

The Center for Human Environments (CHE) operates as a federal structure, bringing together a family of subgroups that address specific research areas, including children's environments, health and society, participatory action research, developmental psychology, housing, public space, the human-architectural design interface, and the evaluation of social change campaigns and advocacy projects. In 2018 CHE was also pleased to welcome a new research subgroup to its collective, the Community Justice Collaborative, which will engage in research partnerships with communities and government agencies that are working to transform the justice system.

In 2017-2018, the Center for Human Environments (CHE) continued to host grants from a wide variety of sources, including federal awards (NSF and US Department of Education), NYC agencies (NYC Department of Education and NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene), US foundations (Ford, Pinkerton, New York Community Trust, Booth Ferris / JP Morgan, Heckscher), and international charities (Bernard van Leer [Netherlands], Axson Foundation [Sweden]).

Here are some of the most notable events from the Center for Human Environments calendar for 2017-2018:

Personal Statement, a film based on the experiences of three Youth Leaders in the College Access: Research & Action (CARA) program at CHE, had its premiere at the American Film Institute's annual festival, AFI DOCS. The documentary, by filmmaker Juliane Dressner, was selected as the opening night feature at the AFI festival, held on June 13, 2018 at the Newseum in Washington, D.C. The three CARA Youth Leaders, together with CARA Co-Director Dr. Lori Chajet, were invited participants in a post-screening roundtable at the Newseum, where they highlighted the impact of CARA's innovative peer-led approach to college counseling, especially for low-income and first-generation-to-college students. Following its AFI DOCS premiere, *Personal Statement* will be broadcast on many PBS stations this Fall.

In Spring 2018, CHE sponsored presentations at the Graduate Center by researchers from two major ongoing longitudinal studies of children and youth: *Next Steps*, located since 2013 at University College London's Institute of Education, and *Young Lives*, based at the University of Oxford's Department of International Development. *Next Steps*, one of the most comprehensive studies of the generation born in 1989-90 anywhere in the world, began following 16,000 young people who were in Year 9 in 2004 at state or independent secondary schools across England. *Young Lives*, begun in 2002, is the largest and most comprehensive comparative mixed-methods study of childhood poverty ever conducted, covering 12,000 children in two cohorts in four countries: Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam. Prof. Mary Clare Lennon was the sponsoring host for Dr. Morag Henderson's presentation on *Next Steps*, while Prof. Roger Hart was host for the presentation on the *Young Lives* project by its Director, Prof. Jo Boyden, and her colleague Frances Winter.

CHE's Public Science Project (PSP), upon recommendation from the Ford Foundation, received funding from the Institute of International Education to

support travel by four South African graduate students from the University of Witwatersrand to attend the January 2018 edition of PSP's week-long Critical Participatory Action Research workshop. This exchange was followed by the participation of three GC doctoral students in the Social/Personality Psychology Program at a conference on community-based research at the University of Witwatersrand in March. The following month, PSP Director Dr. Maria Torre joined GC alumna Dr. Puleng Segalo, now a professor at the University of South Africa, in delivering the Nelson Mandela Legacy lecture at North-West University, South Africa, a historically Afrikaans college.

Prof. Setha Low, Director of CHE's Public Space Research Group (PSRG), together with GC doctoral students Troy Simpson and Erin Lilli, traveled to Sweden in April to present on the public space research database being compiled by the PSRG team with support from the Centre for the Future of Places at KTH (Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm). The PSRG team has also been invited to present at an international symposium entitled *Past Present and Future of Public Space: Knowledge sharing toward implementation of the New Urban Agenda*, a special session devoted to the United Nation's Sustainable Urban Development goals, to be held at the Venice Biennale in September 2018.

Supporting graduate students, both financially and in terms of their development as researchers, remains a primary purpose of CHE. In the past year CHE projects provided fellowships and/or research employment for 21 Graduate Center students. CHE funds in 2017-2018 also furnished support for several students traveling to present at conferences, both in the US and internationally. In line with one of the major goals of the GC's current strategic plan, CHE also provides assistance to students who are beginning to develop their capacity as researchers, and who come to our Center for help in applying for external funding. This past year, for example, we saw the GC website recognize the research of Environmental Psychology Ph.D. student Do Lee, who relied on CHE for support in administering funding for his project on immigrant food delivery workers.

