Reflection, or deep and considered thinking, generates ideas and sparks action. We often reflect as individuals and, ideally, use our learning to guide how we act in our lives.

Imagine, then, what might happen if we reflect together on a problem and its solutions. Imagine if we connect across divides to view multiple angles on a problem and the universe of solutions. Imagine the potential for comprehensive learning, collective action, and sustained impact.

Given our current challenges, it is more urgent than ever to reflect and act together. COVID-19 health consequences cannot be understood apart from the profound racial and economic inequalities that shape our systems and lives. Impacts of school disruption on children cannot be understood apart from families and communities or local, state, and federal policy. We must bridge areas of research and practice to uncover the challenges and find effective solutions.

The Institute of Human Development and Social Change (IHDSC) brings people together to study and advance human development in social context. Over the past year, we have supported the development of over 75 grant proposals and managed over $58 million in active awards. Researchers across disciplines work with communities, policymakers, and practitioners to answer key questions about health and wellbeing, education and child development, justice and child welfare, and race, poverty, and inequality. What reduces racial disparities in school suspensions? Do parenting programs in primary care settings promote school readiness? What types of teaching practices enhance mental health for refugee children? How does bilingual development relate to cognitive and academic learning? What is the role of afterschool programs in reducing inequality?

Throughout the year, IHDSC has convened networks for reflection, research, and action. An interdisciplinary faculty group, NYU Blueprints for Progressive Change in Juvenile Justice, has met with local policy leaders to determine how to advance education trajectories for youth in the justice system. Scholars and community leaders have reflected on the National Academy of Sciences’ Roadmap To Reducing Child Poverty and the next steps for enacting its recommendations. With an award from the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), IHDSC has gathered a research-policy-practice network to train 24 new doctoral fellows from groups underrepresented in the education sciences to become the next generation of education leaders. With support from NYU’s Cross-Cutting Initiative on Inequality, the Institute has awarded seed funds to junior scholars and new investigative teams to study - and dismantle - inequities in our schools and communities.

Reflection inspires inquiry and action, which, in turn, advance science and impact society. Much work remains to be done to promote human development in social context. We will do that work together.
Who We Are

The Institute of Human Development and Social Change (IHDSCL) supports rigorous research and training across social, behavioral, educational, policy, communication, and health sciences. Through collaborative and interdisciplinary research, IHDSC works to bridge the disconnect between the science of human development and policies and practices that affect children, youth, and families in diverse contexts.

A joint initiative of the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development, Wagner School of Public Service, Faculty of Arts and Science, and Office of the Provost, IHDSC brings together over 70 faculty and hundreds of students and staff with the goals of knowledge creation (research), knowledge transmission (education), and knowledge utilization (policy and practice).

Specifically, the Institute provides:

1. infrastructure for grants development and management;
2. interdisciplinary training of students;
3. support for faculty to launch new programs of inquiry;
4. an intellectual community for substantive and methodological cross-fertilization in key thematic areas; and,
5. opportunities for social impact through partnership and dissemination.
By the Numbers

Research Expenditures by Fiscal Year

Since the 2012-2013 fiscal year, IHDSC has averaged over $12 million in research expenditures each year. These expenditures include both direct and indirect costs on each active grant.

Active Grants by Funding Source

In the 2019-2020 fiscal year, over 60% of active grants through IHDSC were funded by US federal sources including the National Institutes of Health and Institute of Education Sciences. 18.5% of active grants were funded by US foundations such as the Russell Sage Foundation, the William T. Grant Foundation, the Spencer Foundation, and others.

*All values are specific to the 2019-2020 fiscal year*
Global TIES for Children Received LEGO Foundation Grant

Global TIES for Children, an international research center embedded within IHDSC and NYU's Abu Dhabi Research Institute, received funding as part of a $100 million grant from the LEGO foundation to broaden its research on young children’s development in humanitarian settings.

