

# **THE CAPSTONE PROGRAM 2007-2008**

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY  
ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE SCHOOL  
OF PUBLIC SERVICE

**NYUWagner**

# Experiential Learning

Capstone is learning in action. Part of the core curriculum of the Masters program at NYU Wagner, it provides students with both a critical learning experience and an opportunity to perform a public service. Over the course of an academic year, students work in teams - either to address challenges and identify opportunities for a client organization or to conduct research on a pressing social question. Capstone contributes not only to the students' education, but is also a university resource for the public good.

In architecture, the capstone is the crowning piece of an arch, the center stone that holds the arch together, giving it shape and strength. Wagner's Capstone program plays a similar role, by integrating and enhancing student learning in several different arenas: a content or issue area; key process skills including project management and teamwork; and methods for gathering, analyzing and reporting data. Capstone requires students to interweave their learning in all these areas, and to do so in real time, in an unpredictable, complex, real-world environment.

We are immensely proud of the work our students have done, grateful to the faculty who have taught and guided them, and appreciative of our clients' trust in us.

# A University Resource

The Capstone Program was started with a generous grant from the Ford Foundation. Since 1995, more than 2,900 students have participated in over 575 projects for approximately 450 organizations. Their work has enabled clients to analyze complex issues, make tough decisions, identify new opportunities, and advance their missions. Through careful oversight and guidance, the program has become a valuable service that Wagner proudly offers to the city, the region, and the world.

In a recently conducted survey, the vast majority of Capstone clients indicated high overall satisfaction with our Capstone program and the tools and resources offered through our student teams. Furthermore, our clients reported that the work produced has had a lasting impact on their agencies.

NYU Wagner acknowledges the following donors for their support of this year's Capstone program: FJC: A Foundation of Philanthropic Funds and The Moody's Foundation.

Organizations and agencies that wish to enter into a Capstone partnership with NYU Wagner are encouraged to complete and submit a Capstone Project Proposal for consideration. For further information, visit: [wagner.nyu.edu/capstone](http://wagner.nyu.edu/capstone).

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## Project Summaries

### Advanced Projects in Public and Nonprofit Management

FACULTY: SARA GRANT AND MERLE MCGEE

#### Brooklyn Arts Council

*Arts in Education Administration and Operations Evaluation*

The Brooklyn Arts Council (BAC) is an arts and services organization that facilitates programs for artists, teachers, students, families, and seniors throughout Brooklyn. BAC's largest department, Arts in Education (AIE), organizes programs in visual, literary, performing, and digital arts in schools and senior centers. Due to increased funding and program popularity, AIE has grown exponentially over the past five years. With an expansion in programming and reporting responsibilities, AIE's administrative needs have grown but its structure and systems have not. In order to help AIE better facilitate its educational

programs as well as meet strenuous reporting requirements, BAC invited the Capstone team to conduct an evaluation and recommend methods to improve its administrative structure and operations. BAC anticipates that the Capstone recommendations will enable it to spend more time developing program goals, conducting outreach to schools, and maintaining relationships with teaching artists.

Capstone Team: Joey Hogue, AiLun Ku, Jaime Langione, Stephanie Wecht

#### Columbia/Barnard Hillel

*Expanding Outreach and Impact at a New York City Nonprofit Organization*

Columbia/Barnard Hillel (CBH) strives to create positive and meaningful Jewish experiences for students at Columbia University and Barnard College with the goal of helping them become well-informed adults who choose to lead lives committed to transmitting Jewish values to

the next generation. CBH primarily focuses its efforts toward undergraduates and seeks to expand its work with graduate students. CBH engaged a Capstone team to determine the interests of Jewish graduate students for programming and community building through Jewish experiences that are both relevant and meaningful. The Capstone team evaluated and assessed the financial, human resource, physical presence, and overall capacity challenges CBH may face in meeting the needs of Jewish graduate students at Columbia. To generate their findings, the team held a series of key informant interviews, created an online survey, and conducted focus groups. CBH will use the team's findings to develop program recommendations for implementation with graduate students.

Capstone team: Kimberly Enoch, Jessica Epstein, Michael Fuld, Ilana Kahn, Alex Kent, Jason Lieberman, Elysia Stein

## **Girls Quest**

*Examining Definitions and Indicators of Social and Academic Competence for Mission Driven Programming*

Girls Quest aims to improve the social and academic competence of girls ages 8-14 from underserved communities in New York through its summer learning program (SEED). The Capstone team was enlisted to define and determine indicators of "social and academic competence" in order to have clear outcomes against

which to evaluate SEED and other programs in the future. Through a study of academic and social competence, both from scholarly literature and like-minded organizations, and a workshop with Girls Quest staff and board members, the team facilitated the creation of a definition of social and academic competence that is clear and measurable, as well as specific to Girls Quest. This definition will provide Girls Quest with language to articulate the impact of its program, as well as provide measurable outcomes to ensure the success of future evaluation efforts.

Capstone Team: Elizabeth Alter, Faith C. Corbett, Jen Dobossy, Ashley Salmon-Wander, Sarah Verity

## **The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC)**

*Creating a Next Generation Initiative Model for a Jewish Nonprofit Organization*

The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) is the Jewish community's premier organization dedicated to rescue, relief, and renewal of Jewish communities abroad. As JDC is strategically planning for its organizational future, it requested a Capstone team to make recommendations concerning a "Next Generation Initiative" that will increase awareness among Jewish young adults of JDC and Jewish communities abroad. The Capstone team conducted a review of relevant literature, interviews with key stakeholders at JDC, interviews with other

nonprofit organizations engaging young adults, and a survey of Jewish young adults regarding their engagement with the Jewish community. This information was then compiled and analyzed to produce a report of findings and recommendations that will help JDC to address the critical issues currently facing the organization. The report's recommendations provide a firm base for JDC to begin to develop a unique JDC "Next Generation Initiative" that will engage Jewish young adults in their mission.

Capstone Team: Ariel Beery, Alyssa Frank, Nessa Heilpern Liben, Rachel Perten, Hindy Poupko, Natalie Solomon, Julie Tilson Stanley

### **JPMorgan Chase Global Philanthropy Foundation**

*Analyzing Data to Evaluate the Success of the Community Renaissance Strategy Model*

The JPMorgan Chase Foundation utilized a Capstone team in analyzing and implementing its Community Renaissance Strategy, a new grant-making model addressing issues and developing solutions in Community Development, Education, and Arts and Culture across markets that the firm serves. The Capstone team approached the project in three phases. Phase I actively assisted Community Relations Officers with local market analysis and development of business plans to guide 2008 philanthropic

grant making, and created a separate analysis for client review. Phase II was a gap analysis designed to discover to what degree the various market-specific business plans move towards embracing the vision of the Community Renaissance Strategy, and operationalize the vision of the Global Foundation through the proposed grants. Phase III provided the Foundation with analysis and recommendations regarding the tools and best practices for the design and implementation of an evaluation and performance measurement framework for the Community Renaissance Strategy.

Capstone Team: Marina Barskaya, David Gottesman, Rachel Herman, Larissa Johnson, Tom McIntyre, Kathleen Nugent

### **MOUSE**

*Making Volunteers Work: Best Practices in Volunteer Management*

MOUSE is a nonprofit organization that provides technological, leadership, and career readiness opportunities to underserved middle and high school students. The Capstone team was asked to assess MOUSE's organizational readiness and present recommendations on whether the organization should expand its core programs to involve volunteers formally. The team used qualitative research methods to better understand volunteer use and best practices at MOUSE and similar organizations. The team performed a literature review of volunteer management,

program design, and best practices, and conducted a SWOT analysis, environmental scan, and interviews with staff members from MOUSE and various nonprofit and private sector organizations currently utilizing volunteers. Research findings served as the basis for recommendations about the appropriateness of integrating volunteers into MOUSE's programs, focusing on topics such as volunteer management systems and best practices, the need for partnerships and networking, and specific steps for planning volunteer program expansion.

Capstone Team: Shana Berenzweig, Tiffany Fletcher, Natalie Matthews, Caryn Roman, Jeffrey Yip

## **Advanced Projects in Public and Nonprofit Policy and Management**

FACULTY: DENNIS SMITH AND ANA OLIVEIRA

### **Citizens' Committee for Children of New York**

*A Policy Analysis of the Educational and Service Needs of Adolescent Girls in NYC*

For this project, Capstone members conducted research and fieldwork that were used to develop a public policy and advocacy agenda to inform and improve the education and youth service system's response to the service needs of adolescent girls in New York City. Capstone members prepared a literature review assessing the current state of the needs of adolescent girls in New York City, as well as how education and youth service institutions currently address these needs. The Capstone team interviewed key stakeholders in education and youth service institutions and conducted focus groups with adolescent girls in New York City. The final product was a report delivered to the Citizens' Committee for Children offering programmatic, legislative, and budgetary solutions that will be used to improve services for adolescent girls in the areas of education and youth development.

