ABOUT CAPSTONE

Capstone, in architecture, is the crowning piece of an arch, the center stone that holds the arch together, giving it shape and strength. Similarly, NYU Wagner’s Capstone Program provides students with the centerpiece of their graduate education where they turn their classroom learning into practice. Capstone teams spend an academic year addressing a challenge and identifying opportunities for a client, or conducting research on a pressing social question—in a complex and real-world environment. Students must quickly become familiar with an issue or content area; demonstrate process skills including project management and teamwork; and effectively gather, analyze, and present data.

The Capstone Program was originally funded with a generous grant from the Ford Foundation in 1995. Since then, more than 5,600 students have completed nearly 1,300 projects for more than 800 organizations.

The summaries in this booklet represent the 72 Capstone projects from the 2016-2017 academic year.

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BECOME A CAPSTONE CLIENT

Organizations—from the public, nonprofit, or private sector—interested in being a Capstone client should visit wagner.nyu.edu/capstone/clients for more information.

ABOUT NYU WAGNER

New York University’s Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service prepares public service leaders to translate ideas into actions that have an effective and lasting impact. We ensure that our students learn critical analytic skills and frameworks, use New York City as a learning laboratory that can be applied anywhere in the world, and understand the distinct contexts in which they’re working. Ranked 11th nationally among all schools of public affairs, NYU Wagner has been teaching students rigorous methods of management, policy, and planning for over 75 years. We offer Master of Public Administration, Master of Urban Planning, Master of Science in Public Policy, Executive Master of Public Administration, and Doctor of Philosophy degree programs.

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ASIAN WOMEN GIVING CIRCLE
INCREASING DONOR ENGAGEMENT

FACULTY: Matt Schaffer
CAPSTONE TEAM: Lauren Bernstein, Malika Henriques, Paige Host, Ziyi Liu

Asian Women Giving Circle (AWGC) is a unique community-based grassroots collective of philanthropists who raise and distribute individual grants to New York City-based Asian American women artists who use their creativity to advance social justice. The number of grantee applications grows each year, yet AWGC’s annual fundraising has plateaued. AWGC enlisted a Capstone team to provide recommendations on how to increase its pool of funding for grantees. The team conducted interviews and surveys to collect qualitative and quantitative data about AWGC’s participants. The team analyzed the findings and provided a report with recommendations on how AWGC can increase its fundraising while maintaining the culture of the giving circle. The report included recommended donor engagement strategies, a list of fundraising ideas, research on potential high-net-worth donors in New York City, testimonials from AWGC participants, and the survey and interview tools.

BRONX DEFENDERS
CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY AND METHODOLOGY

FACULTY: Matt Schaffer
CAPSTONE TEAM: Daniella Asantewaa, Juana Cala, Mandela Jones, Michelle Kroell, Jennie Trayes

The Bronx Defenders (BxD) practices a holistic client-centered model of public defense and considers client satisfaction to be a core value. Aiming to improve the quality of all indigent defense services, BxD engaged a Capstone team in developing a way to collect accurate and reliable data on client satisfaction of their criminal defense lawyers. The team delivered a survey instrument and methodology for BxD to administer annually that would result in an improved response rate. The team conducted research using prior BxD survey and focus group results; interviews with lawyers, advocates, and sister organizations; as well as academic research. The team piloted the survey at the Hall of Justice in the Bronx and delivered a concise report, which analyzed the results and included recommendations for implementation and improvement.

THE BROOKLYN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
PROGRAM ANALYSIS: MEASURING ECONOMIC IMPACTS

FACULTY: Grisel Caicedo
CAPSTONE TEAM: Simon Lim, Michael McKinnon, Madeline Stoddart, Amy Tsai

The Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce (BCC) fosters economic development in Brooklyn by supporting local businesses and entrepreneurs. BCC enlisted a Capstone team to develop statements to quantify the economic impacts of its loan assistance, job placement, and business development programs and services. The team reviewed different economic impact models, analyzed relevant economic impact multipliers, and conducted interviews with BCC’s program delivery specialists and external experts to build a robust, dynamic model to measure the economic impact of BCC’s work. The team developed program-specific economic impact statements using their findings and building on BCC’s established metrics.

CENTER FOR COMMUNITY ALTERNATIVES
EXPANDING SENTENCING MITIGATION PROGRAMS

FACULTY: Robert Criscuolo
CAPSTONE TEAM: Isaura García, Christian Hansen, Francis Ogutu, Daniel Saffon, Ashleigh Zosel-Harper

The Center for Community Alternatives (CCA) is a nonprofit agency that provides research, training, and direct services in the fields of criminal and juvenile justice and related human services. Since 1981, CCA has worked with attorneys and courts to develop comprehensive sentencing proposals for consideration on behalf of individual defendants. Sentencing mitigation—one of the services CCA offers—involves researching a defendant’s background, such as family and medical history, to provide additional consideration for juries. CCA engaged a Capstone team in conducting a feasibility study to expand the organization’s sentencing mitigation services from New York City to the tri-state area. The team performed a literature review, conducted research on the demand and potential for CCA’s services, and interviewed attorneys and other professionals in the field. The final report provided context to expand CCA’s sentencing mitigation program and included a financial model.
End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism-United States (ECPAT-USA) strives to create a world in which no child is bought, sold, or used for sex. ECPAT-USA works with the hospitality industry to provide hotel staff with training on the commercial sexual exploitation of children. ECPAT-USA enlisted a Capstone team to measure how many hotels received its training and identify whether the training program achieved its intended outcomes of increased awareness of commercial sexual exploitation of children, increased security measures, and a decrease in human trafficking incidents. The team conducted a phone survey of a randomized sample of hotels nationwide. The results showed that hotel managers who participated in ECPAT-USA’s training reported that staff awareness of commercial sexual exploitation had increased within the last three years. The team’s research culminated in a set of recommendations, including a data collection method and framework for future qualitative studies. The data collection methodology will allow ECPAT-USA to conduct similar research to track data and examine the long-term effects of its training program.

CLASSWISH
FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A BUYING CO-OP

ClassWish is a nonprofit organization that provides a way for the public to donate money to fund resources for American K-12 schools and teachers. By virtue of its buying power, ClassWish is able to obtain discounts of 15 to 50 percent on goods for schools and teachers. However, ClassWish recognizes that there is a greater opportunity to enhance discounts and consolidate buying power by establishing a buying co-op between American teachers, schools, and nonprofits. The Capstone team investigated the rationale of group purchasing through a literature review, analyzed the discounts that schools and nonprofits receive, assessed the relationship of group purchasing organizations and vendors through an environmental scan, and conducted interviews with key stakeholders in the market. The team presented recommendations for an operational plan and funding request, which included a market analysis investigating the feasibility of establishing the buying co-op.

EAGLE ACADEMY FOUNDATION
MARKET ANALYSIS AND PRICING MODEL FOR EAGLE INSTITUTE

The Eagle Academy Foundation (EAF) is a Bronx-based organization that shapes the lives of thousands of at-risk youth through its all-boys public school network in New York City and New Jersey. EAF’s approach—designed specifically for young inner-city men of color—addresses shortfalls in the United States’ approach to public education, and in doing so, has become a national model. Following more than a decade of proven success, EAF created a new entity called Eagle Institute that offers schools across the country information, training, and consulting programs centered on EAF strategies. Eagle Institute enlisted a Capstone team to obtain a full understanding of its position in the market. The team conducted a comprehensive environmental scan and literature review, produced a SWOT analysis for the organization, and developed pricing models for each of Eagle Institute’s existing and prospective products. The team’s final recommendations reflected the opportunities and competitions in the market and included a pricing strategy to strengthen Eagle Institute’s sustainability.

CHANTING THE PRESENT
DONOR CULTIVATION AND STEWARDSHIP

Changing the Present is a nonprofit organization that connects those interested in buying meaningful gifts with more than 1,500 charitable nonprofits that help make the world a better place. All donations made through Changing the Present’s website go directly to the causes. Changing the Present receives only a small processing fee, which is not enough to sustain operations or grow the organization. The organization engaged a Capstone team in building a fundraising strategy tailored to its unique needs and organizational culture. The team conducted a literature review on best practices in donor cultivation and stewardship and administered and analyzed surveys of stakeholders and field experts. The team’s research culminated in a set of recommendations to support the organization in developing an effective fundraising strategy to provide an avenue for sustainability and growth.

