



PhD in Social Welfare

2025-2026 Graduates



Dear Colleagues,

It is our distinct pleasure to present to you the curriculum vitae of the five PhD candidates who will complete their degrees by May of 2026.

The PhD in Social Welfare program at the School of Social Policy & Practice prepares students for careers as exceptional researchers and scholars committed to critically and rigorously analyzing social problems to propose effective, research-based solutions, and to offer new theories and methods for approaching research and scholarship. Each of our candidates demonstrates excellence and innovation in an arena of social welfare scholarship, practice, and teaching and is well prepared to push the boundaries of our profession.

We encourage you to review the CVs and contact our upcoming graduates directly about available positions at your institutions. Please feel free to contact us if we can provide you with any further information at cadet@upenn.edu and yoosunp@upenn.edu.

Sincerely,



Tamara Cadet
Ph.D. in Social Welfare Co-Director



Yoosun Park, Ph.D.
Ph.D. in Social Welfare Co-director

2025-2026

Graduates

[Alex Bervik, MSW](#)

[Jung Ho Choi, MPP](#)

[Anna Ferris, LSW](#)

[Samaita Jana, MA](#)

[Chris Wodicka, MPA](#)



Alex Bervik, MSW

Alexander’s research lies at the intersection of refugee resettlement and fatherhood. His interest in working with refugee communities grew out of direct practice experiences in Denver, Stockholm, Athens, and Philadelphia. His burgeoning interest in fatherhood has grown out of his personal life as a father, as well as work as a research assistant at the Center for Guaranteed Income Research at the University of Pennsylvania, leading the analysis and writing of a guaranteed income pilot for nonresident fathers in Columbia, South Carolina.

Alexander holds both a BS in Business Administration and a BS in Mathematics from Coorado State University, as well as an MSW from the University of Pennsylvania. Before returning to SP2, Alexander worked as a social worker with students and non-profits at Stanford University’s Haas Center for Public Service.

Alexander D. Bervik, MSW Curriculum Vitae

University of Pennsylvania
School of Social Policy and Practice
3701 Locust Walk, Philadelphia, PA 19104

Philadelphia, PA
adbervik@upenn.edu
(303) 859-6209

EDUCATION

- 2021 -

University of Pennsylvania, School of Social Policy & Practice
Philadelphia, PA
PhD in Social Welfare (expected graduation Fall 2025)
Dissertation: *“But at least he’s trying”*: Exploring fatherhood, masculinity, and welfare for men involved in a guaranteed income pilot
Committee: Dr. Amy Castro (Chair), Dr. Roberto Gonzales, Dr. Ram Cnaan, Dr. Waldo Johnson
- 2017-2019

University of Pennsylvania, School of Social Policy & Practice
Philadelphia, PA
Master of Social Work
Certificate in Interdisciplinary Studies in Global Human Rights
Independent Study: *A comparison of social innovation in the United States and Canada*
- 2010-2014

Colorado State University (*cum laude*)
Fort Collins, CO
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (Accounting Concentration)
Bachelor of Science in Mathematics (Actuarial Sciences Concentration)
Thesis: *A Prison Vision: Implementing vocational and mentoring programs in prison*
- 2013

Queen Mary University of London
London, UK
International Exchange Student

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- 2025 -

Lecturer, University of Pennsylvania, School of Social Policy and Practice,
Philadelphia, PA

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Publications

Bervik, A. & Ferris, A. (2024). An ideology of deserving: A historical analysis of United States immigration policies governing forced migration and social welfare. *International Journal of Social Welfare*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijsw.12706>

Bervik, A. & Lyons, A. (In Revision). Welfare for the settler: The Homestead Act of 1862. *Social Service Review*

Bervik, A., Ferris, A., & Ziembo, C. (Under Review). Different pathways, different results? A scoping review examining methods and outcomes for privately sponsored and government-assisted refugees in the United States and Canada.

Ferris, A., **Bervik, A.**, & Power, K. (Under Review). Fragmented integration: Social welfare and differential inclusion among forced migrants in the U.S. *Journal of Policy Practice and Research*.

Kitchens, K., **Bervik, A.**, & Mitschke, D. B. (Under Review). Life course differences in resettlement: An interpretative phenomenological analysis of adult refugees from Burma. *SSM – Qualitative Research in Health*.

Bervik, A., Lyons, A., Castro, A., & West, S. (in progress). *Child support, fatherhood, and Guaranteed Income: A mixed-methods analysis on unconditional cash payments for nonresident fathers*.