Here are further highlights from the past year's work conducted by CHE research subgroups:

- The College Access: Research & Action (CARA) program expanded its activities again this past year, with increased funding from the NYC Department of Education for its peer-led college access and college retention counseling model. CARA's five-year Multiple Task Award Contract with the NYC DOE, which expires September 2018, is in the process of being replaced by a new five-year MTAC, now entering its final phase of elaboration following a successful pricing negotiation in April. CARA's goal in the coming years will be to work with all schools in the NYC public system to help them put peer-led college counseling into effect and to enhance college-going culture even in schools where this has not been a priority before.

Throughout its growth over the past 10 years, CARA has emphasized research

and evaluation along with program development, and this has yielded additional, multi-year support from the New York Community Trust and the Booth Ferris Foundation for further research, evaluation, and documentation of CARA's innovative youth-centered programming. These two awards supplement new funding received by CARA in the past year from the Heckscher Foundation, the Solon Summerfield Foundation, and the M&T Charitable Trust.

As mentioned above, the documentary film *Personal Statement*, which follows three Brooklyn youth leaders in the CARA program, has been scheduled for broadcast on PBS, thus focusing national attention on CARA's evidence-based model for supporting equality of access to college and equality of educational opportunity.

- In 2017-2018, the Public Science Project at CHE was engaged in many dissemination activities related to its national survey of LGBTQ youth, funded by the Ford Foundation and a consortium of other sponsors. The project, entitled "What's Your Issue? Informing a national agenda by and for LGBTQ and gender nonconforming youth," collected more than 6000 responses to its online survey, and subsequently designed and initiated further research activities and products stemming from the data collected. In particular, PSP coordinated workshops and events based on the project findings with: the Vera Institute for Justice; NYC Department of Education Office of Equity & Action; the NYS Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children; and the NYC Mayor's Office. Another outcome of the "What's Your Issue?" project has been the creation of video shorts on subjects such as housing precarity among LGBTQ youth; inequities in school disciplinary practices affecting LGBTQ youth; and the relationship of LGBTQ youth to the justice and juvenile justice systems. Last, PSP researchers who have worked on the "What's Your Issue?" project presented at many conferences and meetings in the past year:
 - Decolonizing Knowledge and Epistemic Justice, Action Research Network of the Americas, Cartagena, Colombia
 - Contemporary enactments of activisms and solidarities, a forum at the London School of Economics
 - State of Research on LGBTQ People of Color Plenary, 2nd biennial CLAGS LGBTQ Scholars of Color Network Conference, City University of New York
 - Intersectional Convening on LGBTQ Youth of Color in Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Systems: Crafting an Intersectional Research Agenda to Promote Opportunities and Well-being, University of California Los Angeles
 - Knowledge Mobilization for Equitable & Peaceful Social Progress, Action Research Network of the Americas, San Diego California
 - American Psychological Association, Division 45: Society for the Psychological Study of Culture, Ethnicity and Race, Palo Alto, CA
 - 40 to None Summit, True Colors Fund, Los Angeles, CA (A summit about reducing LGBTQ youth homelessness)
 - Society for Qualitative Inquiry in Psychology, New York, NY

- **Society for the Study of Social Issues, Albuquerque, New Mexico.**
- **American Psychological Association, Washington, DC.**
- **Creating Change Conference of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, Washington DC**

PSP has also continued work on a two-year Ford Foundation grant awarded in 2017, which is developing three strands of participatory action research with youth: an expansion of the social media platforms created during the “What’s Your Issue?” project; the Intergenerational Change Initiative, which is developing mobile and web-based platforms to allow NYC youth to engage with the city agencies tasked with serving them; and a project to involve youth, particularly girls, in reviewing New York State’s juvenile justice system (in partnership with New York University’s Roses Initiative).

The past year marked the seventh anniversary of PSP’s Critical Participatory Action Research Institutes, with one session held in January and one in June. Led by PSP Director Dr. Maria Torre with assistance from Prof. Madeline Fox (Brooklyn College), Prof. Michelle Fine (GC Psychology) and Prof. Brett Stoudt (John Jay), these week-long workshops each drew 35-40 participants from community-based organizations, advocacy groups, government agencies, and college and university departments. The audience for the CPAR Institutes now extends internationally, with international participants not only from South Africa (see event listing above), but also from Australia, Canada, Brazil, and Austria.