END CHILD PROSTITUTION IN ASIAN TOURISM-UNITED STATES (ECPAT-USA)
INITIAL IMPACT ANALYSIS OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING TRAINING FOR LODGING SECTOR EMPLOYEES

End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism-United States (ECPAT-USA) strives to create a world in which no child is bought, sold, or used for sex. ECPAT-USA works with the hospitality industry to provide hotel staff with training on the commercial sexual exploitation of children. ECPAT-USA enlisted a Capstone team to measure how many hotels received its training and identify whether the training program achieved its intended outcomes of increased awareness of commercial sexual exploitation of children, increased security measures, and a decrease in human trafficking incidents. The team created and conducted a phone survey of a randomized sample of hotels nationwide. The results showed that hotel managers who participated in ECPAT-USA’s training reported that staff awareness of commercial sexual exploitation had increased within the last three years. The team’s research culminated in a set of recommendations, including a data collection method and framework for future qualitative studies. The data collection methodology will allow ECPAT-USA to conduct similar research to track data and examine the long-term effects of its training program.
FOOTSTEPS
IDENTIFYING AND DEVELOPING HOUSING ASSISTANCE STRATEGIES

FOOTSTEPS is the only organization in North America focused on supporting individuals from ultra-Orthodox Jewish backgrounds attempting to move beyond their insular communities. New York City’s competitive housing market can be daunting or out of reach for Footsteps members who are struggling to find employment, addressing complex custody issues, or first experiencing secular education. Footsteps enlisted a Capstone team to provide recommendations for how to better support the housing stability of its members. The team conducted a literature review, environmental scan, interviews, and a SWOT analysis of potential strategies. The final report included three case studies of housing supports, a set of recommendations for light-touch and in-depth strategies to locate housing, and a referral list of organizations to help individual Footsteps members with housing needs. The team’s final recommendations included an evidence-based assessment of the client’s needs that built on Footsteps’ strengths and considered the organization’s resources and capacities.

FORTUNE SOCIETY
ANALYZING FACTORS FOR SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION TO PERMANENT HOUSING

The Fortune Society has been a leader in rehabilitating incarcerated individuals and reintegrating formerly incarcerated individuals into society. The Fortune Society facilitates reintegration by providing housing, including emergency housing for homeless clients, transitional housing, and eventually permanent housing for clients who have progressed through The Fortune Society’s services. The Fortune Society engaged a Capstone team in analyzing quantitative data they had previously collected regarding clients housed at The Academy—its largest transitional housing site. The team analyzed the data to identify trends with the goal of contextualizing outcomes within supportive housing programs. These trends helped identify opportunities to augment data collection and analysis practices. The team’s research culminated in recommendations that The Fortune Society will use as quantitative evidence to support the organization’s policy and funding efforts.

FORT GREENE PARK CONSERVANCY
CREATING A STRATEGIC PLAN TO INFORM THE CONSERVANCY’S VISION, GOALS, AND IMPLEMENTATION

The Fort Greene Park Conservancy (Conservancy) partners with the City of New York and the NYC Parks Department to steward, fundraise, and advocate for Fort Greene Park. The flourishing Brooklyn neighborhood of Fort Greene and nearby developments have positioned Fort Greene Park for significant growth opportunities over the next five to ten years. To address this opportunity, the Conservancy engaged a Capstone team in assisting with a strategic planning process. The team conducted research to assess the state of the park and identify critical needs. The study included a survey of park users, primary and secondary research, and interviews with over 20 individuals including staff, board members, community partners, peer organizations, and other key stakeholders. The team analyzed the research findings, drawing out trends through a facilitated vision statement workshop, SWOT analysis, and logic model. The team worked closely with Conservancy board members to craft a new vision statement and goals for the organization. The team synthesized the research material and analysis, which culminated in a strategic plan for the Conservancy.

EMPATICO
DESIGNING A PROCESS EVALUATION SYSTEM AND DATA MONITORING FRAMEWORK

Empatico creates virtually connected classrooms to unite students across cultures and geographies, enabling individuals to exercise empathy, navigate adversity, and reconcile differences. Empatico has created a three-month curriculum that leverages the use of technology platforms in third- and fourth-grade classrooms to create opportunities for students to connect with peers around the world. Having launched its first pilot program in January 2017, Empatico engaged a Capstone team to implement a monitoring and evaluation system to inform and refine its approach. To do so, the Capstone team conducted a literature review and weekly classroom observations of Empatico’s pilot program. The team’s research culminated in the recommendation and design of an evaluation system and monitoring framework, which incorporated measures and mechanisms for collecting data.

FACULTY: Erica Foldy
CAPSTONE TEAM: Son Trung Chau, Shirley Kim Duong, Ines Finchelstein, Benjamin Gonzalez Rubio Aguilar, Julia Rose Kilgore
**HEBREW UNION COLLEGE-JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION**

**IMPROVED UTILIZATION OF SOFTWARE TO EXPAND FUNDRAISING CAPACITY**

**FACULTY:** Geoff Davenport  
**CAPSTONE TEAM:** Sanya Agrawal, Jee In Chung, Owen Godshall, Lisa Raffetto, Hongli Wen

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR) is a nonprofit institution of Jewish higher education. HUC-JIR ordains rabbis and cantors in the Reform tradition, confers master’s degrees in Jewish education and Jewish nonprofit management, and offers a Ph.D. in Jewish studies. In response to declining membership revenues, HUC-JIR seeks to expand its fundraising capacity and has invested in The Raiser’s Edge, a sophisticated fundraising software to record, track, and monitor its fundraising activities. HUC-JIR enlisted a Capstone team to ensure more effective utilization of The Raiser’s Edge software by developing a data-driven performance review system and an implementation strategy. Using information gleaned from interviews with HUC-JIR employees, peer organizations, and a literature review, the team culled industry best practices for leveraging The Raiser’s Edge in fundraising operations. The team’s final recommendations included a change management plan, key performance indicators, and additional training tools for employees.

**HOMELESS SERVICES UNITED**

**ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT TO GUIDE STRATEGIC PLANNING EFFORT**

**FACULTY:** Liz Hoagland  
**CAPSTONE TEAM:** Heba Hassan Ahmed, Casey Becerra, Ariel Green, Princess Palmer, Abby Woodard

Homeless Services United (HSU) is a coalition of nonprofit organizations serving homeless and at-risk adults and families in New York City. HSU provides advocacy, information sharing, and training to its approximately 50 member agencies to expand their capacity to deliver high-quality services. The Capstone team conducted a full organizational assessment and environmental analysis that HSU could use to inform its strategic planning effort on the heels of a recent leadership transition. The team interviewed HSU staff, member organizations, and peer coalitions; analyzed HSU’s structure, governance, finances, and operations; and conducted industry best-practice research. The team’s final report identified HSU’s strengths and weaknesses as well as the opportunities and threats it faces, and included targeted recommendations for the executive director and board to consider in their strategic planning process.

**LEGAL SERVICES NYC**

**IMPROVING EFFICIENCY AND THE CLIENT EXPERIENCE AT INTAKE**

**FACULTY:** Erica Hamilton  
**CAPSTONE TEAM:** Susanne Botfeld, Christina Collette, Natalie Serock, Katherine Van Poznak

Legal Services NYC (LSNYC) is the largest civil legal services provider in the country and helps more than 80,000 low-income New Yorkers annually. LSNYC’s potential clients connect to legal counsel by calling the organization’s hotline (Access Line), which a team of paralegals manages. LSNYC enlisted a Capstone team to develop a series of recommendations that would improve the experience of callers to the Access Line. The team analyzed Access Line and call log data, interviewed LSNYC’s team of intake paralegals, and researched best practices in caller engagement protocols utilized by similar legal services organizations and other trauma-focused hotlines. The team’s research will help LSNYC define clear caller engagement protocols for paralegals and improve its efficiency in answering and fielding calls from potential clients.

**THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CREDIT UNIONS**

**MARKET ANALYSIS AND GROWTH STRATEGIES FOR SERVING HISPANIC CUSTOMERS**

**FACULTY:** Ivy Pool  
**CAPSTONE TEAM:** Courtney Biederbeck, Cecilia Chapiro, Lisa Gellner, Sam Greenberg, Rima Raouda

The National Federation of Community Development Credit Unions (the Federation) is an association of credit unions that promotes financial inclusion. The Federation provides support and invests in community development credit unions, which specialize in serving populations with limited access to affordable financial services. In 2015, the Federation acquired a Juntos Avanzamos designation, which signifies a credit union committed to serving Hispanic consumers. The Federation enlisted a Capstone team to investigate existing Juntos Avanzamos credit unions (JACUs) and the greater credit union market to gather information on best practices among credit unions serving the Hispanic community. The team conducted market research and interviews to identify challenges and opportunities for outreach in the Hispanic community. The team’s report identified excelling JACUs as shown by key indicators of success, provided recommendations to improve the accreditation process, determined specific resources that the Juntos Avanzamos program should offer to credit unions, and proposed strategies to expand the JACU program.
NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS
DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE DATA STRATEGY FOR PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

FACULTY: Susan Abramowitz
CAPSTONE TEAM: Nina Lauro, Teymur Mammadzada, Omar Smiley, Xi Wei, Zeyi Yin

The New York City Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT) provides information technology (IT) support, plans and executes IT infrastructure projects, and delivers telecommunications services. Within the DoITT, the Financial Management and Administration (FMA) division oversees procurement, analysis of DoITT’s operations, and budgeting—including managing DoITT’s annual expenditure of $450 million. FMA is required to collect and analyze data effectively on the projects it manages; however, the DoITT collects project data through numerous separate tracking systems, making the compilation and analysis of data difficult. The DoITT enlisted a Capstone team to provide a comprehensive data strategy that will allow FMA to assess a project’s performance against budgets and ensure fiscally responsible use of project resources. The team analyzed DoITT’s project management policies and processes, recommended improvements to assist in the collection and analysis of data, and conducted a financial analysis of project performance to budget.