Bervik, A. & Park. Y. (in progress). *Racializing refugees: The construction of African and Asian refugees in social work discourse*.

Book Chapters

Schlossberg, D. & **Bervik, A.** (2023). Housing and immigration: A legal guide for social workers. In F. Chang-Muy & E. P. Congress (Eds.), *Social work with immigrants and refugees: Legal issues, clinical skills, and advocacy*. Springer Publishing Company.

White Papers & Policy Briefs

Bervik, A., Lyons, A., West, S., Tandon, N., Castro, A., & Nichols, B. (2024). *The American Guaranteed Income Studies: Columbia, South Carolina*. University of Pennsylvania, Center for Guaranteed Income Research.

Bervik, A. & Lee, J. S. (2019). Waterfront revitalization - A Canadian experiment in Toronto. *Wharton IGEL*.

Lee, J.S., & **Bervik, A.** (2019). Linear parks and real estate development. *Wharton IGEL*.

Bervik, A. (2017). International innovation through global migration: Canada – US – France. *French Treasury in the US*.

Bervik, A. (2017). Resiliency to preserve art & culture: The Paris Agreement and how museums are preparing for climate risk. *French-American Chamber of Commerce*.

PRESENTATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Presentations

Bervik, A. (Forthcoming). Can guaranteed income challenge traditional masculinity/fatherhood models? A social constructionist narrative analysis [Oral Presentation]. *24th Congress of the Basic Income Earth Network*. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Bervik, A., Castro, A., West, S., & Tandon, N. (Forthcoming). “A bit of light in that tunnel of darkness”: Guaranteed income for nonresident fathers [Oral Presentation]. *24th Congress of the Basic Income Earth Network*. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Philips, M., Nichols, B., & **Bervik, A.** (Forthcoming). “Yeah, but who else is going to do it?” The Impacts of Unconditional Cash on the Neoliberal and Maternalist Burdens of Caregiving [Oral Presentation]. *24th Congress of the Basic Income Earth Network*. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Bervik, A., Lyons, A., Castro, A., & West, S. (2025). A bit of light in that tunnel of darkness: Guaranteed income for nonresident fathers [Oral Presentation]. *Society for Social Work and Research 2025 Annual Conference*. Seattle, WA, United States.

Kitchens, K., **Bervik, A.**, & Mitschke, D. B. (2025). Resettlement stress among emerging and middle adult refugees from Burma: An interpretative phenomenological analysis [Oral Presentation]. *Society for Social Work and Research 2025 Annual Conference*. Seattle, WA, United States.

Bervik, A. & Ferris, A. (2024). Welfare inclusion vs. exclusion: Comparing welfare states and their responses to those with temporary and full refugee status [Virtual Presentation]. *IMISCOE 2024 Annual Migration Conference*. Lisbon, Portugal.

Ferris, A., & **Bervik, A.** (2024). Welfare inclusion vs. exclusion: The impact of forced migrant categorization on the modern welfare state [Oral Presentation]. *European Conference for Social Work Research 2024 Annual Conference*. Vilnius, Lithuania.

Bervik, A. (2024). Welfare for the settler: The Homestead Act of 1862 [Poster Presentation]. *Society for Social Work and Research 2024 Annual Conference*. Washington, D.C., USA.

Bervik, A. (2023). Can refugees become American?: The construction of the refugee identity in social work discourse [Oral Presentation]. *IMISCOE 2023 Annual Migration Conference*. Warsaw, Poland.

Bervik, A. & Ferris, A. (2023). Welfare inclusion vs. exclusion: Comparing welfare states and their response to those with temporary and full refugee status [Virtual Presentation]. *IMISCOE 2023 Annual Migration Conference*. Warsaw, Poland.

Invited Presentations

Thompson, A., **Bervik, A.**, Lyons, A.J., Tandon, N., & Castro. A. (2024). Guaranteed Income Pilot Project: Columbia SC [Virtual Presentation]. *Center for Guaranteed Income Research, University of Pennsylvania*.

Bervik, A. & Ferris, A. (2023). Welfare inclusion vs. exclusion: The impact of forced migrant categorization on welfare access and integration. *Andrea Mitchell Center, University of Pennsylvania*. Philadelphia, PA, USA.

Schlossberg, D. & **Bervik, A.** (2023). Affordable Housing and Immigration. *University of Pennsylvania, School of Social Policy and Practice* (Guest Lecturer, Law and Social Policy).

