinclair and Dr. Megan Stubbs-Richardson authored a story for Domestic Violence Awareness Month on the MSU news page that was shared by Mississippi Free Press, The Clarion-Ledger, and the Meridan Star. Read the story here msstate.edu/newsroom/article/2020/10/opinion-domestic-violence-awareness-month-raises-question-why-does-she.

Georgiana Swan:

- Georgiana Swan, an undergraduate research assistant, was named one of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration's Outstanding Students of the Year.

Awards & Recognitions

Ben Walker:

- Ben Walker, a project manager, appeared on The Children's Foundation of Mississippi's monthly Chat about Children series. Walker and Foundation Executive Director Dr. Linda Southward discuss Mississippi's Risk & Reach Report, the new data-driven resource that community groups, policymakers, and funders can use to guide their work to improve the lives of Mississippi children. Find the video online at <https://youtu.be/bEgHBOpuB2Q>.

Gender Impacts Lab:

- The SSRC's Gender Impacts Lab's website - which is led by Dr. Kathleen Ragsdale and Dr. Mary Read-Wahidi - received an Award of Excellence for digital tactical materials from the PRISM awards program, from Public Relations Association of Mississippi's Annual State Conference. Dr. Terri Hernandez (Department of Communication) worked hand-in-hand with Drs. Ragsdale and Read-Wahidi and directly supervised a team of Communication undergraduate students in a capstone project to develop and launch the Gender Impacts Lab website.

Tobacco Data Lab:

- Dr. Robert McMillen's work with the Nevada Tobacco Prevention Coalition was featured in Nevada Today and Carson Now. Find the stories at unr.edu/nevada-today/news/2020/expanding-smoke-free-laws and carsonnow.org/story/10/06/2020/research-shows-nevada-locals-favor-expanding-smoke-free-laws-include-casinos-and-ba
- Emily McClelland and the Tobacco Data Lab's work was cited in a newsletter for the Truth Initiative. Read the newsletter at https://truthinitiative.org/sites/default/files/media/files/2021/04/Truth_E-Cigarette%20Factsheet_PATTERNNS_final.pdf
- Work from the Tobacco Data Lab is cited in the CDC's Office on Smoking and Health's Best Practices User Guide. Find the guide at <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/stateandcommunity/best-practices-partnerships/index.html>.
Sociology.

Acknowledgements:

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