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
BUILDING A STREET DETERIORATION MODEL TO PREDICT THE FUTURE QUALITY RATING OF STREETS

FACULTY: Geoff Davenport
CAPSTONE TEAM: Yulin Chen, Shumao Huang, Michelle Mak Ng, Tianhao Wu, Zhenli Yan

The New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) is responsible for maintaining 6,000 miles of streets and highways within city limits by prioritizing the funding of street reconstruction work based on a 10-point quality rating system. DOT leverages a pavement deterioration model to predict the future rating of roads and inform its budget allocations. DOT engaged a Capstone team in supporting efforts to maximize efficiency through the measurement of relevant rating variables. To quantify the influence of different variables on street ratings, the team chose segment ID—the unique number for each street—as the smallest analyzing unit and regressed segment ID on related variables, including defects, street cut permits, past reconstruction activities, traffic route, and borough. The team established data rules, cleaned the dataset, built a regression model using STATA, and interpreted the results of the analysis. The team’s research culminated in the creation of a deterioration model for rating prediction and a set of recommendations to help guide DOT on when and where to execute street reconstruction or resurfacing with available resources.

NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY
IMPROVING EFFICIENCY OF PUBLIC HOUSING WORK ORDER PROCESSES

FACULTY: Corey Blay
CAPSTONE TEAM: Laura Haring Bligh, Sung Eun Kim, Jimena Llopis Abella, Troy Mathews, Gunnar Zuber

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) is the largest landlord in New York City, with about 178,000 apartments across the five boroughs. With its scarce financial resources and limited staffing capability, NYCHA struggles to process the approximately 2.8 million repair requests that it receives annually, resulting in a significant backlog. Dedicated to operating more efficiently, NYCHA enlisted a Capstone team to conduct an in-depth analysis of its work order data and processes. Focusing on NYCHA developments in the borough of Brooklyn, the team conducted quantitative and qualitative analyses, including site visits and interviews, to better understand the root causes of the work order backlog. The team developed recommendations for NYCHA to enhance the allocation of scarce resources, improve service levels for work orders, and boost the overall quality of life for NYCHA residents.
NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY
MANAGEMENT ANALYSIS: DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE OPERATIONS SYSTEM

FACULTY: Ivy Pool
CAPSTONE TEAM: Carine Brann, Eliezhah Hoffman, Stephanie Lo, Doris Yau

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) is a city agency that works to provide affordable housing throughout New York City’s five boroughs to low and moderate-income residents. To fulfill its mission to serve over 400,000 tenants, NYCHA developed Next-Generation NYCHA—a 10-year strategic plan to increase operating capacity and connect residents with social services. With over 300 housing developments and 50,000 court cases per year, NYCHA’s law department and property management team face staffing constraints, which have impacted the rent collection process and tracking of rent delinquency legal cases. NYCHA enlisted a Capstone team to provide recommendations to close the administrative gaps within the legal process. The team conducted stakeholder interviews, on-site visits, and an in-depth analysis of current practices within the law department. The team’s research culminated in a report that provided recommendations on operational property management practices to streamline rent collection processes and tracking of legal cases for rent delinquency.

NEW YORK CITY MAYOR’S OFFICE OF IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS
IMMIGRANTS’ ACCESS TO PUBLIC SAFETY IN NEW YORK CITY

FACULTY: Meridith Seife
CAPSTONE TEAM: Winston Berkman, Molly Buckwalter Fairfield, Logan Spencer, Amy Tse, Nicole Vecchione

The New York City Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) promotes the well-being of immigrant communities. Currently, MOIA focuses on enhancing the economic, civic, and social integration of immigrant New Yorkers; facilitating access to justice for immigrant New Yorkers; and advocating for continued immigration reforms at all levels of government. MOIA enlisted a Capstone team to study the factors that encourage immigrants to feel comfortable reporting crimes and seeking assistance from law enforcement. The team executed interviews with stakeholders and experts and conducted focus groups with immigrants throughout New York City. The team’s findings are consistent with existing literature about factors that impact an immigrant community’s willingness to cooperate with law enforcement, including the perception of police, misinformation, and limited resources and services for crime victims and witnesses.

OUTWARD BOUND CENTER FOR PEACEBUILDING
DEVELOPING IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOLS AND PROCESSES

FACULTY: Erica Foldy
CAPSTONE TEAM: Jennica Bramble, Erin M. Connell, Abby Kulawitz, Corey Rittvo

Established in 2009, Outward Bound Center for Peacebuilding (OBCP) focuses on using outdoor experiential learning as a powerful approach to challenge and inspire leaders in divided societies to build peace. OBCP engaged a Capstone team in developing codified tools and processes for collecting and measuring the impact of its peacebuilding programs over time. The team focused its work on OBCP’s Practicum on Experiential Peacebuilding (PEP) program, designed for working professionals and students to develop their conflict resolution and leadership skills. The team conducted a literature review, environmental scan, and various interviews with OBCP staff members, PEP program facilitators, and alumni. With this research, the team developed a series of evaluation instruments, including a process evaluation, an outcome evaluation, and story banking methods, as well as recommendations for implementation.

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POWER SHIFT NETWORK
STRENGTHENING THE POLITICAL INFLUENCE OF THE YOUTH CLIMATE JUSTICE MOVEMENT

FACULTY: Erica Foldy
CAPSTONE TEAM: Sarah Amanda Bernstein, Emma Bundy, Tina Coye, Megan E. Jackson, Naamah Paley

Power Shift Network (PSN) is a nonprofit organization working to organize, empower, and strengthen the youth climate justice movement. The Capstone team supported PSN as it considered whether to pursue additional political activities through the establishment of an affiliated 501(c)(4), a Political Action Committee (PAC), or a Super PAC organization. To further understand the landscape of the youth climate justice movement and provide relevant guidance, the team conducted a literature review, environmental scan, and various interviews with PSN’s staff members, PAC program facilitators, and alumni. With this research, the team developed a series of evaluation instruments, including a process evaluation, an outcome evaluation, and story banking methods, as well as recommendations for implementation.
PROJECT HOSPITALITY
TRANSITIONING TO PATIENT-CENTERED CARE: BEST PRACTICES

FACULTY: Corey Blay
CAPSTONE TEAM: Rochelle-Anne Campbell, Rashawn Davis, Tasha Garcia, Toniiann Territola, Yunong Zheng

Project Hospitality is a community-based nonprofit organization that addresses the broad spectrum of basic, clinical, and social needs of homeless and food-insecure residents of Staten Island, New York. The organization is currently undergoing a transition from a traditional fee-for-service billing model to a value-based payment system, reflecting a national shift in healthcare funding. Project Hospitality engaged a Capstone team in determining whether the organization was on track to provide necessary information to illustrate outcomes within the framework of patient-centered care. The team produced a broad overview and analysis of Project Hospitality’s clients and services, researched best practices for value-based payment systems, and conducted a program-level analysis of patient outcomes. The final report served as a blueprint to assist Project Hospitality as it continues to adapt to the changing landscape of healthcare practices.

RAPID RESULTS INSTITUTE
EVALUATING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF COMMUNITY PRACTICES TO REDUCE VETERAN HOMELESSNESS

FACULTY: Grisel Calcedo
CAPSTONE TEAM: Adam Amit, Rachelle Conley, Jason Hansman, Teri Rosenberg, Zina Thompkins

The Rapid Results Institute (RRI) strives to bridge the gap between aspirations and impact by choreographing 100-day challenges that nudge communities, organizations, and government agencies—often working together—to achieve improbable results. RRI enlisted a Capstone team to assess which practices within communities and organizations are sustainable in working to reduce veteran homelessness. The team conducted an analysis through a survey distributed to past participating communities and in-depth case study interviews with communities that had various degrees of continued success after their participation in the 100-day challenge. In the final report, the team suggested leadership skills training, capacity building, and conducting a community assessment before the challenge to optimize RRI’s future success. The team also recommended administering post-challenge evaluations in time intervals in each community to better assess which practices are sustainable and why.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN INSTITUTE
FINANCIAL AND POLICY ANALYSIS ON AVIATION BIOFUEL

FACULTY: Robert Criscuolo
CAPSTONE TEAM: Elizabeth Carollo, Devesh Sugrim, Junyan Wang, Yuli Xu, Chencong Zhao

Carbon War Room, a business unit of the nonprofit research and educational foundation Rocky Mountain Institute, works to intervene in markets to accelerate the adoption of business solutions that reduce carbon emissions at gigaton scale and advance the low-carbon economy. As aviation contributes over two percent of annual greenhouse gas emission globally, sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 60 to 80 percent or more. Since SAF is more expensive than conventional jet fuel, airlines are disincentivized to purchase SAF. Carbon War Room enlisted a Capstone team to conduct a market analysis of the supply side and public finance complement and evaluate potential leverage points to stimulate investment in SAF supply chains. The team identified existing policies, incentives, and other policy instruments that apply to SAF. The team’s final report provided recommendations for the feasibility, implications, and concerns around using public funds and a simple financial model to assess the amount of capital investment required to stimulate a commercial-scale SAF industry in the United States.