Bervik, A. (2022). “Go west young man”: Homesteading the United States.” *University of Pennsylvania, School of Social Policy and Practice* (Guest Lecturer, Constructing America: A Socio-Legal History of Immigration).

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

2023 -	Doctoral Fellow Dr. Amy Castro, University of Pennsylvania, Center for Guaranteed Income Research Philadelphia, PA
2021 - 2024	Research Assistant Dr. Yoosun Park, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA
2017-2020	Qualtrics Consultant & Research Coordinator University of Pennsylvania, The Wharton School, Philadelphia, PA

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2025 -	History and Philosophy of Social Work and Social Welfare Master of Social Work, University of Pennsylvania
2025 -	Methods of Social Work Research Bachelor of Social Work, Rutgers University-Camden
2023 -	Macro Practice Simulation Master of Social Work, University of Pennsylvania *Instructor
2021	Social Theory PhD in Social Welfare, University of Pennsylvania *Teaching Assistant
2021	Social Policy through Literature Master of Social Work, University of Pennsylvania *Teaching Assistant
2020	Family Economic Mobility: Problems and Policies Master of Science in Social Policy Program, University of Pennsylvania *Teaching Assistant
2020	History and Philosophy of Social Work and Social Welfare Master of Social Work, University of Pennsylvania *Teaching Assistant
2019	Service-Learning Practicum Undergraduate Education, Stanford University *Teaching Assistant

AWARDS AND HONORS	
2025	Professional Travel Grant School of Social Policy & Practice, University of Pennsylvania \$650
2024	Professional Travel Grant School of Social Policy & Practice, University of Pennsylvania \$650
2023	GAPSA Individual Grant The Graduate and Professional Student Assembly, University of Pennsylvania \$1,000
2022	SP2 Summer Research Fellow School of Social Policy & Practice, University of Pennsylvania \$6,100

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE	
2024 -	Independent Contractor Third Space Research Philadelphia, PA
2019-2021	Cardinal Commitment Coordinator Haas Center for Public Service, Stanford University Stanford, CA
2018-2019	Citizenship Project Coordinator SEAMAAC, Inc. Philadelphia, PA
2017-2018	Learning Coach Lutheran Settlement House Philadelphia, PA
2016	Refugee Center Manager Alliance Refugee Center Athens, Greece
2016	Outreach Worker Korskyrkan Stockholm, Sweden

Curriculum Vitae
Updated August 2025

A. Bervik, MSW

2014-2016	Product Analyst Qualtrics Provo, UT & Dublin, Ireland
SERVICE	
2025 -	Ad-Hoc Reviewer Journal of Refugee Studies
2024 -	Ad-Hoc Reviewer International Journal for Social Welfare
2023	Founding Member Penn Ethnography Lab University of Pennsylvania
2020-2021	Co-Leader White People for Racial Justice Group Haas Center for Public Service, Stanford University
2020-2021	Member Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Haas Center for Public Service, Stanford University
2019-2020	Member Local Community Partnerships Committee Haas Center for Public Service, Stanford University
2019-2020	Workshop Leader Peer Mentoring Haas Center for Public Service, Stanford University
2019	Workshop Leader Qualtrics Survey Design Wharton School of Business, University of Pennsylvania
2020-2021	Leader Frosh Service Liaison Haas Center for Public Service, Stanford University

Curriculum Vitae
Updated August 2025

A. Bervik, MSW

Professional & Research Affiliations

- 2024 -

Student Affiliate
University of Buffalo
Immigrant and Refugee Research Institute
- 2024 -

Member
European Social Work Research Association (ESWRA)
- 2023 -

Member
Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR)
- 2023 -

Member
International Migration Research Network (IMISCOE)

REFERENCES

Dr. Amy Castro
Associate Professor
University of Pennsylvania
School of Social Policy and Practice
amycastro@sp2.upenn.edu

Dr. Roberto Gonzales
Richard Perry University Professor
University of Pennsylvania
Department of Sociology
Graduate School of Education
rggonzal@sas.upenn.edu

Dr. Roberta Iversen
Associate Professor
University of Pennsylvania
School of Social Policy and Practice
riversen@sp2.upenn.edu

Curriculum Vitae
Updated August 2025

A. Bervik, MSW



Jung Ho Choi, MPP

Jung Ho Choi is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Pennsylvania’s School of Social Policy and Practice (SP2). His research focuses on uncovering how private funding drives social impact. He draws on organizational theory and uses both traditional causal inference methods and computational text analysis techniques, including Large Language Models. His dissertation tackles a fundamental question in the philanthropic ecosystem: How can philanthropic funding decisions translate into real-world social change? Through three interconnected studies, he examines the key mechanisms that drive philanthropic impact. His dissertation project received several prestigious awards and fellowships, including the ARNOVA Lester M. Salamon Memorial Award.