Capstone Team: Rachel Burton, Jessica Knevals, Laura Stein, Jean Sung

## **City of Miami, Division of Economic Initiatives**

*Within Reach: Housing Solutions for Miami's Workforce*

Millions of working families across the country struggle to find decent, affordable places to live. This is especially true for the City of Miami. The City's Division of Economic Initiatives requested a Capstone team to recommend strategies to provide housing for the city's essential workforce. The team completed an analysis of current market conditions and conducted stakeholder interviews. Additionally, the team completed a review of best and emerging practices in workforce housing nationwide. The policy options were analyzed based on the local conditions and needs of the City of Miami to produce final recommendations and an implementation structure. This report recommends creating an innovative employer-assisted housing fund that could help attract and retain the workforce that is essential for Miami's economy.

Capstone Team: Samuel Carter, Madeline Maxwell, Ross Meyer, Aaron C. Miner, Nancy Palmadessa

## **Greyston Foundation**

*Performance Management for the Greyston Foundation*

The Greyston Foundation supports low-income individuals and families in Yonkers, NY, as they forge paths to self-sufficiency and community transformation.

The Capstone team was charged with analyzing the performance measurement practices at Greyston in an effort to increase program effectiveness and to identify a structure for best practices in outcome measurement. To do this, the Capstone team examined Greyston's current performance management practices and developed a measurement tracking tool for three of twelve programs at the organization. This system will also serve as the prototype for Greyston's overall outcome measurement protocol: the Child Care Center (CCC), Yonkers' only NAEYC accredited day care; Issan House, a residence for people living with HIV/AIDS; and the Greyston Bakery, a social enterprise that serves the "double bottom-line" of reducing the Foundation's reliance on external funding sources in addition to providing jobs and training for an entry-level workforce within Yonkers.

Capstone Team: Christopher Dabek, Craig Swaisgood, Rohini Vagarali

## **Jersey City Housing Authority**

*Evaluating the Impact of the HOPE VI Public Housing Revitalization Program on the Families of the Lafayette Gardens Housing Development*

With a \$34.1 million HOPE VI grant from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Jersey City Housing Authority (JCHA) demolished the severely distressed 492-unit Lafayette Gardens housing project, and in its place

built several low-rise, mixed-income developments. As part of this HOPE VI project, 483 families living in Lafayette Gardens were relocated to the new developments, existing JCHA facilities, or placed in the open market with or without Section 8 rental housing vouchers. The JCHA commissioned the Capstone team to evaluate the impact of the HOPE VI project on the lives of these 483 families. Through the use of mailed surveys, interviews, and an analysis of existing data on the families, the team examined the effects of the HOPE VI program on the financial outlook, health, and perception of neighborhood quality and crime on the families of Lafayette Gardens.

Capstone Team: Nora Abramson, Daniel Damagala, Patrick Germain, Caroline Ranjitsingh, Oliver Wise

### **New York City Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications**

#### *311 Customer Satisfaction: Assessing Awareness and Understanding*

311 is New York City's phone number for government information and non-emergency services. The Capstone team effectively measured the public's experience with the services provided by 311 through an online survey on nyc.gov and a phone customer satisfaction survey. The team also interviewed various stakeholders to gauge their awareness and understanding of 311 in order to define their expectations

and measure their satisfaction. The need to assess 311 – what it is and what it is not – across various groups of stakeholders is important to understanding and recognizing different stakeholders' definitions of customer satisfaction. The Capstone team conducted interviews and research, and designed two customer satisfaction surveys. Based on the results of the surveys, the Capstone team made recommendations that serve to enhance and expand 311's customer service delivery and marketing.

Capstone Team: Marina Alekseyenko, Michelle Beller, Meredith Moore

### **New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance**

#### *Transforming Practice: From Performance Measurement to Outcome Performance Management*

The New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Services (OTDA) provides and/or oversees programs administered through 58 local districts: temporary cash and heating assistance; assistance in paying for food; child support enforcement; eligibility for Social Security Disability benefits; homeless housing and services; and assistance to certain immigrant populations. The Commissioner of OTDA requested this project to improve performance management, building on existing capabilities in performance measurement. The Capstone team examined the exchange of communication and measure-

ment data between OTDA and local districts; solicited from various stakeholders recommendations for performance system changes; and conducted interviews with district commissioners, OTDA officials, relevant performance management experts, and officials from related state agencies. The team's literature review examined mechanisms utilized in other states that could serve as models for OTDA. Based on its research, the Capstone team recommended mechanisms with the best chances for success for OTDA.

Capstone Team: Kate Hansen, Christina Harvey

### **Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services for the City of New York**

#### *Development of an Electronic Food Stamp Application System in New York City*

Currently, the application for food stamps in New York City is a paper-driven process, whereas many other jurisdictions have made at least part of their processes electronic. The team has performed an assessment of and will make recommendations on how NYC's food stamp application and recertification processes could be streamlined technologically. Possibilities include replacement of in-person interviews with phone calls and in-person document submission with electronic submission to enhance the application experience and speed of determination to allow eligible New Yorkers to gain access to services. To

accomplish this, the team has worked with various food stamp program and policy staff in New York and other states to conduct a nationwide scan of food stamp application systems that involve electronic processes and identify which of these could be used in NYC and what waivers would be required prior to implementation.

Capstone Team: Cynthia Brothers, Noemi Figueroa, Alyson Grant, Dan Meenach

### **Osborne Association**

#### *NYC Initiative for Children With Incarcerated Parents: A Case for Counting and Tracking Children of Promise*

Every day in New York City children face the loss of a parent due to incarceration. Existing research does not account for the numbers, ages, gender or locations of these children, thus impeding the development and implementation of programs and services that address their specific needs and those of their caregivers. Through an extensive literature review, interviews with experts in the field, and interviews with New York City government agencies such as Administration for Children's Services, Department of Corrections, Department of Juvenile Justice, and the New York Police Department, the Capstone team has identified missed opportunities among New York City agencies to help children who have had, or currently have, a parent in prison. The report will offer recommenda-

tions for counting and identifying children as well as provide an organizational audit tool for agencies to assess to what degree organizational policies take into consideration both the existence and needs of children with incarcerated parents.

Capstone Team: Elizabeth Fisher, Wilnelia Gutierrez, Julie Weiss

## Advanced Projects in Public and Nonprofit Policy and Management

FACULTY: RONA AFFOUMADO

### Harlem Educational Activities Fund

*Evaluating the Feasibility of Expansion for the Harlem Educational Activities Fund*

The Harlem Educational Activities Fund (HEAF) is a college preparatory and youth development organization whose goal is to assist students from educationally and/or economically disadvantaged communities to develop the intellectual and life skills necessary to succeed at New York City's most competitive public high schools and the nation's leading colleges and universities. In recent years, HEAF has seen an increase in the number of applicants from outside the Harlem community and has outlined efforts in its strategic plan to expand the program in order to serve more students. HEAF requested the Capstone team's assistance in assessing the feasibility of expansion. Through stakeholder interviews, surveys, and community asset mapping, the team assessed the feasibility of replicating two of HEAF's signature programs for middle school students by identifying potential geographic areas for expansion, recommending potential community partners, and outlining necessary operational components.

Capstone Team: Katie Appel, Chris Brown, Scott Clarke, Krystal Reyes

## **The Office of Arts and Special Projects at the New York City Department of Education**

*Evaluating the Impact of the "Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts, preK-12"*

The mission of the Department of Education's Office of Arts and Special Projects (OASP) is to provide New York City public school communities with information and resources that will enable every student to achieve a full education in the arts. In 2004, the OASP introduced the "Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts, preK-12", the first comprehensive, multi-dimensional framework for arts education for use throughout the NYC school system. To measure the impact of the Blueprint on teachers' classroom practice, the OASP requested a Capstone team to do an evaluation. The evaluation included an online survey to arts teachers, an analysis of survey results, focus groups to identify best practices, and interviews with arts teachers who had less experience using the Blueprint. The evaluation's findings provided data and analysis of the Blueprint's impact on teacher practice as well as information to support future OASP initiatives.

Capstone Team: Darren Flusche, Amanda Kahn, Elizabeth Langsdorf, Monica Martinez, Jennifer Pick

## **University Settlement Society of New York**

*Fostering and Maximizing a Volunteer Relationship with New York University*

University Settlement (US), a settlement house located on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, provides a broad range of services, including child care, senior services, after-school programs, and other community support services to its primarily immigrant community. In May 2007, US identified a need to develop an understanding of its volunteer base and to seek recommendations on strengthening volunteer programs, particularly the ones it has with New York University (NYU). Through interviews and surveys conducted with key personnel at US and NYU, the Capstone team gathered data and other evidence to determine the extent of the impact of the current relationship, as well as an overall understanding of US's existing volunteer program. The report includes suggestions to US on how to maximize its volunteer efforts, utilize the community engagement resources at NYU, and strategies to improve the organization's volunteer programs.