SOUTH ASIAN YOUTH ACTION
REVAMPING RECRUITMENT AND SIMPLIFYING HUMAN RESOURCES OPERATIONS

FACULTY: Matt Schaffer
CAPSTONE TEAM: Kristen Barrett, Nina Blume, Marjorie Davolos

The South Asian Youth Action (SAYA) is a youth development organization that aims to “foster a strong sense of belonging in youth and provide them with tools to thrive academically, professionally, and personally.” SAYA has grown into a $3.9 million organization running programs out of nine Queens- and Brooklyn-based NYC public schools and its community center in Elmhurst, Queens. SAYA engaged a Capstone team in enhancing recruitment materials and processes to meet the organization’s recruitment challenges and to simplify human resources operations. The team designed an action plan that includes a customized proposal of vetted software providers to meet SAYA’s job application and employee compliance tracking needs, enhanced recruitment materials, and an actionable list of partnership opportunities to establish a job candidate pipeline. Through employee interviews, industry research, engagement of software providers, and pipeline opportunity exploration, the team provided SAYA with the tools necessary to attract qualified talent, enhance the organization’s recognition through external partnerships, and methodically track applicant and employee information.
THE ARTHUR PROJECT
GENERATING AN EXPERIENTIAL CURRICULUM FOR AT-RISK YOUTH

The Arthur Project (TAP) builds economic and social mobility for at-risk youth through full-time mentorship, project-based civic engagement, and critical life skills development. TAP is a unique program that hires and equips full-time paid mentors to work exclusively with at-risk middle school youth. TAP leverages the mentors’ experience with their mentees to develop an informed curriculum that systemically targets six critical areas shown to be highly influential in determining a youth’s ability to be a productive adult. TAP enlisted a Capstone team to create an initial curriculum and activity bank. The team conducted interviews with mentorship and education experts and conducted in-depth research in the field of experiential education for youth. Based on their findings, the team generated 150 activities to serve as the foundation for TAP’s inaugural cohort. TAP will be able to replicate the approach used for constructing the activities and utilize it as a template for further growth.

UJA-FEDERATION OF NEW YORK
DETERMINING GOVERNMENT INDIRECT COST RATES FOR NYC’S HUMAN SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

UJA-Federation of New York (UJA) identifies and meets the needs of New Yorkers and Jews everywhere through the power of collective action. UJA engaged a Capstone team in improving the fiscal functioning of NYC’s nonprofit human services sector by proposing funding and policy solutions that can augment indirect cost reimbursement. The team analyzed the current work of UJA, government indirect cost policies, and their impact on nonprofit organizations. The team then gathered policy and financial information from UJA grantees and city agencies using methodologies that included surveys, a literature review, an environmental scan, interviews, and financial analysis. This research culminated in policy recommendations encouraging the adoption of a standardized overhead rate structure and introduced a process for UJA to formalize contract allowances.

URBAN STRATEGIES COUNCIL
LINKED LEARNING ACCOUNTABILITY PROJECT IN OAKLAND SCHOOLS

The Urban Strategies Council (USC) is an anti-poverty organization based in Oakland, California that works to transform low-income neighborhoods into vibrant, healthy communities. In response to disparate educational outcomes among students, California developed the Linked Learning program for high schools—a college and career readiness framework for schools. USC is collaborating with Oakland Unified School District to examine how Linked Learning affects student achievement and influences equitable educational outcomes. USC enlisted a Capstone team to create a database of district and school budget allocations, establish a framework for public accountability, and analyze spending patterns associated with Measure N—a tax in the Oakland districts in which proceeds are directed to improving the quality of education. The Capstone team’s findings indicated that nearly 50 percent of Measure N funds do not correlate with student performance. The Capstone team’s research culminated in a set of recommendations that included improving the budget process to enhance performance tracking and adopting the Linked Learning program to address gaps in Measure N’s effectiveness.

Start Small Think Big (SSTB) is a legal and financial technical assistance provider for micro-businesses in disadvantaged New York City neighborhoods. SSTB’s mission is to help low- to moderate-income individuals build and sustain thriving businesses to increase personal financial security and stimulate economic activity. SSTB engaged a Capstone team in evaluating its technical assistance services, effects on business owners, and overall outcomes. The team conducted a program review, in-depth interviews, and data collection. By quantifying and refining a traditional business valuation model, the Capstone team identified areas of changes and growth receptive to SSTB technical assistance intervention. The refinement of the valuation model, research results, and report provided clarity and narrowed down tangible program inputs and effects from a diverse set of services, resulting in targeted grant requests for SSTB. The team’s research supports SSTB by illuminating which combination of services and areas of technical assistance can produce positive outcomes for micro-businesses in New York City.
Z STREET CONSULTING
GUIDING THE TRANSITION TO SHARED SERVICES: A TOOLBOX FOR FEDERAL AGENCIES

FACULTY: Liz Hoagland
CAPSTONE TEAM: Melissa Diaz, Claudia Martin, Casey Rooney, Kimberly Seiler, Jacob Shiflett

Z Street Consulting is a firm specializing in human resource consulting for federal government agencies. The private sector has spearheaded efforts to centralize human resources, finance, and information technology functions using shared services centers. Momentum to replicate these centers among federal agencies is growing, and with projected benefits ranging from cost savings to improved data transparency and cyber security, interest in shared services implementation remains high. However, practitioners lack guidance for managing transitions to shared services, especially when agencies require customization for specific features. The Capstone team researched this balance between standardization and customization and interviewed industry experts to inform technical and managerial guidelines, recommend best practices, and identify concrete tools to assist practitioners in successful shared services implementation.

PROJECTS IN HEALTH MANAGEMENT, FINANCE, AND POLICY

ALLIANCE FOR POSITIVE CHANGE
CREATING A SUSTAINABLE INVENTORY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

FACULTY: Rona Affoumado
CAPSTONE TEAM: Rebecca Fleischman, Sarah Sebton, Tammy Seney, Jayson Valcik

The Alliance for Positive Change (Alliance) helps New Yorkers make promising transitions toward improved health, housing, recovery, and self-sufficiency. Alliance offers a diverse range of individualized professional services. The organization enlisted a Capstone team to help identify inefficiencies with supply ordering, inventory management (specifically the MetroCard process), and systematizing operations at the Comprehensive AIDS Services Alliance Washington Heights site. The MetroCard process provides clients with a round-trip pass for attending appointments, meeting directly observed therapy requirements, and accessing other services. However, tracking and distribution were not centralized, resulting in clients receiving multiple cards and the travel assistance program being consistently over budget. Utilizing information from interviews with key staff members, the Capstone team designed and implemented an efficient tracking system, leveraging technology to transform the process from paper to digital. The final report contains recommendations to implement this new workflow effectively across all agency sites in the future.

COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE NETWORK
ADDRESSING BOTTLENECKING IN PATIENT CLINICS

FACULTY: Sarah Gurwitz
CAPSTONE TEAM: Amanda Cruz, Brooke Feingold, Katie Girardi, Margot Lachaud-Richard, Jennifer Tevere, Haseeb Younas

Community Healthcare Network (CHN) is a nonprofit organization that provides care to more than 85,000 predominantly low-income or uninsured New Yorkers of all ages at sites throughout New York City. CHN engaged a Capstone team in identifying the causes of bottlenecking at its clinic sites. The team conducted patient and staff interviews, analyzed past bottlenecking projects, mapped geospatial data, and led observations throughout CHN’s sites. The team’s final product included a comprehensive analysis of the clinic sites, a qualitative synopsis of the interviews, and a final report with a formal presentation to CHN’s executive leadership. The team’s research culminated in a set of recommendations aimed at producing more efficient and effective patient visits while fully optimizing clinicians’ schedules.
DAVITA KIDNEY CARE
CREATING A FRAMEWORK FOR A COALITION OF NEW YORK CITY KIDNEY DIALYSIS PROVIDERS

FACULTY: Regina Gurvich
CAPSTONE TEAM: Sarah Cunningham, Janice McFarlane, Linda Schillaci, Vivian Wang

DaVita Kidney Care, a division of DaVita HealthCare Partners Inc., provides dialysis services to patients with chronic kidney failure and end-stage renal disease throughout the United States and abroad. DaVita is the largest kidney dialysis provider chain in the New York City metropolitan area. DaVita engaged a Capstone team in determining if a coalition of kidney dialysis providers in the New York area would be a cost-effective way to educate patients and lobby for policy reforms to improve dialysis healthcare. The Capstone team assisted DaVita in forming the coalition by developing a coalition framework and created a business plan to sustain the coalition. The team produced the framework and business plan using research from a literature review, stakeholder interviews, a survey of independent dialysis providers, and a focus group of interested organizations. The insights gained culminated in the identification of common issues and challenges that providers in the New York City area face and a business plan for a coalition that best addresses the providers’ needs.