Jung Ho Choi

3701 Locust Walk, Philadelphia, PA 19104
Email: chjho@upenn.edu | Phone: 612-757-0587

EDUCATION

PhD	University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA School of Social Policy and Practice Dissertation: <i>Essays on the Social Impact of Philanthropic Grantmaking</i> Committee: Femida Handy (Chair), Chao Guo, Rand Quinn <ul style="list-style-type: none">Winner, 2025 ARNOVA Lester M. Salamon Memorial Award	Current
MPP	University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN Humphrey School of Public Affairs	2022
BA / MA	Korea University, Seoul, Republic of Korea Department of Public Administration	2019

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Topic Nonprofit and Public Management | Social Impact Measurement | Organizational Theory
Method Causal Inference | Computational Social Science

PUBLICATIONS

Refereed Journal Articles

Choi, J. H., & Handy, F. (Forthcoming). “Social Closure in Social Work: The Racial Implications of Licensure Requirements” *Advances in Social Work*.

Oelberger, C., Eaton, A., & **Choi, J. H.** (2025). “One Size Fits All? Exploring Motivation for Public Employees with a Job Fit Framework and Response Surface Analysis” *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, 45(2), 333-364.

Allen, R., Horner, K., & **Choi, J. H.** (2023). “Penalties and Payoffs: The Short-Term Economic Consequences of Human Capital Acquisition for Resettled Refugees in the U.S.” *International Migration*, 61, 58–74.

Cheng, Y., & **Choi, J. H.** (2022). “Dealing with Endogeneity to Understand the Societal Impact of the Third Sector: Why Should We Care and What Can We Do About It?” *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 33, 1245-1255.

Manuscript under Revision

Choi, J. H., Marrese, T., Handy, F., & Cnaan, R. “Does Trust in Nonprofit Organizations Matter for Donors in Times of Crisis? Insights from the COVID-19 Pandemic” Revise & Resubmit, *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*.

Manuscript in Preparation

The Empathetic Bot: Can AI Enhance Citizen Satisfaction in Citizen-State Interactions? (with Tiana Marrese and Viviana Chiu Sik Wu)

Signaling Prosocial Value: A Text Analysis Approach on Online Job Postings in Minnesota (with Dongil Jang)

Money or Impact? Job Preferences Between Monetary Compensation and Potential Prosocial Impact

RESEARCH GRANTS

2024	Institute for Humane Studies, “The Empathetic Bot: Can AI Enhance Citizen Satisfaction in Citizen-State Interactions?” (PI, \$3,000) (with Tiana Marrese and Viviana Wu)
2021	Center for Social Value Enhancement Studies, “Signaling Prosocial Value: A Text Analysis Approach on Online Job Postings in Minnesota” (PI, \$2,000) (with Dongil Jang)

HONORS, AWARDS, AND FELLOWSHIPS

University of Pennsylvania

2023-24	Summer PhD Research Fellowship, School of Social Policy and Practice (\$10,000)
2024-25	Conference Travel Fund, School of Social Policy and Practice (\$1,005)

External Sources

2025	ARNOVA Lester M. Salamon Memorial Award for Promising Ph.D. Proposal
2025	Doctoral Fellowship, Oxford-Penn Social Impact Fellowship Program (£3,000)
2025	Junior Scholar, Stanford Philanthropy and Civil Society Junior Scholars Forum
2025	Doctoral Fellowship, ARNOVA
2023-24	Graduate Diversity Scholars Fellowship, ARNOVA (\$1,000)
2019-20	Government Scholarship for Study Overseas, Korea Ministry of Education (\$80,000)
2014-15	Undergrad Student Scholarship, Ilju Academy and Culture Foundation (full tuition)
2011-15	Undergrad Student Scholarship, Korea Foundation for Advanced Studies (stipend)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant

2024	Economics of Human Behavior and Organizational Life (Graduate level, Online), Fall School of Social Policy and Practice, University of Pennsylvania
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Instructor

2022	Introductory Statistics for the Social Sciences (Graduate level, In-Person), Summer Department of Public Administration, Korea University
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- 2021

Applied Statistics for Policy Analysis and Evaluation
(Undergraduate level, Online), Summer
University of Minnesota-Twin Cities
- 2020

Advanced Social Statistics and Data Science
(Undergraduate level, In-Person), Summer
Department of Public Administration, Kookmin University

OTHER EXPERIENCE

Additional Training

- 2024

Network for Social Work Management Doctoral Scholars Institute, Online
- 2023

Academy of Management Doctoral Student Professional Development Consortium
(Public and Nonprofit Division), Boston, MA.