The funding expanded a partnership developed in 2017 between Global TIES for Children, Sesame Workshop, and the International Rescue Committee (IRC). Sesame Workshop and IRC were previously awarded a $100 million grant from the John. D. and Catherine MacArthur Foundation to bring early education to young children affected by the Syrian refugee crisis. Global TIES for Children agreed to manage and implement the evidenced-based research and evaluation portions of the program.

“We are honored to partner with Sesame Workshop, BRAC, and the IRC on this historic initiative to understand how play-based learning and support can build a future of hope, creativity, and engagement for a generation of children in some of the most challenging contexts in the world,” said Dr. Hirokazu Yoshikawa, the co-director of Global TIES for Children. “In our research we plan to understand how critical early childhood development services can impact the lives of displaced families in their cultural and community contexts.”

$4.6 Million Received to Renew IES-PIRT Program

Dr. James Kemple, executive director of the Research Alliance for New York City Schools at NYU Steinhardt, and Dr. Elise Cappella, a professor and director of IHDSC, were awarded $4.6 million over five years to continue funding IHDSC’s Predoctoral Interdisciplinary Research Training (IES-PIRT) program.

The award will allow the IHDSC to offer 4-year fellowships to incoming doctoral students from three NYU schools (NYU Steinhardt; NYU’s Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service; and NYU School of Arts and Science) with the goal of training a new generation of education researchers, scholars, and leaders to assist US policymakers and practitioners with tackling our nation’s most pressing education issues.

Under the leadership of Kemple and Cappella, the program will recruit 24 fellows primarily from groups underrepresented in the education sciences, including scholars of color, students from low-income families, immigrant origin students, and individuals with disabilities. Throughout their fellowships, students will be embedded in one of IHDSC’s rigorous research teams.

The program was originally funded by IES in 2008 and again in 2014. This award was granted under IES’ Research Training in the Education Sciences program.
NYU Blueprints for Progressive Change in Juvenile Justice

Youth face profound and predictable disparities in their encounters with school disciplinary policies and the legal system. Eliminating these disparities and accompanying social inequality requires innovative, multidisciplinary, and responsive solutions – solutions that bridge education, mental health, public safety, child welfare, and the law. NYU Blueprints for Progressive Change in Juvenile Justice involves faculty working across disciplinary boundaries and with practitioners and policymakers to advance equitable opportunities for justice-involved youth to succeed in their education, health, and life trajectories.

With co-leadership from Dr. Elise Cappella (IHDSC) and Dr. Michael Lindsey (McSilver Institute for Poverty Policy and Research), and support from NYU’s Cross-Cutting Initiative on Inequality, NYU Blueprints develops and tests research-based solutions to create meaningful and long-lasting change in the lives of children and their families. The group’s approach builds on specific, identified needs within and across settings alongside evidence-informed strategies that can be leveraged to address these needs. Ultimately, the goal is to expand opportunities for school and life success for youth who face challenges due to school suspensions and justice involvement.

SMART Beginnings Project

The SMART Beginnings project is a collaboration between Drs. Pamela Morris (NYU Steinhardt), Alan Mendelsohn (NYU School of Medicine), and Daniel Shaw (University of Pittsburgh). The study tests a comprehensive approach to the promotion of school readiness in low-income families, beginning shortly after the birth of the child, through enhancement of positive parenting practices and reduction of psychosocial stressors. The project integrates two evidence-based interventions into pediatric primary care settings to facilitate population-level engagement and scalability.

The first phase of the research project, which ran from 2014 to 2019, served 400 families in two urban centers with varying constellations of risk, and demonstrated positive impacts on parenting practices and child development. The renewal award from the National Institutes of Health of $5.9 million over five years will allow for the research team to continue intervention delivery through child age 36 months and test the effectiveness of this comprehensive approach on child outcomes at time of formal school entry.
Perspectives on A Roadmap To Reducing Child Poverty

In 2015, Congress asked the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to conduct a comprehensive study of child poverty in the United States, and to provide a nonpartisan, evidence-based report that would provide its assessment of the most effective means for reducing child poverty by half in the next 10 years. The National Academies appointed a committee with expertise in economics, psychology, cognitive science, public policy, education, sociology, and pediatrics to conduct the study and issue a report.