EMBLEMHEALTH
CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE IN BREAST CANCER CARE

FACULTY: Amy Goldman
CAPSTONE TEAM: Christian Adams, Elnaz Fakhimi, Lorraine Hutzler, Paige Mintz, Suparna Roy, Anjandeep Sandu

EmblemHealth, one of the largest nonprofit health plans in the United States, was formed through the merger of Group Health Incorporated and the Health Insurance Plan of Greater New York in 2006. Headquartered in Manhattan, EmblemHealth’s goal is to provide quality insurance plans for New Yorkers. EmblemHealth has an extensive network of providers, allowing members to access the tri-state area’s top medical professionals. EmblemHealth seeks to improve services to its members by informing them of which providers offer the best care based on patient experiences, costs, and procedure volumes. EmblemHealth engaged a Capstone team in developing criteria to classify healthcare facilities in the New York Metropolitan region as Centers of Excellence for Cancer Care and identify which cancer type could be the basis for analysis. To this end, the team analyzed metrics based on industry standards and provided recommendations leading to said classification and identification.

GRANT THORNTON
DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK FOR DATA ANALYSIS ACROSS FLORIDA STATE HOSPITALS

FACULTY: Regina Gurvich
CAPSTONE TEAM: Michael Montrose, Melanie Spivack, Chinar Verma, Kelly Wood

Grant Thornton is the American member firm of Grant Thornton International, a global organization of member firms that provides audit, tax, and advisory services. Since its establishment in 2010, Grant Thornton’s Health Care Advisory Practice has provided consulting services to the rapidly evolving healthcare industry. The Capstone team’s primary goal was to develop the healthcare practice’s data analytics capacity to help evaluate trends in the Florida hospital market. Based on Grant Thornton’s pilot benchmarking study in Florida using Agency for Health Care Administration claims data, the team completed a comprehensive study encompassing all hospitals across Florida. The study utilized the Statewide Planning and Research Cooperative System all-payer claims database to explore a replication of the Florida study’s approach and included an extensive literature review. The team’s research culminated in the development of a framework for data analysis and a series of use cases that illustrate the applicability of each developed strategy in the healthcare market.

JOHNSON & JOHNSON
THE STATE OF ORAL HEALTH AND PROMOTING THE IMPORTANCE OF RINSING

FACULTY: Sarah Gurvitz
CAPSTONE TEAM: Ellina Barber, Jermaine Blakley, Daniella Michelle Eras, Amrita Vijay Herkal, Shivani Bharat Parikh

Johnson & Johnson is one of the world’s oldest and most trusted providers of oral care products. Over the last decade, Johnson & Johnson has faced significant challenges in increasing public awareness of the oral health benefits of mouthwash. As a result, Johnson & Johnson collaborates with many oral health and dental organizations to modify and promote oral health recommendations, which include rinsing as a primary method for maintaining good oral health. The Capstone team reviewed and analyzed the domestic and international oral health policy landscape and identified correlations between oral health policies and a population’s state of oral health. By examining the impact of poor oral health on populations and their economies, the team strengthened the foundation for Johnson & Johnson to advocate for the therapeutic claims and economic benefits of mouthwash use. Based on this analysis, the team crafted a comprehensive document that highlights the correlations between oral health practices and improved oral health and recommends strategies for Johnson & Johnson to promote the importance of rinsing in social, corporate, and political environments.
NEW YORK CITY OFFICE OF EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE
IMPROVING THE GRANT PROCUREMENT PROCESS

FACULTY: Amy Goldman
CAPSTONE TEAM: Ayaz Alam, Melissa Cheung, Palavi Khade, Ritu Kundu, Alyssa Napoli

The Office of Emergency Preparedness and Response (OEPR) promotes New York City Department of Mental Health and Hygiene initiatives such as preventing preparing for, responding to, and recovering from health emergencies. Federal grants fund the OEPR program, which is intended to design, develop, and implement emergency preparedness plans across a wide range of stakeholders. OEPR engaged a Capstone team in identifying and addressing departmental grant management processes that can be improved and optimized. The team offered insight into which processes are key problem areas for stakeholders within OEPR and should be a priority for improvement. The research culminated in the creation of a framework that OEPR can standardize and implement for future process improvement needs.

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE, CENTER FOR HEALTH EQUITY
GENTRIFICATION AND HEALTH: FRAMEWORK AND COMMUNITY TOOLS

FACULTY: Rona Affoumado
CAPSTONE TEAM: Whitney Adair, Anaïs Borja, Savanna Essig-Fox, Calley Heffer, Shardae Vaughn

The Center for Health Equity (CHE) is a division of the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) whose mission is “to strengthen and amplify the DOHMH’s work to eliminate health inequities, which are rooted in historical and contemporary injustices and discrimination, including racism.” CHE seeks to promote accountability, community power, and diversity and inclusion by focusing on racial justice, identifying key neighborhoods for investment, creating partnerships to advance social justice, and using evidence-based storytelling. CHE enlisted a Capstone team to create a framework that describes the relationship between gentrification and health, and craft a community tool to empower residents in gentrifying communities. The team synthesized mechanisms to mitigate the negative effects of neighborhood change on health while amplifying any benefits. The final report included a comprehensive literature review, expert and stakeholder interviews, and recommendations for advancing the division’s mission and contributing to evidence-based initiatives.

NEW YORK CITY OFFICE OF EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE
IMPROVING THE GRANT PROCUREMENT PROCESS

FACULTY: Amy Goldman
CAPSTONE TEAM: Ayaz Alam, Melissa Cheung, Palavi Khade, Ritu Kundu, Alyssa Napoli

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NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS
STANDARDIZATION AND SUSTAINABILITY OF EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT CARE

FACULTY: Regina Gurvich
CAPSTONE TEAM: Winnie Chan, Sophia Temis, Sarah Verbofsky, Heeta Vithalani, Roman Zamishka

NYC Health + Hospitals (H+H) is the largest public safety-net hospital system in the country, serving 1.4 million New Yorkers annually. In September 2014, H+H was awarded a $17.9 million healthcare innovation grant through the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation to reduce preventable emergency department readmissions over three years. H+H engaged a Capstone team in evaluating the project’s operational sustainability and making recommendations to improve standardization of care across six of the system’s hospitals. The team conducted extensive research into care management best practices, staffing models, and implementation strategies and tools. The team also interviewed key care management personnel within H+H and similar organizations. The team’s research resulted in the development of patient-facing health literacy tools, screening mechanisms for identifying social determinants of health, and program-specific staff competency evaluation tools.

SERVICES FOR THE UNDERSERVED
COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS OF SUPPORTIVE HOUSING AND DATA VISUALIZATION FOR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY PROGRAM

FACULTY: Amy Goldman
CAPSTONE TEAM: Karla Marie Alegria Aguilar, Debbie Erisnor, Lelise Getu, Jared Riviere, Katie Tobin

Services for the Underserved (SUS) is a nonprofit organization that provides $185 million in services to over 25,000 people annually. SUS has tripled in size in the past seven years and is currently consolidating its programs, clients, and staff to prepare for future changes. SUS enlisted a Capstone team to provide data management and visualization recommendations, and to analyze program costs and benefits for advocacy efforts. The team conducted a literature review on leading practices on data visualization, performed outreach to similar agencies, and administered a cost-benefit analysis of operating SUS’s housing program. The team’s research culminated in a set of recommendations for SUS and the development of an operational framework for its Developmental Disabilities program to support its data management.
NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS: AFFORDABLE CO-OP SHAREHOLDER MORTGAGES

The New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) is the largest municipal housing agency in the nation. HPD promotes quality housing and thriving neighborhoods through the implementation of affordable housing preservation and development programs. The Housing Development Fund Corporation (HDFC) has developed approximately 1,050 shareholder-owned cooperatives in NYC containing a total of more than 25,000 units, making them a significant percentage of the City’s affordable housing stock. HPD solicited a Capstone team to evaluate shareholder access to financing and determine the types of risks that lenders take to underwrite these loans. The team performed a detailed analysis of HPD's proposed HDFC co-op regulatory agreements, interviewed lenders on their underwriting terms for limited equity co-ops, and performed a comparison of the City's existing HDFC tax exemption with a newly proposed model. This analysis helped HPD assess the impacts of newly proposed regulatory agreements on the ability of future shareholders to obtain financing.