Capstone Team: Pedro Farinas, Jennifer Hensley, Jeannie Kwon, Rosalie Mistades, Jenny Vazquez-Akim

# Advanced Projects in Public and Nonprofit Policy and Management

FACULTY: CHRISTINE CAMPBELL

## Environmental Grantmakers Association

*Sustainably Yours: Improving Constituent Services*

Environmental Grantmakers Association (EGA) brings together key players in environmental philanthropy to share, collaborate, and network. As the organization prepares for its upcoming strategic planning process, it seeks further information on how it can best service its member foundations and affinity groups. The Capstone team was recruited to make salient recommendations regarding member opinions and engagement, affinity group relations, and comparative practices in the field. The team developed and distributed a member survey, interviewed executive directors of eleven environmental affinity groups, and closely researched twelve grantmakers/funders associations for benchmarking. Team members analyzed results of these endeavors and wrote up a report of key findings and recommendations to inform EGA's strategic plan. The Capstone team also presented a narrative report of these findings to EGA's executive director.

Capstone Team: Leah Christenson, Angelica Crane, Rachel Cyrulnik, Roy Eappen, Roshni Melia, Jason Solle

## Family Justice

*Corrections Culture Strength-Based Training*

Family Justice sought for the Capstone team to add to its knowledge about its changing organizational culture in its pursuit to provide strength-based trainings to people who work in prisons. The Capstone team provided a literature review highlighting its research on corrections organizational culture and change. The literature review included information about creating sustainable culture change and considerations that are unique to corrections culture. Information gathered from the literature review and from interviews with professionals in the corrections field was then used to produce a white paper that details corrections culture change best practices that Family Justice can use to improve its training and technical assistance program in prisons.

Capstone Team: Seth Brown, Ming Ma, Kristy Roberts, Katie VanLangen, Jared Walkowitz

## Harlem Congregations for Community Improvement

*Impact Evaluation of the HCCI Construction Trade Academy Program*

Harlem Congregations for Community Improvement, Inc., (HCCI) is a nonprofit organization committed to the revitalization of Harlem. HCCI provides an array of services to residents such as housing, job training, employment opportunities, and

commercial revitalization. HCCI asked the Capstone team to evaluate its Construction Trades Academy (CTA), a short-term program offered by HCCI that prepares residents with skills in the building maintenance and construction industries and offers successful graduates job placement and retention services. HCCI was interested in determining the effectiveness of the CTA program by evaluating whether the program leads to higher earnings, jobs in the construction or maintenance industries, and overall improvement in the lives of its participants. HCCI asked the Capstone team to conduct a process and impact evaluation of the program. The team reviewed the program process by assessing program materials, observing classes, and interviewing staff. The process evaluation will help identify the program's strengths and weaknesses and HCCI can modify its program, if needed. To determine the long term impact of the program, the team utilized a comparison group, surveys, and statistical analysis to isolate the effects of the CTA program, make conclusions, and provide recommendations.

Capstone Team: Eduardo Betancourt, Keely Freeman, Kristin Misner, Marjorie Parker, Faith Perfecto

## Advanced Projects in Public and Nonprofit Management and Finance

FACULTY: JOHN BROTHERS AND MONTE KURS

### Community Works

#### *Scalable Fundraising Plan to Raise Unrestricted Revenue*

Community Works, based in New York City, is a 15-year young nonprofit arts and education organization that aims to strengthen communities and public school arts curricula through programs that honor local communities and unsung heroes. In recent years, Community Works has faced rapid growth that includes an impending move into the new Dwyer Cultural Center in Harlem as the resident arts program producer. With strong support from restricted funding sources and a nascent program in unrestricted giving, Community Works has great opportunities to increase its financial resources. This Capstone project's main objective is to assist Community Works in strengthening its capacity to raise unrestricted revenue by conducting a development audit, creating a fundraising plan, and incorporating prevailing fundraising practices from peer organizations in the arts and education sector.

Capstone Team: Timothy Higdon, Thomas Song, Amy Yen

## **Human Services Council of New York City**

### *The Return-on-Investment Created from Funding Human Services Programs*

Local human service programs operate under the chronic threat of budget cuts to already meager resources. Annual budget deliberations generally focus on the costs of these programs and rarely consider the benefits, despite the fact that these programs generate a significant return-on-investment – they help those being served avoid situations that require significantly more costly interventions. The Capstone team conducted extensive research into three existing areas focusing on the NYC region: alternatives to incarceration, supportive housing, and provision of early childcare services. The team examined and produced a report which empirically demonstrates the return-on-investment from funding human services programs. The report will be an important tool to inform elected officials, government administrators, and the public about the financial advantages from investing in this work, and the publication of such a document will improve the recognition of these programs as sound economic investments deserving of increased priority.

Capstone Team: Krisda Chintakananda, Sookhee Kim, Cate Lumppp, Molly Merriman, Mohammed Murad, Masahiro Sakurai

## **Inwood House**

### *Improving Nonprofit Operations Through a Fiscal Policies and Procedures Manual*

Inwood House is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping young people become healthy and self-reliant adults through pregnancy prevention, youth development, and teen family support programs. Following a recent expansion, Inwood House requested that a Capstone team assess the relationship between the fiscal and program offices, make recommendations to improve fiscal operations, and create an organization-wide Fiscal Policies and Procedures Manual. The Capstone team researched fiscal manuals and interviewed fiscal and program staff. The team drafted a Fiscal Policies and Procedures Manual and convened a task force of Inwood House program staff to edit and approve the manual. After finalizing the manual, the team conducted a train-the-trainer session to prepare Task Force members to train their staff on how to use the new Fiscal Manual. Based on feedback from the interviews and additional research, the team presented additional recommendations for Inwood House's Fiscal Office. The new manual, training, and recommendations will help align and connect fiscal and program staff in supporting Inwood House's mission.

Capstone Team: Lauren Burnham, Ali Khan, Mallory Kozar, Jenn McVetty, Smith Rodes

## **Low Income Investment Fund**

### *Best Practices for Business Capacity Building in the New York City Childcare Sector*

The Capstone team was engaged to further the Low Income Investment Fund's (LIIF) goals to provide capacity building services to community based childcare providers serving low-income children in New York City. The team's work was performed in the context of a larger system revamping being planned by New York City's Administration for Children's Services (ACS). Partnering with LIIF, the Capstone team's main objective was to create a capacity building plan to model technical assistance and training for childcare providers in New York City. To that end, a need was noted to survey best practices nationally, inventory NYC's existing services, dimension the need, and propose effective models for short- and long-term implementation, including public and private sector roles and cost analysis. The team's tasks centered on researching and cataloging childcare sector business capacity building systems across the country, researching the current child care system in New York City, identifying NYC organizations and individuals that provide sector specific business/ capacity building assistance, and identifying recommendations for implementation of a business model for New York City.

Capstone Team: Cesar Avila, Beth Dunphe, Stephanie Hirschorn, Yanghoon Rhyu, Yuao Tang, Aigerim Yussubaliyeva

## **Mississippi Center for Justice**

### *Strategies to Combat Payday Lending in Mississippi*

The Mississippi Center for Justice is a non-profit, public interest law firm committed to advancing racial and economic justice. The Capstone team was engaged to synthesize information about the payday lending industry in Mississippi and the effects such businesses have on residents and the state's economy. The Capstone team is also providing strategies and initiatives to encourage effective money management and saving, and discourage the use of high interest credit like payday loans. This information will assist the Mississippi Center for Justice and its partners, the recently formed Coalition Against Payday Lending, target their future efforts to combat payday lending, as well as develop and implement alternative credit access solutions.

Capstone Team: George Jeng, Stephanie Kinlock, Jason Labate, Laura Persichette, Jon VanOeveren.

## **New York City Council, Policy and Investigations Division**

### *How NYC Recreation Centers Can Improve Women's Health*

In 2007, the State of New York received an "unsatisfactory" grade in women's health from the National Women's Law Center. In response, New York City Council's Policy and Investigations Division was interested in assessing how New York City's public recreation centers can positively impact women's health. The Capstone team created a protocol to evaluate the current state of New York City's public recreation centers and visited a representative sample of them. The Capstone team then researched benchmark cities to find successful city initiatives targeting women's health. The Capstone team's final deliverable is a comprehensive analysis of New York City's recreation centers and recommendations for improving the quality of the recreation centers for the purpose of improving women's health in New York City.