Dr. J. Lawrence Aber (NYU Steinhardt) and Dr. Benard Dreyer (NYU Langone) served on the expert committee and co-authored A Roadmap to Reducing Childhood Poverty. The comprehensive report concludes that poverty causes negative outcomes for children, and recommends “packages” of evidence-based policies and programs that could cut the child poverty rate while increasing employment and earnings in low-income families.

On October 30th 2019, Drs. Aber and Dreyer offered their perspectives on the report and discussed the proposed policies and programs with Jennifer Jones-Austin (Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies) and Dr. Xavier de Souza Briggs (Ford Foundation).

Social Science for Impact Forum

Each year, NYU researchers analyze New York State Medicaid, New York City Department of Education, and New York City subsidized housing data to discover new patterns of family experiences and outcomes and inform new approaches to fighting poverty, reducing inequality, and expanding opportunity in our communities. NYU's Social Science for Impact Forum (SSI) took place virtually on May 11 2020 and featured presentations from Dr. Sherry Glied (NYU Wagner), Dr. Ingrid Ellen (NYU Wagner), and Dr. James Kemple (NYU Research Alliance) about three NYU-housed datasets (e.g., HEAL, CoreData, and SCHMA).

Following the forum, IHDSC announced the 2020 SSI research competition. SSI aimed to support graduate students and early career researchers in conducting research using one or more of the health, housing, and education datasets available at NYU to answer compelling research questions and inform viable social policies.

IHDSC hosted these events to advance solutions to the challenge of inequality as part of our theme of “Unraveling Inequality, Expanding Opportunity.”
Community Screening of *Crime + Punishment*

A semifinalist for the 91st Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature, *Crime + Punishment* tells the story of N.Y.P.D. whistleblowers who risked their careers to challenge illegal policing practices. On January 31, 2019, IHDSC hosted a community screening of the documentary followed by a research and policy panel discussion.

The panel featured documentary cast and crew Stephen Maing (director), Lt. Edwin Raymond (film subject), and Pedro Hernandez (film subject), as well as Angelo Pinto (advocate and attorney), Dr. Patrick Sharkey (IHDSC affiliate), and Dr. Amanda Geller (IHDSC affiliate).

Data & Ethics: In the public sector for the public good?

In May of 2019, IHDSC hosted an annual research-policy-practice conference in partnership with the Institute of Education Sciences-funded Predoctoral Interdisciplinary Research Training program (IES-PIRT), the Center for Practice and Research at the Intersection of Information, Society, and Methodology (PRIISM) and the Research Alliance for New York City Schools.

The conference featured a keynote from danah boyd, principal researcher at Microsoft Research and a founder of Data & Society. Following the keynote, the conference hosted two panels: the first on using and evaluating algorithms in the public sector (moderated by Dr. Anne Washington of NYU Steinhardt) and the second on ethical research and data collection (moderated by Dr. Ravi Shroff of NYU Steinhardt). The conference concluded with a debate moderated by Dr. James Kemple (NYU Research Alliance).

The Institute of Human Development and Social Change has hosted a variety of events in partnership with other NYU departments, initiatives, and research centers including NYU’s Cross-Cutting Initiative on Inequality, NYU’s Urban Initiative, the Center for Practice and Research at the Intersection of Information, Society, and Methodology (PRIISM), and others.
IHDSC Seed Awards

Beginning in the Fall of 2006, IHDSC launched a seed award competition in recognition of the need for faculty to conduct preliminary research and develop collaborations before submitting external grant applications for larger interdisciplinary projects. A key goal of the seed award program is to support faculty in jumpstarting new programs of multidisciplinary research while also furthering the mission of the Institute. Since the inception of the Seed Award initiative, IHDSC has offered 49 awards, totalling $637,501 in pilot funding.