FACULTY: Kei Hayashi
CAPSTONE TEAM: Molly Anderson, Malcolm Morse, Pamela Razo, Laura Sellmansberger

BROOKLYN COMMUNITY BOARD 2
IMPACTS OF THE 2004 DOWNTOWN BROOKLYN REZONING

Brooklyn Community Board 2 (Brooklyn CB2) is one of 59 geographically exclusive, independent New York City agencies that serve as the most local form of representative government. In 2004, the New York City Council passed the Downtown Brooklyn Rezoning plan, which aimed to further the growth of the area as New York City’s third largest Central Business District. Brooklyn CB2 engaged a Capstone team in conducting a comprehensive needs assessment based on the impacts of the 2004 Downtown Brooklyn Rezoning plan to inform its responses to city charter-mandated budget submissions. The team analyzed existing conditions associated with five areas: public schools, parks and open space, pedestrians and transit, water and sewer capacity, and affordable housing. The team created and analyzed a survey to gather resident concerns, interviewed prominent community and city stakeholders, and produced recommendations for future neighborhood improvements to mitigate the impacts.

FACULTY: Kate Sargent
CAPSTONE TEAM: Jin Xiu Chen, Gwen Kilvert, Nonie Mathur, Dana Waller
NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF SMALL BUSINESS SERVICES
MEASURING THE IMPACT OF ADVOCACY CONDUCTED BY BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

FACULTY: Kei Hayashi
CAPSTONE TEAM: Lisa Awaya, Lusungu Kayani, Alexander Marte, Karina Vangani

The New York City Department of Small Business Services (SBS) helps unlock economic potential and create greater economic security for all New Yorkers by connecting residents to good jobs, creating stronger businesses, and building a fairer economy in neighborhoods across the five boroughs. As the oversight agency for the City’s Business Improvement District (BID) program, the SBS Neighborhood Development Division monitors the fiscal and organizational health of all 73 BIDs in New York City. SBS enlisted a Capstone team to assess the impact of the BID program’s advocacy and identify needed resources. The team conducted focus group discussions with SBS, developed and implemented a survey administered to all 73 BIDs, and conducted in-depth interviews with select BID executive directors to define BID advocacy and determine measurement methods. Based on the collected and analyzed data, the team compiled a final comprehensive report with recommendations that included a framework for measuring the BID program’s advocacy going forward.

OPEN COMMUNITIES ALLIANCE
FAIR SHARE PLAN AND FORMULA FOR CONNECTICUT

FACULTY: Michael Keane
CAPSTONE TEAM: Al Beatty, Amy DeHuff, Aden Munassar, Ashley Smith

The Open Communities Alliance (OCA) is a civil rights nonprofit organization in Connecticut that promotes access to opportunity for all people through education, advocacy, research, and partnerships. OCA’s opportunity mapping work has shown that low-opportunity areas in Connecticut contain a disproportionate amount of affordable housing. To promote housing choice and the deconcentration of poverty in Connecticut, the Capstone team conducted best practices research on fair share planning, analyzed existing conditions and planning efforts in Connecticut, and developed a Fair Share Housing Plan to propose statewide adoption. The final report utilized a series of criteria to allocate a portion of the statewide demand for affordable housing to select municipalities that will then be encouraged to meet production targets through a series of policy incentives.

TOWN OF RYE, NEW YORK
COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING INITIATIVE FOR RYE TOWN PARK

FACULTY: Michael Keane
CAPSTONE TEAM: Chelsea Brandon, Barbara Ioannidis, Colin Murphy, Jenny O’Connell

Rye Town Park is a 62-acre public park and beach in Rye City, New York, approximately 35 miles northeast of New York City. In recent years, the Rye Town Park Commission has struggled to develop policies to prevent degradation of the park while maximizing access to park users. Working with the Town of Rye, the Capstone team identified and engaged park stakeholders, investigated comparable case studies, and offered recommendations for a vision statement and appropriate measures of success. Until this point, Rye Town Park stakeholders had never had a platform to express their ideas and desires for the future of the park. The team executed informed research through numerous site visits, three public events, online surveys, and meetings with key stakeholders. The team’s final recommendations relied on community input and established the groundwork for future park improvements.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
A STUDY ON THE RECENT RISE IN ROAD FATALITIES

FACULTY: Kate Sargent
CAPSTONE TEAM: Fatima Ahmed, Katherine Downes-Angus, Robert Joseph, Hallah Saleh, Stephen Solecki

The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) serves the nation by ensuring a fast, safe, efficient, accessible, and convenient transportation system that meets vital national interests. Between 2014 and 2015, traffic-related fatalities rose across the US by seven percent. The USDOT engaged the Capstone team with investigating potential causes of this spike in fatalities. Through an extensive literature review, expert interviews, data analysis, and use of the geographic information system mapping, the team identified the relationship between fatal crashes and several key variables. Using the Fatality Analysis Reporting System data in conjunction with analysis of select data variables, the team assessed which variables were likely to be directly associated with the recent increase. The team concluded that many variables, ranging from climate change to economic growth, influence the occurrence of traffic-related accidents resulting in deaths. The team’s research and analysis culminated in a set of recommendations for the USDOT aimed at improving roadway safety throughout the United States.

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AIDE ET ACTION
ILEAD CAMBODIA: EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION STRATEGIC MODEL EVALUATION

FACULTY: Giuliano Bosi
CAPSTONE TEAM: Sohana Islam, Kate Monaghan, Michelle Shin

Aide et Action (AEA) is a nonprofit that focuses on supporting local actors throughout the world so that they may devise, develop, and implement educational projects. It aims to build the capacity and promote the autonomy of population groups so that they can take charge of their futures. The Capstone team worked with AEA’s chapter based in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, to observe, strategize, and scale up efforts to expand the iLEAD program—a social impact educational initiative. The team monitored schools in both the village and city and conducted interviews with teachers, students, family members, community leaders, and AEA staff to gather first-hand observations and feedback. This research allowed the Capstone team to conduct a SWOT analysis. The results culminated in a report divided into four pillars: generating revenue, capacity development, solidarity link, and advocacy. The report identified critical needs to help scale the iLEAD program and made recommendations within the domains of hiring, marketing, and community outreach to help facilitate communities across regions and income levels.

CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE
UNDERSTANDING VIOLENCE IN MEXICO: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CIVIL SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENT

FACULTY: Natasha Iskander
CAPSTONE TEAM: Jessica Cardenas, Glynnis McIntyre, Sherylynn Sealy, Isabel Vicentini

The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (Carnegie) is one of the world’s most highly regarded international affairs think tanks and the oldest in the United States. Carnegie’s mission is to advance the cause of peace through analysis and development of fresh policy ideas and direct engagement and collaboration with decision-makers in government, business, and civil society. Carnegie enlisted a Capstone team to conduct extensive research on compounded violence and political reform in Mexico City and Monterrey, Mexico. The team traveled to both cities and interviewed over 50 stakeholders, including representatives from government, civil society, academia, media, and employees in the private sector. The team researched the relationship between civil society and government and the impact of this relationship on violence and the political reform process. The team’s research culminated in a report that outlined the relationship structure between key stakeholders and provided recommendations for how to leverage existing mechanisms and partnerships to address the issue of violence in Mexico.