- **In 2017-2018, the Children’s Environments Research Group (CERG) supported three doctoral students (two as fellows and one as a salaried Research Assistant) working in developmental psychology, social psychology, and environmental psychology; this research support is derived from the Selim Iltus Memorial Fund established by the Bernard van Leer Foundation in 2016. These fellowships and the related research support are designed to celebrate the life of Selim Iltus (a GC Environmental Psychology alumnus) and to continue the work on children’s environments and children’s well-being for which he was widely known before his untimely death in 2015.**

As part of the extended Bernard van Leer project, GC doctoral student Aysenur Ataman travelled to Turkey, where she conducted interviews on child discipline practices; the research findings will be incorporated into a final report to the Bernard van Leer Fdn.

Last, CERG’s Director Prof. Roger Hart has begun a final phase of research on his project “The Changing Geography of Childhood,” the main portion of which was supported by funding from NSF. This last segment of the research deals specifically with the impact of digital technologies and social media on children’s lives.

- **In 2017-2018, the Housing Environments Research Group, led by Prof. Susan**

Saegert, devised and implemented a new, online-based data collection plan for its National Science Foundation project, “Interrupting Place-based Inequality: Building Sustainable Communities through Shared Equity Homeownership.” The project is providing multi-year research employment and experience for several graduate students. Prof. Saegert’s Graduate Center Co-PI is Prof. Mary Clare Lennon (Sociology), who brings statistical expertise to this survey of the changes in economic, social and cultural capital that may be associated with residence in Community Land Trust housing; Prof. Lennon will also focus on the effect of CLT residence on the children of families who live in CLT housing. The NSF project involves collaboration with two Co-PIs at Georgia State University, who have previous experience with federally funded research on housing policy and low-income communities, and have presented research findings to policy makers at the national level.

- In the past year, The Public Space Research Group (PSRG) received a grant from the Centre for the Future of Places at KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm to fund Prof. Setha Low’s ongoing work on a volume entitled *Why Public Space Matters*. (CHE has just learned that this funding will be renewed for a second year, beginning in Fall 2018.) This book-length project has been accompanied by KTH support for two doctoral students at PSRG who are producing an annotated database on public space. The database is intended to create a repository of research for scholars, policy makers and practitioners with an interest in promoting intelligent urban development by shifting the predominant focus from the hardware or “objects” of cities (such as buildings and infrastructure), to the “software” of urban centers (that is, places and people).

In addition to meeting with an international cohort of researchers on public space in Sweden this past April, the PSRG team will also take part in a symposium on public space at the 2018 Venice Biennale (see details in event listing above).

- In the past year, Developmental Studies Research Group Director Prof. Colette Daiute has worked with two projects on the status of minorities and migrants in Italy and the Balkans. One product of this research has been a roadmap/curriculum guide for and by Roma minority pedagogical assistants working in the public school system of Serbia. Prof. Daiute has also begun work on a project to evaluate a European Union program to encourage locally developed “global education” projects. (“Global education,” in the EU agency definition, includes topics such as *Human Rights Education, Education for Sustainability, Education for Peace and Conflict Prevention, and Intercultural Education*.) Two GC doctoral students are being employed to assist in this evaluation, which will focus its analysis on 12 projects that were awarded EU funding, and 20 additional projects that will be published as models for discussion and development.
- The User Design Information Group (UDIG) is a new CHE research group that seeks to connect environmental psychology to the work of architects, planners, and communities in order to promote equitable design outcomes. In

the past year UDIG's GC doctoral student members Evie Klein, Eleanor Luken and Troy Simpson have led a collaborative research project with architects from the Committee on Architecture for Education at the American Institute of Architects New York (AIANY), and have also partnered with Medgar Evers College (MEC) to improve elements of campus life at MEC by using field-based research methods in drafting design changes. UDIG members will present the results of their work at MEC at several conferences, including the upcoming Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA) conference, a national convening scheduled to be held next year in Brooklyn.

- **CHE affiliate ActKnowledge has continued to engage a wide audience for its Theory of Change Online (TOCO), a web-based planning tool designed for use by advocacy movements, nonprofits, human rights organizations, and government agencies as they formulate programs and policies, monitor their implementation, and evaluate their success. In the past year, ActKnowledge has released a special edition of TOCO for use by international development organizations; TOCO was also selected as the Theory of Change analysis tool in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals toolkit. In addition, ActKnowledge presented on TOCO in June 2018 at San Diego State University.**

In 2017-2018, AK continued its longstanding work with community schools. AK has been one of the leading evaluators for the community schools movement in the US, with clients including the Children's Aid Society, the Paterson Public Schools (New Jersey), the Hartford, Connecticut public system, and the United Federation of Teachers.