Military Service

- 2012-14

Staff Sergeant, Public Affairs Office, 15th Special Missions Wing, Korea Air Force

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- 2025

Public Management Research Association Conference (PMRC), Seoul.
1. **Choi, J. H.**, Marrese, T., & Wu, V. C. S. “The Empathetic Bot: Can AI Enhance Citizen Satisfaction in Citizen-State Interactions?”
- 2024

Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA), Washington DC.
1. **Choi, J. H.**, Hung, C., & Handy, F. “Are Diverse Nonprofit Organizations More Favored by Donors? A Survey Experiment.”
2. Panelist of Data and Analytics Section (DAS) Colloquium. “Integrating Generative AI into Nonprofit Research: Examples, Best Practices, and Ethical Considerations”
- 2023

Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA), Orlando, FL.
1. **Choi, J. H.**, Doghri, Y., & Handy, F. “If I Look at The One: Identifiability of Victims and In-group Favoritism in Charitable Giving.”
2. **Choi, J. H.**, Marrese, T., Handy, F., & Cnaan, R. “Who Stopped Donating During the Pandemic? A Quasi-Experimental Study Using Coarsened Exact Matching.”

LANGUAGES AND SKILLS

Languages Korean (Native), English (Fluent)
Computing Skills R, Python, Stata

Last updated: September 2025



Anna Ferris, MSW, LSW

Anna’s dissertation, Liminality of Forced Displacement: Syrian Refugee and Immigrant Lives in the US explores Syrian migration histories after the start of the Syrian revolution and war. Specifically, she takes a phenomenological method of inquiry to examine how the types of legal and geographic pathways that Syrians traverse shape their experiences with the US immigration system, holding different humanitarian protection statuses while in the US and placing individuals and families in limbo for months or years waiting on pending applications, have their asylum claims rejected, or find themselves in a temporary or uncertain legal status that places them in the “in-between” reality – not deported but unable to claim the rights of citizenship. Furthermore, she explores how migration pathways shape belonging and community within their local context. Her dissertation is supported by a grant from the Muslim Philanthropy Initiative (MPI) at the University of Indiana Lily School of Philanthropy.

Anna holds an MSW from the University of Pennsylvania and a BSW from the University of North Carolina Wilmington. Before doctoral studies, Anna accumulated over 5 years of experience in social work practice, both in refugee resettlement and education.

Anna Ferris, MSW
Curriculum Vitae
3701 Locust Walk
Philadelphia, PA 19104
Email: aferris@upenn.edu

EDUCATION

PhD in Social Welfare University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy and Practice Dissertation title: <i>Liminality of Forced Displacement: Syrian Refugee and Immigrant Lives in the United States</i> Dissertation Committee: Drs. Ram Cnaan, Roberto Gonzales, Amy Castro, and Samer Abboud	August 2021-present
Master of Social Work University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy and Practice	August 2016
Bachelor of Social Work University of North Carolina at Wilmington School of Social Work	May 2014

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Refereed Journal Articles

Bervik, A., & Ferris, A. An Ideology of Deserving: A Historical Analysis of United States Immigration Policies Governing Forced Migration and Social Welfare. *International Journal of Social Welfare*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijsw.12706>

Ferris, A., Marrese, T., Cnaan, R., Choi, D., & Handy, F. (2024). Who Volunteers at Refugee and Immigrant Nonprofits? Results from Two Studies. *Nonprofit Policy Forum*. doi: 10.1515/npf-2023-0066

Choi, D., Ferris, A., Marrese, T., Cnaan, R., & Handy, F. (2023). The Implications of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Recruitment and Retention of Volunteers and Donors in the US. *Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership, and Governance*. 48(3). 340-354. 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23303131.2023.2232844>

Journal Articles in Submission or Preparation

Bervik, A., Ferris, A., & Ziembo, C. Different Pathways, Different Results? A Scoping Review Examining Integration Outcomes for Privately Sponsored and Government-Assisted Refugees (Under Review).