BROOKLYN BRIDGE TO CAMBODIA
IDENTIFYING STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS AND CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE

FACULTY: Kathleen Apitauer
CAPSTONE TEAM: Yao Guo, Eliza D. Karp, Eugenia Lee, Sheba Rivera

The Brooklyn Bridge to Cambodia (BB2C) is a social enterprise start-up based in the United States and Cambodia that develops innovative equipment for smallholder Cambodian farmers through human-centered design and local insights. Seeking to develop an adaptive strategy to serve farmers better and broaden its market impact, the BB2C enlisted a Capstone team to identify promising practices and tools around climate change resilience and recommend strategies for partnership development. The team studied and synthesized information collected through extensive desktop research, interviews with subject matter experts and stakeholders, a two-week field visit in Cambodia, and facilitated team strategy sessions. Following the investigation, the team conducted a cost-benefit analysis, an organizational needs assessment, and an environmental scan of climate change in Cambodia. The team recommended technological and organizational improvements to BB2C’s strategy and developed a practical tool to help BB2C assess future partnership opportunities.
CREA COMUNIDADES DE EMPRENDEDORES SOCIALES
LOWER DROPOUT RATES IN BUSINESS TRAINING FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

FACULTY: Kathleen Apltauer
CAPSTONE TEAM: Andrea Davila, Kevin M. Riley, Daniela Sarzosa

Crea Comunidades de Emprendedores Sociales (Crea) is a nonprofit social enterprise that implements customized programs to empower and strengthen women entrepreneurs from socially and economically marginalized areas in Mexico. Crea enlisted a Capstone team to identify common attributes of women who attend Crea training programs. The team reviewed Crea’s portfolio of programs and services, analyzed data on the female attendees, and interviewed participants and staff in Mexico City, Toluca, and Tlalnepantla. The goal was to find verifiable explanations for why some participants do not finish Crea’s training programs. The data analysis revealed that women with greater socioeconomic advantages, higher non-cognitive abilities, and more established institutional linkages are more likely to finish the training. The fieldwork disclosed that women who completed the training program have intrinsic characteristics that motivate them to finish. Additionally, Crea’s staff and beneficiaries identified the importance of learning transferable skills, which are a key component of women’s empowerment. Based on these findings, the team proposed policy and program innovations to help lower dropout rates for future beneficiaries.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION’S DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION
ASSESSING THE DECENTRALIZATION PROCESS AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN TANZANIA

FACULTY: Paul Smoke
CAPSTONE TEAM: Mubarak Nasser Al-Thani, Runlin Han, Duru Oksuz

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Development and Cooperation (EC) supports local and community development and governance through its Civil Society Organizations and Local Authorities Unit. The Unit engaged a Capstone team to continue the process of piloting a new diagnostic tool intended to provide input and guidance for EC programming to support decentralization and local governance. The team applied the diagnostic tool to Tanzania, traveling to Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar, and Bagamoyo to collect information and conduct interviews with local government officials, donor agency staff, scholars, representatives of civil society organizations, and community leaders. The results of the research will assist the EC in understanding the effectiveness of its current initiatives and also help provide guidance on designing possible future support to decentralization in Tanzania. The insights gained from the case study are expected to inform future applications of the diagnostic tool in other countries and regions beyond Tanzania.
THE HUNGER PROJECT
ANIMATING THE ANIMATORS: IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS, MOTIVATIONS, AND CHALLENGES FOR HIGH-PERFORMING VOLUNTEERS

FACULTY: Kathleen Apltauer
CAPSTONE TEAM: Khadija Benoit, Jessica Pham, Camilla Somers, Fan Zhang

The Hunger Project (THP) aims to end hunger and poverty by pioneering and advocating for sustainable, grassroots, and women-centered strategies in developing countries across the globe. There are nearly 400,000 THP volunteers—referred to as “animators”—worldwide, and they are at the core of the organization’s work. A Capstone team researched animators’ characteristics, motivations, and challenges for increased understanding of their core human capital. The team traveled to Senegal and Uganda to observe meetings and conduct focus group interviews with animators, animator leadership, and local THP staff. The team also created a case study of Bangladesh as a high-performing site and sent written surveys to the remaining nine countries where THP has a presence. Values such as pride, empowerment, and love of community were among key motivations for animators, while transportation and community mobilization were major challenges. In addition to a report synthesizing their findings, the team created an assessment tool, a focus group, and an interview guide to help inform THP’s work with animators.

INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK
DEVELOPING TOOLS TO ASSESS METROPOLITAN PLANNING CAPACITY

FACULTY: Paul Smoke
CAPSTONE TEAM: Mick Arieta, Carlos Calvo Hernandez, Maria Monica Salazar

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) is a significant source of financing for economic, social, and institutional development in Latin America and the Caribbean. As part of its efforts to address the urban infrastructure gap in the area, IDB engaged a Capstone team in developing and testing an analytical tool to measure the institutional capacity of metropolitan authorities to support urban development. Based on a literature review, the team developed an analytical tool that was piloted in Guadalajara, Mexico and conducted interviews with members of the government, citizen advisory board, and civil society organizations. The team’s research culminated in a synthetic literature review and a case study that outlined recommendations for the metropolitan area of Guadalajara. The project will contribute to IDB’s future work related to metropolitan governance and urban infrastructure finance.

MERCY CORPS
DOCUMENTING THE ROLE OF PEACEBUILDING IN POST-CONFLICT COMMUNITIES

FACULTY: Giuliano Bosi
CAPSTONE TEAM: Adnan Karim, Erin McCreary, Erica Silverman, Anna Wright

Mercy Corps is a leading humanitarian and development organization with offices in more than 40 countries. Operating in some of the world’s most complex and fragile environments, Mercy Corps works globally to alleviate suffering, poverty, and oppression by helping people to build secure, productive, and just communities. Mercy Corps has teamed with Pact International on a USAID-funded program known as PEACE III to strengthen cross-border conflict management in the Horn of Africa. In the past, the PEACE III program has struggled to document and communicate how these efforts are translating into greater peace and other benefits across the social, economic, ecological, and governance systems. Mercy Corps enlisted a Capstone team to support the PEACE III program in translating and documenting these efforts. The team traveled to the Uganda-Kenya border to interview team members, develop partnerships, and collect feedback from program participants. The team developed case studies to illustrate the progress of peacebuilding through various activities, such as natural resource sharing, trauma healing, and the PEACE III approach to youth. These case studies will be used to assist in outreach and increase funding for similar peacebuilding programs throughout Africa.
UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM SWAZILAND
ADVISING ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Swaziland supports the government in policy areas of poverty alleviation, the provision of equitable social services, and good governance. As a global knowledge network, UNDP advocates for sustainable human development and connects countries to experiences and resources to build better lives. The Capstone team assisted UNDP, the larger United Nations Country Team, and Swaziland’s government with aligning the country’s national development plan and strategies with the global 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. The work included researching global best practices for sustainable development initiatives, collecting data on existing work in Swaziland related to the sustainable development goals, and identifying important gaps and challenges in planning and implementing a national development strategy. The team conducted in-depth research on sustainable development initiatives related to health and climate change, which are top priorities in the country. The team’s research culminated in a report that showcased a localized monitoring and evaluation framework.

FACULTY: Giuliano Bosi
CAPSTONE TEAM: Anna Feingold, Sophie Pauze Peper, Tatjana Richardson

PRO MUJER
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION STRATEGY

Pro Mujer supports low-income women in five Latin American countries by providing access to financial services, preventive health services, and education and business training. The organization aims to address the detrimental and pervasive effects of gender-based violence (GBV) on its clients. To help execute their mission, Pro Mujer enlisted a Capstone team to identify strategies to implement a GBV intervention and prevention program. The team explored approaches to addressing GBV through an in-house program and partnerships. The team developed screening criteria, created stakeholder maps of potential partners, conducted interviews with stakeholders in Bolivia, and provided an overview of potential funding strategies. The team offered recommendations that apply to each Pro Mujer location across the five countries of operation.

FACULTY: Giuliano Bosi
CAPSTONE TEAM: Anna Feingold, Sophie Pauze Peper, Tatjana Richardson

NAMIB DESERT ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION TRUST
DEVELOPING A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

The Namib Desert Environmental Education Trust (NaDEET)—a nonprofit environmental education organization—aims to protect Namibia’s natural environment by educating its citizens to practice a sustainable lifestyle. After successfully concluding a three-year European Union-funded action program, NaDEET enlisted a Capstone team to help clarify its direction through the development of a five-year strategic plan. The team researched Namibia, environmental education, and strategic planning best practices. The team worked closely with NaDEET’s director and board to learn about NaDEET’s operations, operating environment, and history. The team toured NaDEET’s facilities; conducted staff interviews; and interviewed the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, UNESCO, NaDEET beneficiaries, and local NGOs. The team’s research culminated in a set of recommendations on management changes, organizational structure, and increased stakeholder engagement.

FACULTY: Natasha Iskander
CAPSTONE TEAM: Samantha Dawson, Brock Johnson, Mike Yuin

MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION
RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS OF PROCUREMENT MODERNIZATION IN INDONESIA

The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) is an innovative and independent US foreign aid agency that is helping lead the fight against global poverty. Since 2012, the Indonesian government and the local affiliate of MCC have embarked on an ambitious Procurement Modernization (PM) project, designed to achieve government expenditure savings on procured goods and services while ensuring quality and efficient delivery. The Capstone team researched the various factors that influence procurement reform in Indonesia and determined how the PM project impacted institutional development. The team developed a customized questionnaire for the study and conducted in-person interviews with stakeholders spanning the procurement ecosystem, ranging from local procurement agents to presidential cabinet-level ministers. The team prepared a report that analyzed the various factors impacting procurement reform in Indonesia and the specific role played by the PM project. MCC plans to share the team’s findings with other country teams working on procurement modernization.