Capstone Team: Pamela Baga, Mavis Mai, Makiko Sato, Gaukhar Smailova, Debby Sotelo

## **United States Government Accountability Office**

### *The Tools of Public Action: Cataloguing Government Efforts to Increase the Availability of Affordable Housing in New York*

Over the past five decades, there has been an increase in the variety of "tools of pub-

lic action" that the government has at its disposal. Analytic work on the cross-cutting and integrated nature of these tools is still relatively nascent in the federal government oversight arena. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) has charged the Capstone team with developing a system for making sense of the universe of tools available. By clarifying the nature of the interactions between different types of tools, the system would seek to inform the decisions of policymakers regarding which types of tools to utilize. The team chose to focus its efforts on cataloguing the broad array of affordable housing tools available to aid New York City residents. Ultimately, the work will culminate in a comprehensive database of federal, state, and local programs which would allow the GAO to track current government efforts using a specific set of program characteristics. The database will be accompanied by a narrative report, which will include a discussion of the characteristics of existing programs and the relative lack of transparency around program costs, as well as a guidebook explaining the rationale for the choices the team made in constructing the database.

Capstone Team: Nicolanne Addalli, Nino DePaola, Sarah Vennekotter, Stephanie Woepfel

# Advanced Projects in Management

FACULTY: ANTHONY KOVNER

## **Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City**

### *Mentoring Immigrant Youth*

Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City (BBBS) Center for Training and Professional Development engaged the Capstone team to conduct research on the needs and challenges of the immigrant youth population in the New York City region. In order to gather comprehensive data, BBBS identified a number of organizations that offer or wish to offer services to this population. The team surveyed these organizations and subsequently interviewed a subset of them. An extensive review of the literature on the needs of immigrant youth and best practices for mentoring immigrant youth was conducted and the Capstone team met with academic experts who have conducted research on immigrant youth issues. The information gathered was analyzed and integrated into a formal report containing recommendations. BBBS Center for Training and Professional Development will use these findings and recommendations in developing a training module and support program for agencies that provide mentoring and other services to immigrant youth.

Capstone Team: Michelle D'Amico, Diane Gustard, Alexis Nissenbaum, Blake Redding

## **Lutheran Family Health Centers**

### *Improving Quality and Utilization of Outpatient Rehabilitation Services*

Lutheran HealthCare has embarked on a strategic plan to expand its rehabilitation services. A primary goal is to improve the referral rate from Lutheran Medical Center to Lutheran Family Health Centers' outpatient rehabilitation centers, promoting continuity of care and increasing outpatient rehabilitation service utilization. The Capstone team examined and analyzed the referral process by utilizing quality improvement tools and conducting interviews with key constituents. The Capstone team produced recommendations, as well as implementation and evaluation mechanisms to: obtain staff accountability and ownership of the process; establish patient and physician education standards throughout the entire process; and improve quality of the data collection system.

Capstone Team: Jenifer Brake, Connie Chuang, Brenda Jimenez, Patrick Minson

## **Mt. Sinai School of Medicine, Department of Surgery**

### *Identifying Key Revenue Drivers in an Ambulatory Surgery Center*

In anticipation of its new Ambulatory Surgery Center, the Mount Sinai School of Medicine's Department of Surgery engaged the Capstone team in the gathering and aggregating of throughput/capacity and surgical fee packages data from physician interviews, market research and the Hospital's main operating room (MOR) yearly utilization rate for outpatient procedures. The opening of the Ambulatory Surgery Center (ASC) in June 2008 will offer the ASC management team an opportunity to identify key revenue drivers necessary for making sound decisions about appropriate strategies needed to increase net revenue. The Capstone team created a directional revenue Excel model based on a number of assumptions, including: 1) projected physician case volume procedures; 2) patient/payor mix; 3) physician fee schedules; and 4) average length of procedures and patient recovery times. This information will assess revenue impact and the capacity of caseload volume transfer from the MOR to the ASC. The use of this model will help management optimize capacity and determine baseline revenue drivers relative to future reimbursement changes. It will also allow management to better focus marketing priorities for surgeons and for patients.

Capstone Team: Leonie Gordon, Andrew Mainardi, Sara Mody, Tamir Novotny, Ginseng Torres-Chae

## **Advanced Projects in Health Policy and Management**

FACULTY: SJ AVERY AND JOHN DONNELLAN

### **New York Academy of Medicine**

#### *Prenatal and Early Childhood Obesity Prevention in East Harlem*

The New York Academy of Medicine (NYAM) improves the health of people living in cities, especially the disadvantaged and vulnerable populations, through research, education, community engagement, and evidence-based policy advocacy. NYAM is located in East Harlem and has recently recommitted itself to improving the health of the local population, where prenatal and early childhood obesity have been identified as major health problems. The Capstone team conducted extensive research, including literature reviews and interviews/focus groups, in order to identify significant resources and barriers in the community, best practices for prevention, and key concerns expressed by community members about these health issues. Based on research findings, the team made recommendations for what role NYAM can play in prenatal and early childhood obesity prevention in East Harlem, and identified potential collaborators. The team also suggested criteria for evaluating a successful healthy weight policy initiative.

Capstone Team: Liliana Diaz Hidalgo, Shamila Dilmaghani, Kemberlie Joseph, Tara Lantz, Thaline Tarpinian, Angelo Wiltshire

## **New York City Council, Policy and Investigations Division**

### *Urban Reproductive Health Agenda*

In America's urban centers, high concentrations of poverty, large immigrant populations, and overtaxed public health systems converge to make reproductive health policy an issue of critical need. To begin a dialogue on best practices in urban reproductive health policy, the New York City Council (NYCC), Mayor Bloomberg, and the National Institute for Reproductive Health will hold a summit on urban reproductive health in May 2008, which will bring together municipal leaders from across the nation. Through extensive research, the Capstone team, working on behalf of the NYCC's Policy and Investigations Unit, developed a compendium of municipal-level reproductive health policies and best practices, and made policy recommendations toward a comprehensive reproductive health agenda for U.S. cities in advance of the summit. The project focused on four core areas of reproductive health: abortion and contraception; reproductive health screening and prevention; healthy pregnancies and birth outcomes; and teen sexuality.

Capstone Team: Arkaprava Deb, Amanda Jo Greep, Susan Hernandez, Alicia Starkey

## **New York University Child Study Center**

### *Research Subject Recruitment Registry Creation and Development*

Despite being named one of only two independent Departments of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry in the country and the only New York State Center of Excellence in Mental Health, the NYU Child Study Center (CSC) faced losses of important clinical research funding and findings due to a complex and inconsistent approach to and management of subject recruitment for clinical research. The Capstone team was tasked with improving and streamlining research subject recruitment across the independent and diverse CSC research institutes. The team interviewed CSC staff to determine individual and common needs throughout the institutes and elected to create an online Research Subject Recruitment Registry. The team worked with NYU's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and IT departments to create an appropriate prototype which could be applied to other NYU Medical Center Departments. Additionally, the team provided CSC with training materials for the online registry to ensure that its use is sustainable.

Capstone Team: Valentina Clark, Sibernie Dalloo, Jordan Reese, Allison Smith

## **Robert Wood Johnson Medical School's Child Health Institute of New Jersey** *Operational Assessment*

The Robert Wood Johnson Medical School's Child Health Institute of New Jersey (CHINJ) opened in 2005 as a pediatric subspecialty ambulatory practice. Despite steady increases in patient demand, and a favorable payor mix, many ambulatory practice divisions are not reaching their goals for financial sustainability or growth. The Capstone team was tasked with evaluating the operations of seven practice divisions within CHINJ to identify operational barriers to financial and clinical growth. Over the course of six months, the team examined how these divisions could increase efficiency and productivity. The team collected a wide array of data onsite, including workflow documentation and staff interviews. The data were compared with best practice standards from literature and pediatric institutions nationwide. Conclusions from this comprehensive assessment were utilized to provide recommendations for operational improvement to the ambulatory practice.

Capstone Team: Eric Colchamiro, Joseph Jackowiak, David Sharvit, Royal Tuthill

## **Advanced Projects in Health Services Management and Finance**

FACULTY: ROGER KROPF AND AMY GOLDMAN

### **Community Healthcare Network** *Implementation of an Electronic Health Record*

Community Healthcare Network (CHN) is a nonprofit organization that provides access to affordable, culturally-competent and comprehensive community-based primary care, mental health, and social services for diverse populations in underserved communities throughout New York City. In anticipation of the implementation of eClinicalWorks, an Electronic Health Record, CHN asked the Capstone team to perform a pre- and post-implementation analysis of selected clinics and make recommendations to facilitate a smooth transition away from paper records. CHN's primary goal was to assess how patient wait times would be affected by the Electronic Health Record. The team conducted site visits and analyzed existing workflows and policies prior to the date on which use of the Electronic Health Record would begin. The team then made extensive recommendations to improve efficiencies. The updated workflows were intended to serve as a model for post-implementation practice management and clinical operations.