Ferris, A., Bervik, A., Power, K., & Cnaan, R. Fragmented Integration: Social Welfare and Differential Inclusion Among Forced Migrants in the U.S. (Under Review).

Choi, D., Marrese, T., Ferris, A., Cnaan, R., & Handy, F. Religiosity and Generosity in Light of the Pandemic. (Under Review).

Marrese, T., Choi, D., Ferris, A., Cnaan, R., & Handy, F. Changes in Formal and Informal Volunteering Before and During Crises; Lessons from the COVID-19 Pandemic. (Revise and Resubmit).

Research Reports

Cnaan, R.A., Handy, F., Marrese, T., Choi, D. Y., and Ferris, A. 2022. Generosity Trends and Impacts: Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic in the USA.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE AND GRANTS

Center for Guaranteed Income Research (CGIR)
Doctoral Research Assistant - Qualitative Research Team
June 2025- present

Guaranteed Income Pilot Program (GIPP) – Paterson, NJ Phase II
Principal Investigator: Rosemarie Frasso

- Conducting qualitative data collection, data coding, and analysis of unconditional cash experiments in Paterson, NJ
- Co-authoring the white paper on the outcomes of the experiment

University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy & Practice
Graduate Research Assistant
August 2021- present

Muslim Philanthropy Initiative - Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy
2024 PhD Scholar
Dissertation Research Grant Recipient; Awarded: \$4,200

21st Century CCLC grant awarded to Oxford Circle Christian Community Development Association (OCCCA)
Program Evaluator
March 2025 – present

University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy & Practice, 2024 Summer Research Fellowship

Principal Investigator
Project: Humanitarian Protection and Social Welfare Provision: An Exploration of How Access to Federal Welfare Shapes the Lives of those Seeking Humanitarian Protection. Funding: University of Pennsylvania; Awarded \$5,000

University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy & Practice, 2023 Summer Research Fellowship

Principal Investigator
Project: Who Volunteers for Refugee and Immigrant Organizations? Two Studies Exploring Volunteering at Nonprofits Serving Refugees and Immigrants. Funding: University of Pennsylvania; Awarded \$5,000

Generosity Trends and Impacts: Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic in the USA
Co-Investigator
May 2021-April 2022

TEACHING INTERESTS

Social research methods, history of social welfare, social policy, social theory, forced migration and social work

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

History and Philosophy of Social Work and Social Welfare (Fall 2025)
University of Pennsylvania, School of Social Policy and Practice
Adjunct Faculty

Introduction to Social Research (Fall 2024)
Temple University
Adjunct Faculty

Teaching Assistant (Fall 2019)
University of Pennsylvania, School of Social Policy and Practice
Civil Society in Palestine and Israel

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

International Community, Work, and Family Conference
Bielefeld, Germany
Oral presentation: *Liminality of Forced Displacement: Syrian Refugee and Immigrant Lives in the US*
March 2025

IMISCOE (International Migration Research Network)
Krems, Austria (presented online)

Oral presentation: *Liminality of Forced Displacement: Syrian Refugee and Immigrant Lives in the US*
March 2025

Society for Social Work Research (SSWR)
Seattle, WA
Poster Presentation: *Fragmented Integration: Social Welfare and Differential Inclusion Among Forced Migrants in the U.S.*
January 2025

IMISCOE (International Migration Research Network)
Lisbon, Portugal (presented online)
Oral Presentation: *Welfare Inclusion vs Exclusion: The Impact of Forced Migrant Categorization on the Modern Welfare State*
July 2024

European Conference for Social Work Research
Vilnius, Lithuania
Oral Presentation: *Welfare Inclusion vs Exclusion: The Impact of Forced Migrant Categorization on the Modern Welfare State*
April 2024

Society for Social Work Research (SSWR)
Washington, DC
Oral Presentation: *Who Volunteers for Refugee and Immigrant Organizations? Two Studies Exploring Volunteering at Nonprofits Serving Refugees and Immigrants*
January 2024

Andrea Mitchell Center for the Study of Democracy
University of Pennsylvania
Oral Presentation: *Welfare Inclusion vs Exclusion: The Impact of Forced Migrant Categorization on Welfare Access and Integration*
December 2023

IMISCOE (International Migration Research Network)
Warsaw, Poland (presented online)
Oral Presentation: *Welfare Inclusion vs Exclusion: Comparing Welfare States and their Response to those with Temporary and Full Refugee Status*
July 2023