FACULTY: Paul Smoke
CAPSTONE TEAM: Jeremy Hebert, Colin Miller

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UNIVERSAL NATIONS POPULATION FUND
ASSESSING ENGAGEMENT IN MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES

**FACULTY:** Kathleen Apitauer
**CAPSTONE TEAM:** Safadi, Dejian Zeng, Minkoff, Cybele, Talal Alyan, Hannah

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) aims to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe, and every young person’s potential is fulfilled. To accomplish this, UNFPA works to ensure that all individuals, especially women and young people, can access high-quality sexual and reproductive healthcare services so that they can make informed and voluntary choices about their lives. UNFPA enlisted a Capstone team to explore how UNFPA can enhance its engagement in middle-income countries (MICs) by establishing a new vision and path to Sustainable Development Goal targets. The team conducted desktop research, analyzed program data, interviewed UNFPA officials, and reviewed development strategies to provide recommendations for upstream policy and advocacy engagement in MICs. Rather than taking a universal approach, the team recommended that the UNFPA engage with each MIC differently, specifically by considering the political and cultural environment, to bring about targeted and effective changes. The project contributed to UNFPA’s new strategic plan for 2018-2021.

WORLD BANK
MIGRATION AND INCLUSION IN NEW YORK CITY

**FACULTY:** Natasha Iskander
**CAPSTONE TEAM:** Iskander, Natasha

The World Bank, comprised of 189 member countries, aims to end extreme poverty and foster income growth of the lowest earning 40 percent of the population of every country. Currently, there are 28 mega-cities—cities with 10 million inhabitants or more—around the world, and rapid urbanization is set to introduce 13 more by 2030. Due to the high influx of international migrants, there is strategic value in studying the precedents set by urban centers with established histories of migration. The World Bank enlisted a Capstone team to examine immigration trends, specifically regarding formal and informal networking. The team looked at the Chinese and Arab communities in New York City and how their social and spatial inclusion has impacted their access to the labor market. The team conducted extensive policy research and interviews with community organizations, business owners, and immigrants. The team’s research culminated in both a report outlining the impact of policies and social dynamics on migrant populations and a presentation highlighting their findings to the World Bank.

WORLD BANK - INDEPENDENT EVALUATION GROUP
ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

**FACULTY:** Paul Smoke
**CAPSTONE TEAM:** Andrew Harlemagne, Spencer, Yana

The Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) of the World Bank evaluates the development effectiveness of the Bank. Climate change and disaster risk pose significant threats to development across the globe. The Capstone team created a learning product on climate risk screening for the IEG to complement the World Bank’s development of reference guidelines for climate risk management. The team’s work supported the IEG’s activities by seeking to evaluate the climate and disaster risk screening process. The team reviewed the projects under the International Development Association portfolio and surveyed Task Team Leaders and other project managers. The team’s research culminated in the development of case studies and the identification of risk assessment priorities for projects approved under the risk screening mandate in high-risk sectors.
**NEW YORK-PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL**

**OPTIMAL CARE COORDINATION PROCESS FOR HEART FAILURE PATIENTS**

**FACULTY:** John Donnellan  
**CAPSTONE TEAM:** Valentina Lucaj, Lauren Raggio, Jessica Ronnera, Christel Vasquez

NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital (NYP) is one of the leading healthcare institutions in the country. As there is ever-growing regulatory scrutiny on avoidable hospital readmissions and accompanying financial penalties, it is imperative that healthcare institutions focus on closely evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of their care coordination processes. NYP engaged a Capstone team in evaluating the existing care coordination process for patients diagnosed with heart failure within the NYP/Lawrence Hospital Emergency Department. The team completed an in-depth analysis of the policies, processes, and available resources to provide recommendations for improving efficiency and best practices. In combination with an extensive literature review, the team produced a comparative analysis and recommendations to improve and modify the existing care coordination process at NYP/Lawrence Hospital.

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**NEW YORK-PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL**

**RESEARCHING AND IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE NEW NURSE RESIDENCY PROGRAM**

**FACULTY:** John Donnellan  
**CAPSTONE TEAM:** Ugochi Chukwuocha, Katherine O’Hara, Peter Stoffan, Diane Willemin

The NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital (NYP) strives to identify, define, and improve upon the current practices and measures of success while focusing on evidence-based strategies to improve new graduate nurse retention. The NYP New Nurse Residency Program aims to bridge the educational and professional gap between student nurse to successful and competent professional nurse. To measure the effectiveness of the NYP New Nurse Residency Program, the Capstone team gathered data through interviews with key stakeholders, extensive surveying and focus groups, and observation of current practices and processes. The team also conducted a comprehensive literature review, which resulted in valuable insight into emerging best practices in the field. The research culminated in a set of recommendations for NYP that includes the identification of metrics to measure the effectiveness of existing and future programs within the institution and an operational framework aimed at improving processes in the New Nurse Residency Program.

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**DANBAD URBAN ROADS PROJECT**

**FACULTY:** Paul Smoke  
**CAPSTONE TEAM:** Francisca Benitez, Santiago Carrillo, Aziza Gaouda, Nasiq Khan

Dhanbad, known as the Coal Capital of India, is one of the largest industrial towns of Jharkhand State. A proposed loan from the World Bank aims to improve the city’s road network and public transport systems. The government of Jharkhand prepared the Comprehensive Mobility Plan for Dhanbad, a master urban infrastructure development project. The World Bank South Asian Regional Unit enlisted a Capstone team to review the Comprehensive Mobility Plan and associated project report containing the scope and magnitude of the proposed road improvements. The team traveled to Dhanbad where they conducted multiple site visits and interviews with key stakeholders. The team used the gathered data to identify areas for improvement and advance project goals. The team’s research supported the development of innovative initiatives—such as contextual planning, multi-purpose programming, solar lighting, and other urban design solutions—that will help tackle the social and environmental challenges of implementing the Dhanbad Roads project.
Composite Household Finance in China
Exploring the Financial Health of Families in China

Considering China’s rapid development over the last thirty years, new and distinct financial groups have emerged among China’s 1.4 billion residents. A Capstone team explored the Composite Financial Status (CFS)—a measure of overall financial health—of families in China using datasets from the Chinese Household Income Project and the China Family Panel Study. CFS uses a household’s income level and asset holdings to gain a robust picture of a household’s financial well-being. The four CFS categories include poor, transient poor, transient rich, and rich. The team’s research identified the distinctions between the different financial status categories, analyzed demographic characteristics, and explored the personal outcomes associated with membership in each of the categories.

Projects in Applied Research

Composite Household Finance in China

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Projects in Applied Research

NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital
Expansion of Shared Governance and Practice Standards

NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital (NYP) is one of the nation’s most comprehensive, integrated academic healthcare delivery systems dedicated to providing the highest quality and most compassionate care and service to patients. NYP recently acquired five regional hospitals located throughout New York, which presented the opportunity to improve the quality of care and scope of services offered at the regional level. The Capstone team reviewed and implemented recommendations to evaluate the opportunity for integration of NYP’s nursing practice standards and shared governance across the NYP Regional Hospital Network. The team’s research culminated in a report that analyzed best practices of shared governance structures, standardization, and implementation processes at NYP across the Regional Hospital Network and with other multi-level hospital network systems.

Projects in Applied Research

Health and Gentrification
A Descriptive Analysis of Changes to Healthcare and Health Status Across a Gentrifying City

Health, socioeconomic status, and neighborhood characteristics have well-documented associations. Relatedly, limited healthcare access—typically thought of as a rural issue that can exacerbate health conditions and lead to poorer outcomes—also exists in low-income, urban neighborhoods. Over the past several decades, New York City neighborhoods have experienced significant economic transformations resulting in higher rents and costs of living in historically low-income neighborhoods. Williamsburg, Brooklyn Heights, and Park Slope have become national symbols of gentrification. Despite dramatic neighborhood change, there is a surprising lack of evidence suggesting gentrification has directly displaced low-income residents. A Capstone team explored healthcare and health changes for residents of gentrifying neighborhoods. Using data from the Primary Care Service Area Project, the US Census, and the NYC Community Health Survey, the team created a multi-pronged descriptive analysis to explore changes in healthcare availability, utilization, and health status across New York City through the lens of gentrification.
MOTIVATIONS BEHIND SAVINGS BEHAVIOR

WHY DO PEOPLE SAVE? THE SALIENCE OF IDENTITY IN SAVINGS BEHAVIOR

According to a 2016 consumer survey, one in three Americans has no retirement savings, and 56 percent have less than $10,000 saved. Using longitudinal panel data of 4,800 households in the United States, a Capstone team sought to understand the underlying motivations of why people save. The team examined the savings behavior of people who consistently self-identify as planners or non-planners and savers or spenders—measured by having a savings device as well as the amount of savings. The team’s findings indicated that there is a significant difference in savings behavior between planners and non-planners but no difference between savers and spenders, suggesting the planner identity may be a salient force in savings behavior. This analysis contributes to the multi-disciplinary temporal decision-making literature by applying behavioral theory to a vast and longitudinal real-world dataset. The research also has significant implications for policymakers and other actors involved in creating interventions that promote savings behavior.

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