Capstone Team: Vanessa Giannone, Amy Goldman, Shivani Jain, Lawrence Lupkin, Pratik Thaker

## **Harlem Hospital Center**

### *Greening Initiatives for Harlem Hospital Center*

Harlem Hospital Center (HHC) is two years along in its five-year Modernization Capital Campaign to upgrade its campus and build a new patient pavilion. HHC has a long and distinguished tradition of providing innovative, high-quality health care programs and services to the Harlem community, and aims to continue providing leadership by incorporating greening standards into its modernization program. By incorporating green practices, HHC will not only reduce operating costs and environmental waste but also provide its patients with a healthier healing environment and maintain a moral obligation to reduce its carbon footprint in the Harlem community. The Capstone team's main objective was to provide HHC with greening alternatives that can be incorporated into renovation of its existing facilities and create long-term savings. The team provided HHC with extensive research which included presentation of greening initiative models incorporated by other health care facilities, trade expert interviews with those involved in greening projects at other local NYC hospitals, and a three-year cost benefit analysis of the recommended initiatives. It is the goal of the Capstone team

to assist HHC in becoming an environmental steward in the healthcare community.

Capstone Team: Christine DeMarco, Daniel Ibañez, Antonia Marriott, Eric Schips

## **New Milford Hospital**

### *Planning for an Electronic Medical Record: Research Based Guidelines*

New Milford Hospital (NMH) is an 85-bed community hospital in Connecticut facing the challenge of keeping pace with the rapidly evolving healthcare information technology environment. NMH asked the Capstone team to help its Health Information Technology Committee prepare to upgrade their current core system and develop a strategic plan for achieving a fully integrated Electronic Medical Record (EMR). NMH believes this will greatly improve patient care and allow the hospital to participate in regional healthcare data exchange. The Capstone team identified and interviewed best practice community hospitals that have implemented a functional EMR. It then compared and analyzed the core EMR products of several vendors, assessing their benefits and limitations to NMH, and verifying their match to its infrastructure and resources. The team's final report provides recommended transition plans, after the selection of a suitable core vendor, as the hospital migrates towards a comprehensive EMR.

Capstone Team: Joseph Friedman, Akiva Rudner, Linda Siconolfi-Baez, James Tu

## **New York Academy of Medicine**

*Alternatives for Diversifying the Revenue Base at New York Academy of Medicine*

For the past 160 years, the New York Academy of Medicine has been engaged in research and education to enhance the health of people living in cities, particularly disadvantaged populations. The Academy relies primarily on grants to support its activities but in recent years that support has been declining. Given the current environment, the Academy is reassessing its business model. The Academy asked the Capstone team to assist in identifying more diversified revenue streams. The team interviewed other organizations for ideas on how the Academy can expand its education programs, market its intellectual property, and maximize the value of its library and historical collections. Based on these interviews, the team identified that the Academy may potentially generate revenue from event hosting, physician executive education programs, and e-commerce opportunities at the library. To further identify market opportunities, the team conducted competitive and service analyses in the aforementioned areas and examined benefits and costs associated with the proposed projects. Finally, the team recommended strategies on how to translate these opportunities into revenue streams.

Capstone Team: Jackson Chin, Irina Livshits, Jose Perez, Lauren Weinstein

## **Advanced Projects in International Management and Policy**

FACULTY: DENNIS SMITH

### **Education For Employment Foundation**

*A Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation System*

The Education For Employment Foundation (EFE) works in the Middle East and North Africa to provide disadvantaged youth with skills to improve the economic future of both themselves and their countries. EFE accomplishes this objective by providing unemployed youth with cutting-edge professional training that leads directly to job opportunities. The Capstone team was commissioned by EFE to create a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework to gauge the success and impact of EFE's programs. The team first undertook a literature review of monitoring and evaluation techniques and looked at similar organizations' M&E frameworks to brainstorm for innovative and creative ideas. The team then drew up a logframe with EFE's goals, results, and indicators. Based on the indicators, the team created a host of tools that will enable EFE to carry out a continuous process of monitoring and evaluating. The Capstone team is delivering a handbook to EFE, incorporating all the M&E tools to be used, instructions on how they should be used, and the frequency of use. The team hopes that this handbook will enable EFE to implement monitoring and evaluating processes that

are tailored to individual program and country needs.

Capstone Team: Katherine Aaby, Stephanie Bosse Barksdale, Margaret Della, Farah Siddique

## **Near East Foundation**

*Re-Evaluating Program and Organizational Focus and its Coherence with Current Trends in the Nonprofit Environment*

Following an almost 100 year existence, the Near East Foundation (NEF) is at a pivotal point in reassessing its place among nonprofit organizations in a similar market. NEF's programs consist mainly of agriculture, education, health care and income generation projects that help communities find means to provide these elements for themselves. By conducting an environmental scan and interviewing individuals in the nonprofit world, the Capstone team gathered information to gain a comprehensive understanding of NEF's current role in the nonprofit community and possible alternatives to its future programs and direction. Using this information, the Capstone team highlighted NEF's comparative advantages and unique strengths in a core statement that can provide direction and guidance in future organizational and programmatic decisions.

Capstone Team: Matthew Graham, Kristin O'Keefe, Arik Shur, Kate Synak

## **Rudin Center for Transportation Policy and Management**

*Benchmarking Transit Improvement Processes in Megacities of the Developing World*

Mayor Bloomberg's introduction of PlaNYC 2030 represented a pivotal moment for the future strategy of New York City. Developed out of the recognition that the City's infrastructure, particularly its transit system, is too old to accommodate an expected resident population of over 9 million people by 2030, and a commitment to combating climate change through green initiatives, PlaNYC 2030 is an exciting challenge to move our celebrated city forward into a sustainable future. The Capstone team was tasked with researching and benchmarking the process of three comparable megacities – Bogota, Buenos Aires, and Cairo – as they expanded their transit systems while coping with challenges similar to those New York City is confronting. The Capstone team's research for the Rudin Center will provide practitioners from the transportation community, city planners, and officials with important insights, lessons learned, and best practices that could be applicable to New York City's future transit system expansion.

Capstone Team: Pierre Des Roseaux, Aurelien Pere, Jacqueline Ross, Vincent Valdmanis

## **The Synergos Institute**

### *Developing an Evaluation Framework for a Global Network of Philanthropists*

The Synergos Institute is dedicated to bringing together governments, business-ees, civil society organizations, individual leaders, and philanthropists to address the underlying causes of poverty and inequity by employing innovative strategies that lead to meaningful, long-term change. Synergos requested that the Capstone team create a set of assessment tools for appraising one of its programs, the Global Philanthropists Circle. The Global Philanthropists Circle is an international network of philanthropists dedicated to eliminating poverty and increasing equity through collaboration and targeted giving initiatives. The Capstone team developed an evaluation framework and a set of measurement tools to assess the impact of the network activities on the members' philanthropy. These tools will enable Synergos to support a more effective and strategic group of philanthropists.

Capstone Team: Annie Hitchens, Gwen Neely, Michael Provenza

## **The World Bank**

### *Women and Children in Post-Conflict Situations: Comparison of Multilateral Development Banks' Responses to The World Bank*

Numerous issues affect women and children in post-conflict and emergency situations. These include sexual violence and

rape, coping with the deaths of family members, domestic violence, and economic hardships, among others. In February 2007, the World Bank introduced a new Rapid Response Policy which laid out a framework for a more rapid and effective response to crises and emergencies. The Capstone team compared this policy to similar policies of other Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs), namely the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). The Capstone team conducted extensive research, interviewed key Bank staff, and produced a written report on its findings. The report included specific observations on the Bank's work in comparison with other MDBs, and gave recommendations on how the Bank might better meet the needs of this vulnerable subset of the population.

Capstone Team: Preeti Maria Bhuyan, Eunsook Kang, Wanjiru Ndichu

# Advanced Projects in International Management and Policy

FACULTY: LUCILLE PILLING

## Helen Keller International

*Avian Influenza Pandemic Preparedness at an International Nonprofit Organization*

Helen Keller International (HKI) is a nonprofit organization devoted to fighting and treating preventable blindness and malnutrition, with programs in 22 countries. HKI sought the assistance of the Capstone team to develop a business continuity plan for its New York headquarters and country offices should business operations be interrupted due to rapid onset of an avian influenza pandemic. To address this critical issue, the Capstone team devised a four-stage methodology which consists of: 1) Background research on avian influenza, including the World Health Organization's (WHO) six phases of pandemic alert, and identification of best practices for continuity planning; 2) qualitative data derived from interviews with key administrators from comparable organizations and HKI country directors; 3) model scenarios for pandemic preparedness based on the WHO's six phases; and 4) a focus group at the HKI Indonesia office to identify key questions and concerns for pandemic preparedness planning. From research findings and interviews, the Capstone team devised a preparedness plan and human resource

policy recommendations for business continuity.