Migration Practicalities: Host Country Responses to Authorized and Unauthorized Migrants
Madrid, Spain
Oral Presentation: *Afghan Evacuee Resettlement and Civic Engagement*
October 2022

SERVICE TO PROFESSION

Journal reviewer to Nonprofit Policy Forum

Journal reviewer to the International Journal of Social Welfare

Journal reviewer to VOLUNTAS

SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE EXPERIENCE

United Communities of Southeast Philadelphia

Community Schools Specialist

November 2020-August 2021

SEAMAAC

(Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Associations Coalition)

Lead Case Manager

September 2016-November 2019

HIAS Pennsylvania

(Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society)

Refugee Resettlement Case Manager (MSW Field Placement)

July 2015-May 2016

Congressman Mike McIntyre

Veterans Services Case Manager (BSW Field Placement)

August 2013-May 2014

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR)

European Social Work Research Association (ESWRA)

IMISCOE (International Migration Research Network)

SKILLS

Software: Dedoose, R (beginner)

LANGUAGES

English (native language)

Arabic (intermediate working proficiency – Syrian dialect)



Samaita Jana, MA

Samaita Jana is a PhD candidate at the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy & Practice. Her research interests include mental health in precarious employment, community organization and development processes in the informal sector, and their impact on mental health outcomes in worker populations.

Prior to joining the PhD program, she worked as a researcher in the field of mental health rights and community mental health. She holds a bachelor’s degree in economics from Bryn Mawr College and a Master’s degree in social work with a concentration in mental health from Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Mumbai, India.

EDUCATION

University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy & Practice

Ph.D. Social Welfare, *expected 2025*
Dissertation Title: Tensions in the Line: The Mental Health of Women Sex Workers in India

Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
M.A. Social Work in Mental Health, *May 2018*

Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, USA
B.A., *May 2015*
Major: Economics

HONORS AND AWARDS

***Hal Levin Award*, School of Social Policy & Practice, University of Pennsylvania**

May 2023

- Merit award given annually to a student in the Doctor of Philosophy in Social Welfare

***Ariadne Solter Internship Fund Recipient*, Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, PA**

June 2014-August 2014

- competitive summer internship funding (\$4000) from Bryn Mawr College to support work with USHA Multipurpose Cooperative Society Ltd. (USHA) on business investment projects, organizing workshops for collectors and monitoring officers at USHA, and revamping website and updated online content

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

***Researcher*, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences (CSSS), Calcutta and Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee (DMSC)**

February 2020—January 2022

- Mixed methods research examining the impact of COVID-19 on the health-seeking behaviors and mental health of the sex work community
- Psychoeducational groups with sex worker community members

***Researcher*, Dream Building and Aspiration-Building Project, Adam Smith Business School - University of Glasgow and Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee (DMSC)**

March 2019 – September 2019

- Conducted quantitative and qualitative research to determine the impact of Dream Building, a psychological training program used as an intervention among sex workers and members of self-help groups in West Bengal, India
- Translation and compilation of the Dream Building Module and Facilitator’s Guide in the English language for dissemination across international sex workers’ collectives and self-help groups

***Research and Documentation Officer*, Anjali – Mental Health Rights Organization, Kolkata, India**

May 2018 – February 2019

- Coordinated a national study on deinstitutionalization sanctioned by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of India, titled ‘National Strategy for Inclusive and Community Based Living for Persons with Mental Health Issues’
- Monitored quantitative and qualitative data collection at four public psychiatric hospitals across West Bengal
- Documented program-specific events, annual and half-yearly reports of the organization
- Managed Twitter account and social media content of the organization

***Project Director*, DRISHTI, University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy & Practice, Philadelphia**

May 2015-May 2016

- Coordinated National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) funded project titled ‘Implementing DRISHTI: Reducing HIV Risk Among High Risk Women’ which seeks to lower depression and drug addiction among sex workers in Kolkata, India through Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) in a support group setting
- Trained members of the support group in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) techniques
- Facilitated weekly interventions with members of the support group
- Monitored and evaluated outcomes of training and intervention

PUBLICATIONS

- Jana, S., Ray, P., Roy, S., Dam, M., Sinha, S., & **Jana, S.** (2018). Assessing Acceptability, Feasibility and Deliverability of PrEP among Female Sex Workers in Brothel Settings. *International Journal of Medical Science and Health Research*, 2(5).
- **Jana S**, Maitra S, Bose K, Ray P, Jana S (2018) Positioning Health Interventions from the Perspective of Well-Being-as Conceived by the Community. *J Nurs Womens Health: JNWH*-147. DOI: 10.29011/2577-1450. 100047
- Jana, S., Ray, P., Roy, S., Piduttia, J., Ghose, T., **Jana, S.** (2017) Depression and Its Relation with HIV Risk and Social Well-Being among the Brothel-Based Female Sex Workers in Kolkata, India. *J Community Med Public Health Care* 4: 025.