We provide seed funding to new projects that fall under one or more of our five focus areas:

- Education and Child Development
- Race, Poverty, and Inequality
- Health and Wellbeing
- Justice and Welfare Systems

We prioritize proposals that include:

- Early-career investigators
- Faculty or investigators who are new to IHDSC and/or NYU
- New interdisciplinary teams
- Partnerships with CBOs, NGOs, government agencies, or external groups focused on policy or practice

This year, IHDSC prioritized research that aligns with our theme of “Unraveling Inequality, Expanding Opportunity” as part of NYU’s Cross-Cutting Initiative on Inequality, funded by the Office of the President. Six projects were selected to be funded as part of the 2019-2020 seed awards.
Science Education Through a Radical Citizen Science Approach

The goal of this project is to work with science museum visitors on a study on a language science topic of interest. Researchers invite them to come up with research questions, hypotheses, and experimental design, and help carry out data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

**PI:** Dr. Sudha Arunachalam, Associate Professor of Communicative Sciences and Disorders
**Partner Organization:** Columbus Center of Science and Industry

Disrupting the Narrative: Mobilizing Collective Action to Reduce Racial, Economic and Gender Inequality

This research examine how narratives about the group’s past and narratives about past social movements can be leveraged to mobilize collective action for reducing inequality along racial and class divides.

**PI:** Dr. Rezarta Bilali, Assistant Professor of Psychology and Social Intervention

Optimizing a Daily Mindfulness Intervention to Reduce Stress from Discrimination among Sexual and Gender Minorities of Color

The goal of this project is to see what methods of mindfulness interventions are most effective for sexual and gender minorities of color.

**PI:** Dr. Stephanie Cook, Assistant Professor of Social and Behavioral Sciences and Biostatistics (pictured)
**Co-I:** Dr. Erin Godfrey, Associate Professor of Applied Psychology
**Co-I:** Dr. Shabnam Javdani, Associate Professor of Applied Psychology
**Partner Organization:** Healthy Minds Innovations, Inc. (HMI)

“The IHDSC Seed Award has helped me develop a strong partnership with researchers at the NYU Center for the Study of Asian American Health located in the NYU School of Medicine, and with community partners from the Hamilton Madison House. This project, funded by the IHDSC Seed Award, has served as valuable preliminary data for a K01 Career Development Award I recently received from the NIH National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities. Overall, the support from IHDSC has been invaluable for the other grant mechanisms I have applied for as well.”

Dr. William Tsai, 2018-2019 Seed Award Recipient
Reexamining the Link Between Pregnancy Intentions and Early Life Outcomes

Unintended pregnancies are associated with adverse outcomes for both mothers and their infants. The goal of this project is to reexamine data that finds no significant relationship between pregnancy intentions and outcomes of interest by going beyond previous work to conduct analysis by maternal subgroup.

**PI:** Dr. Sarah Cowan, Assistant Professor of Sociology

The Black Suburban Governance Project

The Black Suburban Governance Project examines the political and social realities facing Black suburbs in the United States. Through survey data and interviews with political actors, researchers will build a data set that will allow us to look at a range of issues within Black suburbs.

**PI:** Dr. L’Heureux Lewis-McCoy, Associate Professor of Sociology of Education (pictured top)
**Co-PI:** Dr. Kimberley Johnson, Professor of Social & Cultural Analysis (pictured bottom)

It Takes a Village: Understanding the Interactive Roles of Families, Schools, and Communities in the Student Discipline Process

The study focuses on the New York City context as an empirical case to understand the extent to which out-of-school factors contribute to exclusionary discipline practices.

**PI:** Dr. Luis Rodriguez, Assistant Professor of Education Leadership (pictured top)
**Co-PI:** Dr. Richard Welsh, Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies (pictured bottom)
**Partner Organization:** New York City Department of Education, Research and Policy Support Group
A Special Thanks to Our Current Funders

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- Assicurazioni Generali
- Bernard Van Leer Foundation
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