Capstone Team: Qaisia Ali, Jonathan Bandel, Jackline Oluoch, Meredith Sather

## Hesperian Foundation

*Evaluation of Hesperian Foundation's Publication: Where There Is No Doctor*

Hesperian Foundation is a nonprofit publisher of books that provide practical, life-saving medical information. Hesperian's best-known publication, "Where There Is No Doctor," is used by medical missionaries, Peace Corp volunteers, and NGOs around the world. The organization's simple database of anecdotal evidence and buyer information, however, cannot track the distribution of books or measure how the book communicates information and affects health outcomes. To provide Hesperian with an assessment of how "Where There Is No Doctor" is used and distributed, the Capstone team created three online surveys, in both English and Spanish. This was disseminated to a sample of individual and organizational buyers from the last two years, as well as those who received the book gratis. The final report analyzed the surveys' results to guide Hesperian's future strategic planning and publication development, as well as provided a replicable survey and case study methodology for future evaluations.

Capstone Team: Kelly Davis, Linda Eng Warshaw, Jenna Liut, Danielle Reichner

## **ReliefWeb**

### *Building a Communication Strategy for ReliefWeb*

Launched in 1996 by the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, ReliefWeb is a website that assists the international humanitarian community by delivering timely, reliable, and relevant information concerning global emergencies and disasters. ReliefWeb posts vital information 24 hours a day from over 2,000 stakeholder sources (including the UN, OCHA, national governments, NGO field and HQ offices, and the International Red Cross). ReliefWeb partnered with the Capstone team to create a communication strategy targeting these stakeholders to: 1) promote further awareness and usage of ReliefWeb; and 2) encourage stakeholders to deepen their partnerships and increase their contribution of information to ReliefWeb. To accomplish this goal, the Capstone team consulted communications and marketing experts to gain insight into research methodology. Stakeholders were interviewed (including a field visit to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia) to better understand how the humanitarian relief community obtains and disseminates information. From the findings, the team created targeted messages tailored to each of the stakeholder groups.

Capstone Team: Amy Hsieh, Alex Iverson, Diana Mao, Lucia Poster

## **Transatlantic Partners Against AIDS/Global Business Coalition**

### *Evaluating the Performance of a Russian NGO in HIV/AIDS Policy and Advocacy*

Epidemiologists have called the increasing incidence of HIV/AIDS in the Russian Federation the second wave of the pandemic. In Russia, stigma and lack of services for most-at-risk groups such as injecting drug users is a real threat against efforts to curb the epidemic. Transatlantic Partners Against AIDS/Global Business Coalition (TPAA/GBC) has been working with the Russian Interfactional Deputies' Working Group on HIV/AIDS, a coalition of State Duma members, since April 2004. The Moscow-based Policy and Leadership Team performs education and advocacy activities to raise awareness and inform the coalition on a range of policy issues related to HIV/AIDS. The Capstone team conducted an evaluation and analysis of the Policy and Leadership Program and its effectiveness to date. The qualitative assessment included interviews with TPAA staff as well as other partners and stakeholders. The final report included recommendations for the Policy and Leadership Team and its role in the to-be-merged TPAA/GBC organization.

Capstone Team: Erdeta Bani, Marijeanne Kachur, Scott Morgan, Pratiksha Patel, Haley Socha

# Advanced Projects in International Management and Policy

FACULTY: JODY SPIRO

## Asia Society

### *Asia Society's Role in the Intermediary Education Market*

The Capstone team worked with the Asia Society to provide strategic recommendations for achieving the organization's goals of producing globally competent students through its position as an educational intermediary. Using Asia Society's whole school model of international education as a platform for analysis, the team's work included: visiting public schools; interviewing school directors, administrators and students; examining the current landscape of Asia Society's activities; analyzing the methodology of four comparable organizations; researching different definitions and implementations of international education; and creating and distributing a market survey. Through this process, the team came to understand the funding sources, interests, and broader needs amongst potential stakeholders in the domestic market for school development services, and as a result, the Capstone team presented to the Asia Society a package of key information, insights, and recommendations regarding its expansion plans as an educational intermediary.

Capstone Team: Natalie Grandison, Arlene Jamo, Marlon Williams, Judy Yan, Gelmina Zidelyte

## Huairou Commission

### *Developing Participatory Instruments and Administrative Guidelines for Evaluating and Monitoring the Women's Land Link Africa Program*

The Huairou Commission is a global coalition of networks, institutions, and individual professionals that links grassroots women's community development organizations to partners. The networks gain access to resources, information sharing and political space, whereas the development professionals are linked to on-the-ground practice. Currently, the coalition focuses its joint efforts on five campaigns: Governance; AIDS; Disaster; Land and Housing; and Peace Building. The Huairou Commission Capstone project goal is to design a monitoring and evaluation process, including instruments and administration guidelines, specifically for the land and housing program called Women's Land Link Africa (WLLA). Currently, the WLLA program participants have no standardized processes or goals to monitor and evaluate their service delivery or demonstrate results as part of accountability to key stakeholders. The processes developed will be grassroots focused, participatory, have simple/accessible language, reflect the overall Huairou Commission vision, and reflect aspects

important to Huairou Commission partners.

Capstone Team: Jyotswaroop Bawa, Dorian Caal, Batseba Kassahun, Dan Osnato

## **Advanced Projects in International Public Finance and Planning**

FACULTY: PAUL SMOKE AND NORA LIBERTUN DE DUREN

### **Congressional Research Service**

#### *Mapping Chinese Development Aid*

The Congressional Research Service (CRS) is a non-partisan entity serving Congressional staff and committee members with up-to-date information regarding international and domestic policy issues. Just as the Chinese economy has developed so has its diplomatic reach, but the scope of Chinese assistance to and interaction with developing countries is not well understood. At the request of CRS, this Capstone team undertook research to link hard data to Chinese development flows to Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia. Through the use of various media, financial, and research sources, the team created a database and prepared a report analyzing various categories and trends in development assistance throughout these regions.

Capstone Team: Amanda Kogut, Sean Maloney, Ok Namkung, Santhosh Ramdoss, Gabrielle Wang

## **Lincoln Institute of Land Policy**

*Comparative Review of Land and Property Taxation in Southeast Asia*

The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy conducts research, policy evaluations, education, and training on policy issues relating to land around the world. The Institute has international studies programs that focus specifically on Latin America, the Caribbean, and China, and it is evaluating extending its work into other countries or regions. In particular, the Lincoln Institute is interested in exploring property taxation issues in Southeast Asia. Property tax may support the decentralization process as it has the potential to serve as an important source of own-source revenue and political accountability for local governments. The Capstone team examined land and property administration and taxation structures in Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, and Malaysia. Based on a review of existing literature and interviews with local experts, the team then wrote and presented a working paper for the Lincoln Institute comparing and contrasting property and land administration and taxation in Indonesia and the Philippines. The team examined the impact of decentralization and intergovernmental transfer systems on the valuation and collection efficiency of the property tax regime in the two countries.

Capstone Team: Sharad Aggarwal, Aparna Dalal, Kristin Gilliss, Karolyn Rancourt

## **Municipal Development Partnership of Eastern and Southern Africa**

*Participatory Budgeting and Revenue Generation in Africa*

The Municipal Development Partnership of Eastern and Southern Africa (MDP-ESA) sponsored the Africa Regional Seminar on Participatory Budgeting in Durban, South Africa, in March 2008 to explore participatory budgeting and governance in the African context. The Capstone team assisted in the preparation for this seminar through research and fieldwork to prepare multiple documents for the conference, including an issue paper on participatory budgeting in the Western context, an issue paper on designing mechanisms for citizen engagement in revenue generation, and a case study on participatory governance in Uganda. The team presented the results of these studies to several audiences, including local government practitioners in Uganda and municipal leaders from a wide range of African countries over continent-wide video conferences and at the seminar in South Africa. The results of this research will aid African practitioners in implementing new projects and strengthening existing practices, and contribute to the limited scholarly literature on the topic.

Capstone Team: Courtney Babcock, Erin Brannan, Priyanka Gupta, Shital Shah

## **United Nations Capital Development Fund**

*Local Economic Development in Nicaragua: Experiences from PRODELISA*

The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) requested this project for the purpose of learning lessons from the implementation of the EU-funded, Nicaraguan-executed, PRODELISA program. PRODELISA is based on the premise that Nicaraguan Municipal governments can effectively help reduce poverty by playing a more pro-active role in promoting local economic development (LED), and facilitating ventures that leverage local competitive and comparative advantages, generate income and employment opportunities, and improve food security. The purpose of the report is not to provide a comprehensive evaluation of PRODELISA, but more narrowly to study PRODELISA's experience in the area of municipal development planning in addressing LED, and in the area of investment project planning to determine the extent to which projects are carried out in a technically, institutionally, and financially sustainable manner. The report studied these variables by focusing on a sample of three productive projects. The results will be used to improve the design and implementation of the new UNCDF-funded, Nicaraguan-executed, PADETOM program, which has goals similar to those of PRODELISA.

Capstone Team: Andrea Buteau, Rebecca Feinberg, Jennifer Kuhlman, Sergio Palacios, Celine van den Abeele, Anna York

## **United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Public Administration and Development Management**

*Promoting Citizen Engagement in Public Revenue Generation in Post-Conflict Nations*

The Division for Public Administration and Development Management of UNDESA examines issues of public administration, public finance, and public management at the United Nations. The Capstone team was enlisted to conduct research about citizen engagement in public revenue generation, particularly in post-conflict countries. The team analyzed three post-conflict nations: Rwanda, Cambodia and Timor-Leste. The team conducted a field visit to Rwanda to research two local programs, and used secondary sources to examine Cambodia and Timor-Leste. The final output of the project was two reports. The first report was a macro-level comparison of citizen involvement in public revenue generation programs in all three countries. The second report featured in-depth case studies of two local level programs in Rwanda. The Capstone team's research will help UNDESA and its partners enhance their knowledge about mechanisms of engaging citizens in resource mobilization, especially in post-conflict countries, and will serve as a resource for future studies.

Capstone Team: Amna Khawar, Jessica R. Kiessel, Hope Tumukunde

## **The World Bank**

*Understanding Decentralization in Political and Institutional Context: Motives, Opportunities and Constraints*

The World Bank Poverty Reduction and Economic Management (PRMPS) group has done considerable work on public sector decentralization and has recently become interested in exploring the historical, political, and institutional context in which decentralization unfolds. In order to formulate more strategic and pragmatic decentralization support activities and to conduct more robust comparative work, the Bank is developing a diagnostic to help analysts understand these contextual dynamics. The Capstone team performed an extensive literature review and developed and refined a framework to analyze six case countries: Bosnia, China, Kenya, Nicaragua, Uganda, and Vietnam. In addition, the team conducted a workshop to present and receive feedback on their findings, as well as to provide a forum for dialogue among decentralization experts on how to broaden and improve the analysis of decentralization as an approach to poverty reduction, service delivery, and increased democracy in the developing world.

Capstone Team: Priya Aggarwal, Martha Bowen, Samantha Brooks, Carolyn Githinji, Leila Jerusalem, Malini Krishna

## **The World Bank Institute**

*Advisory Services for Capacity Building of Municipal Planning Offices in Guatemala*

The Capstone team worked with World Bank Institute (WBI) staff to develop capacity building tools for strengthening the Guatemalan Municipal Planning Offices (OMP) and enhancing the skills of OMP officials. During the decentralization process OMPs were established in order to coordinate and consolidate the diagnostics, plans, programs, and projects for the development of municipalities. Challenges remain in professionalizing the urban planning profession in Guatemala and establishing standards of competencies required for municipal planners. The WBI team contributed to the development of effective management models that could be scaled up across municipalities in Guatemala and worked to develop processes that would strengthen the capacity of municipal planners in Guatemala through certification, including the formulation of a certification curriculum. Methods proposed include distance learning capacity-building programs for municipal officials such as radio, web-based, and print programs.

Capstone Team: Naomi Myrna Doerner, Andrew Krochalk, Paula Restrepo

# Advanced Projects in Urban Planning

FACULTY: RAE ZIMMERMAN AND KEI HAYASHI

## Apollo Theater Foundation

*Central Harlem Demographic and Market Analysis*

The Apollo Theater Foundation, Inc., is a nonprofit organization whose goal is to preserve the historic Apollo Theater and expand the reach of the “Apollo Experience.” The Apollo is now at a pivotal point in its development, as it attempts to find a balance between its for-profit (performances series) and nonprofit (educational and community) goals while in the midst of preparing for a renovation and re-opening in 2011. The Apollo requested a Capstone team to provide insight into how the changes in neighborhood composition, real estate market, and business community would impact its current and future programming. The Capstone team conducted extensive research into historical and existing conditions in Central Harlem, forecasted trends, and produced recommendations in order to inform the Apollo's strategic planning process. Additionally, in an effort to ensure the ongoing data capture of employee demographic information, which the Apollo needs for grant applications and incentive programs, the Capstone team created an electronic employee demographic tool and user manual that illustrates how to set up, maintain, and analyze data in the tool on an ongoing basis.

Capstone Team: Lindsay Carpenter, Karen Leu, Vera Moore

## Empire State Development Corporation

*Environmental Sustainability Project*

The Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC), a New York State public finance and development authority, enlisted the assistance of the Capstone team to investigate sustainable development opportunities, incentives, and best practices. Research was conducted using two nonprofit cultural institutions as case studies: the Guggenheim Museum in Manhattan and the Bethel Woods Center for the Arts in Sullivan County. Through extensive telephone interviews and site visits, the team identified areas at both facilities where building and/or site performance upgrades could be applied. Federal, state, and local policies were assessed to understand any regulatory or institutional obstacles encountered at the facilities with regard to energy efficiency. The team developed a user-friendly catalogue/database of energy-saving financial incentives and technologies that can be applied to developments in New York State. Recommendations included in the final report take into consideration the challenges posed by the urban and rural contexts of the respective case study institutions. The report will enable ESDC to better promote sustainable development practices.

Capstone Team: Alison Culpen, Daniel Doyle, Michael Kodransky, Jennifer Steinberg

### **Enterprise Community Partners**

*The Feasibility of Developing Affordable Housing on New York City Public Library Sites*

The perpetual demand for affordable housing in New York City, coupled with the lack of development sites throughout the five boroughs, have required developers to become creative in their site selection techniques. Consequently, Enterprise Community Partners has been examining the potential for developing affordable housing on top of existing public library sites. Many of these libraries were constructed in the 1960's as one-story bunker-type buildings, and are not fully built out to their maximum floor area ratios. Since these libraries are aging and many are in dire need of renovation, Enterprise retained a Capstone team to investigate the potential of partnering with the library systems (Brooklyn Public Library, New York Public Library, and Queens Public Library) to determine the costs of rebuilding libraries with affordable housing. The team examined the inner workings of each library system and researched recent capital construction projects. The Capstone team learned about Enterprise's development costs, analyzed the costs of construction for a public library, and examined alternative funding sources for such a project. Finally,

the Capstone team performed an air rights analysis and applied the team's construction metric on a few sites pre-selected by Enterprise.

Capstone Team: Carrie-Ann Ferraro, Dan Guilbeault, Melanie Ochser, Ji Young Yi, Adam Zeidel

### **Mississippi Center for Justice**

*Growing Community Assets in Gulfport, Mississippi*

Hurricane Katrina devastated whole communities along the Gulf Coast. The storm was particularly damaging to traditionally marginalized neighborhoods in Gulfport, MS, that have long struggled to capitalize upon their assets. The Mississippi Center for Justice, a public interest law firm, advocates on behalf of these neighborhoods in the post-Katrina planning and redevelopment process. Soria City and The Quarters, two predominantly African-American neighborhoods with rich historical legacies, are especially in need of community planning resources. The Capstone team conducted a comprehensive lot-by-lot parcel inventory survey (804 total property lots) of these areas, identifying land uses, physical structure, architectural style, and historical narratives. The team converted this data into a web-based geocoded database capable of GIS manipulation. Relying upon this database, the team delivered a best practices community development guidebook for both communities, tailoring an array of private and public programs to

meet local needs. The Capstone team identified eight topic areas for community development: housing preservation and rehabilitation; infrastructure; youth workforce development; organizational capacity; small business incubation; cultural tourism; greenway development; and logistical solutions.

Capstone Team: Molly Brantz, Tara Duvivier, Emre Edev, Peter James Kralovec, John Thomas Saunders

### **New York City Mayor's Office of Long Term Planning and Sustainability**

#### *Best Management Practices for Stormwater Management*

PlaNYC is a comprehensive effort carried out by the City of New York to address the new pressure on the city's infrastructure from the additional one million residents that are expected to reside in NYC by the year 2030. The Mayor's Office asked the Capstone team to assist in Water, one of the five initiatives. Working alongside the Mayor's Office of Long Term Planning and Sustainability (OLTPS), the Capstone team has carried out two phases of research to assist in efforts to develop policy to mitigate stormwater runoff. Phase I included a detailed analysis of forty-five best management practices (BMPs) for stormwater runoff. Research included looking at cost, maintenance, implementation, and current uses of each BMP. Phase II looked more in detail at environmental conditions for BMPs in order to provide specific informa-

tion on areas within NYC where BMPs could best be implemented. The research culminated in policy recommendations for the OLTPS on where and how to best implement BMPs in the NYC landscape.

Capstone Team: Chris Gorman, Jung-Hsien Liao, Akila Shenoy

### **New York University, Office of Strategic Assessment, Planning and Design**

#### *NYU Green Buildings*

NYU is committed to environmental issues and has established the Sustainability Task Force with the main objective of reducing NYU's environmental footprint. Implementing sustainable building practices plays a crucial role in attaining NYU's sustainability goals, as buildings utilize an enormous amount of energy, water, materials, and other resources. This Capstone project was established to analyze twelve buildings that accurately represent NYU's building stock, and determine methods for attaining the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification and improvements in sustainable practices. The team gathered an inventory of the twelve selected buildings from various departments and that information was compiled, researched, and analyzed to create a report that lists what improvements must be made in order to obtain LEED certification. The team then made a series of recommendations to guide NYU in implementing sustainable practices for its building

stock, and assist the Sustainability Task Force in achieving its goals.

Capstone Team: Lauren Brust, Erik Dahlberg, Arturo Espinoza, Harry Ostrander, Danit Simon

## **Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation**

*Identifying Needs and Exploring Options for Affordable Housing in a Changing Manhattan Neighborhood*

The Capstone team provided the Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation (NMIC) with information to help the organization see the current state of the community and evaluate the feasibility of affordable housing construction in the context of escalating costs and scarce available space. The first phase of the project presented the current state of the areas' demographic and housing situation. This quick snapshot will assist NMIC in the evaluation of its population's needs and will help guide the use of its organizational capacity and resources. The second phase provided an index of financial resources to fund affordable housing development. The Capstone team provided a comprehensive list of financial subsidies on local, state, and federal levels. The database includes financing mechanisms, targeted populations, and the relevant requirements of the administering agencies. The last phase of the project was to conduct a site-survey to capture detailed information on the physical attributes of

vacant land currently zoned as residential and severely underbuilt properties in the area. NMIC will be able to use the survey to target potential sites of affordable housing development.

Capstone Team: Michael Lear, Danise Malqui, Jessica Sanclemente

## **Westchester County Department of Planning/Westchester County Department of Transportation**

*Bus Ridership Strategies for Westchester County*

Westchester County, NY, seeks to increase "choice ridership" on its Bee-Line bus system. Unlike "captive riders" or transit dependents who lack mobility alternatives, choice riders retain access to automobiles. Westchester County has solicited the Capstone team's assistance in developing a set of strategies to achieve the goal of shifting a portion of the transportation picture from the least efficient mode (single occupancy vehicle) to a more efficient mode (bus transit). These recommendations will be included in "Westchester 2025," the policy document created to guide future growth and development. The Capstone team analyzed current land-use policies and practices, demographic trends, and bus services, and compared this data against examples and techniques discussed in the literature. The team issued recommendations based on its findings. The Capstone team also completed three case-studies of municipi-

palities within Westchester County: an urban downtown setting (City of New Rochelle); a commercial retail strip (the Central Avenue corridor in the Town of Greenburgh); and a small village setting (Village of Mount Kisco).

Capstone Team: Alejandro Blei, Justin Schultz, David Slotnick

## Advanced Projects in Urban Planning

FACULTY: NHADINE LEUNG

### **Biloxi Housing Authority and Local Initiatives Support Corporation**

*Post Hurricane Commercial Revitalization of Biloxi, Mississippi*

Biloxi, MS, suffered extensive damage during hurricane Katrina in 2005. The Biloxi Housing Authority (BHA) has been spearheading revitalization and rebuilding efforts to restore the vitality and diversity that made Biloxi a great community. While many residents have returned to rebuild their homes and lives, many more are unable to come back due to a lack of housing. Rebuilding efforts in Biloxi have largely centered around workforce housing. The BHA has recognized that in order to create a vibrant and sustainable community, commercial revitalization is also necessary. The Capstone team was asked to research and analyze how best to rejuvenate Division Street, the main commercial corridor in East Biloxi. The team conducted two site visits to assess existing conditions and gather input from the community as to how they envision Division Street. Through extensive research into relevant and applicable case studies and land use assessments, the team developed a set of recommendations for spurring commercial revitalization along Division Street.

Capstone Team: Leah Flax, Samelys Lopez, Ines Saldana

## **Myrtle Avenue Revitalization Project Local Development Corporation**

*Revitalization Opportunities in Industrial Wallabout, Brooklyn - An Economic Development Plan*

Myrtle Avenue Revitalization Project LDC (MARP) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to restore Myrtle Avenue in the neighborhoods of Fort Greene and Clinton Hill, Brooklyn, to a bustling, economically vital neighborhood commercial corridor. MARP charged the Capstone team with creating an economic development plan for a manufacturing-zoned area known as Wallabout, located just north of Myrtle Avenue. MARP's objectives are to retain and expand the presence of light manufacturing activities in the Wallabout area, while bridging retail, commercial, and industrial activity from the Brooklyn Navy Yard to the Myrtle Avenue corridor. The Capstone team provided recommendations for the project area based on existing conditions, field observations in the form of business surveys and stakeholder interviews, manufacturing market trend analysis, relevant case studies, and real estate feasibility studies. Ultimately, the plan produced by the Capstone team will help MARP to educate constituents and other interested parties about the potential for economic growth in the Wallabout area.

Capstone Team: Joy Chiu, Becky Ferguson, Russell Lang, Daria Siegel, Sherilyn Tran

## **Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity at Yale University**

*Healthy Food Access in Underserved Urban Areas*

The Capstone team studied the problems associated with a lack of access to healthy food in underserved urban neighborhoods, and how planners can help rectify the situation. Grocery stores and supermarkets are common in suburbs, but in many poor neighborhoods with fewer transit options, healthy food is harder to find. This leads to a reliance on poor nutrition choices from fast-food outlets or convenience stores, which are common in low-income areas. Working with Yale University's Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity, the Capstone team researched the history of food retailers, and examined planning barriers that exacerbate food-access problems. The team developed an interactive guide for planners and community organizers who are interested in bringing better food options to their cities, but are unsure how to proceed. By matching characteristics and variables with past success stories, the guide is designed to get planners started on helping solve an often unnoticed public health crisis. The team also compiled a report on available literature and case studies to summarize current trends in the field.

Capstone Team: Hugh Bailey, Denali Dasgupta, Alyson Evans, Brian Ross, Sarah Wu

# Applied Research in Public Finance and Policy

FACULTY: TOD MIJANOVICH

## Effectiveness of State Participation in Voluntary Programs for Pollution Control

Regulating pollution levels can be costly for governments and polluters. In hopes of a more cost-effective manner for reducing pollution, the EPA launched its first voluntary programs for pollution control in 1991. Such programs form partnerships with firms, industries, and state and local governments using voluntary commitments to reduce pollution not generally addressed by laws and regulations. The Clean Energy-Environment State Partnership Program (CEESP) is a program that helps states review and adopt policies and programs that effectively integrate clean energy into a low-cost, clean, and reliable energy system. The intended result of the program is the public good of reduced pollution levels. While firm participation in voluntary programs has been studied to a significant degree, state participation has not. The intent of this study is to understand which state characteristics encourage participation in a voluntary program, specifically CEESP, and whether a state's participation significantly and positively affects a state's generation of green power.

Capstone Team: Payal Dalal, Vida Jong, Benjamin Matranga, Mariscelle Payawal, Bridget Young

## The Effects of Welfare Reform on the Well-Being of Single Mothers

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 changed the face of welfare by imposing time limits, work requirements, and stricter eligibility controls. While many studies show that it has been successful in reducing welfare caseloads and increasing the number of women who work, little research has been done to determine the effects on women who were the worst-off prior to reform. This research aims to determine how single mothers who face the most financial hardships have fared in the post-reform period. The Capstone team also investigated the impact of state-level variation in the strictness of post-welfare reform policies.

Capstone Team: Melissa Grober, Andrea Hollen, Johanna Laco

## Minding the Gap: Exploring State Factors Associated with the Black-White Test Score Gap

Racial inequality has been a persistent failing in American education. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) requires that states decrease the size of achievement gaps between racial subgroups each year and close all test score gaps by 2014. Research has explored which student, family, and school characteristics impact student achievement and the black-white gap, yet little research has focused on which state-level demographic,

economic, and education factors relate to the test score gap between black and white students. The Capstone team addressed this issue by conducting a study relating state-level factors to the size of states' black-white test score gaps over time.

Capstone Team: Emily Anthony, Anne Rotenberg, Katie Ruddy

### **Racial Disparities in the Diagnosis of Depression Within a Hospitalized Geriatric Population in New York State**

Projections suggest that by 2020 depression will become the second leading cause of disease worldwide. The high prevalence of the disease and its associated morbidity and economic burden are major public health concerns. Racial and ethnic disparities in access and receipt of appropriate mental health care have been documented in the United States. The Capstone team explored this issue by focusing on disparities in the diagnosis of depression among older adults hospitalized in New York State. This study will contribute to the literature on mental health disparities, as well as fill a gap in knowledge regarding the elderly. The development of sound health policy models that integrate mental health care into physical health services requires examining the status quo of the mental health care that older adults receive. Identifying the existence of disparities would allow for a more effective approach to re-conceptualizing and

improving integrated health care for the elderly in a hospital setting.

Capstone Team: Michelle L. Paladino, Sachin K. Shinde, Rubén Soto-Rodríguez, Michael P. Summers

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