Manuscripts under Submission

Manuscripts under Preparation

- **Jana, S.** Trends in Condom Use and Sexual Health Risk of US Adults from 2011-19 from the 1997 National Longitudinal Study of Youth
- **Jana, S.** The Mental Health of Women Sex Workers: Negotiating Slow Violence

Samaita Jana

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Email: jsam@upenn.edu Tel: 445-251-1497

- Sikdar, S & **Jana, S.** RG Kar Rape Protests: Where Civil Society and Political Society Lines Blur in Mass Movements

PRESENTATIONS

- Stanton, M., **Jana, S.**, Ray, R., Begum, A., & Ghose, T. (2015). “*Formalizing labor, facilitating health: The impact of a community-led cooperative bank on sex worker well-being.*” Paper presented at the American Public Health Association 143st Annual Meeting and Exposition, Chicago, Illinois.
- Chaudhuri, Sambuddha, Samira Ali, and **Samaita Jana.** "Environment of Violence: Exploring Risk of Violence in LGBT Individuals in India." Diss. 2014. Abstract. American Public Health Association, n.d. Web. <<https://apha.confex.com/apha/142am/webprogram/Paper312526.html>>.
- Research paper was presented at the 142nd American Public Health Association (APHA) Annual Meeting and Expo, New Orleans, LA
- Presented research on the role of economic empowerment through microfinance (USHA) in curbing rates of HIV/AIDS and other STIs in the presentation titled “*Economic Empowerment Leads to A Higher Standard Of Living Among The Sex-workers Population*” at the 10th International Congress of AIDS in Asia and Pacific (ICAAP), Busan, South Korea

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant, The Lauder Institute, University of Pennsylvania

Fall 2025

- TA for INTS 9910: Master’s Thesis Research (Capstone)

Teaching Assistant, School of Social Policy & Practice, University of Pennsylvania

Spring 2025

- TA for SWRK 7620: Social Work Practice with Groups

Teaching Assistant, School of Social Policy & Practice, University of Pennsylvania

Fall 2022

- TA for SWRK 7980: Taking down the Prison Industrial Complex

PRACTICE EXPERIENCE

Translator, Penn School of Social Policy & Practice, Philadelphia, PA

June 2011- July 2014

- Conducted both qualitative and quantitative research on various public health and public policy issues surrounding marginalized women in West Bengal, India

Samaita Jana

Philadelphia, PA

Email: jsam@upenn.edu Tel: 445-251-1497

- Translated qualitative interviews from Bengali and Hindi to English and vice-versa for PhD and MSW students

Cataloging Assistant, Canaday Library, Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, PA

September 2013-May 2015

- Cataloging, printing and making labels, book mending, revising.

Office Assistant, Graduate School of Social Work and Research, Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, PA

September 2012-March 2013

Assisted dean’s office staff and faculty in organizing files, mail, lecture materials and coordinating special events

Research and Communications Associate, USHA Multipurpose Cooperative Society Ltd. (USHA), Kolkata, India

August 2010- August 2011

- Helped in building networks between other funding agencies, microfinance institutions and USHA, a microcredit venture designed by and for sex-workers of West Bengal, India
- Organized and coordinate incoming staff training workshops
- Worked on investment projects with the board of directors
- Coordinated and helped organize the Annual General Meetings
- Authored and presented a report on how economic empowerment of sex workers through USHA helped in curbing rates of HIV/AIDS and other STIs at the 10th International Congress of AIDS in Asia and Pacific (ICAAP)

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCES

Balaram Dey Street Anandam, Kolkata, India

August 2019-December 2022

- Presently acting as an external advisor and community organizer for Balaram Dey Street Anandam, a collective of LGBTQ+ members based in West Bengal
- Coordinating data collection to assess PreP feasibility among transgender persons and men who have sex with men (MSM)
- Planning community events such as LGBT Parliament, seminars, and protest marches

Anjali - Mental Health Rights Organization, Kolkata, India

November 2017-December 2017

- Assisted in casework (case history, rehabilitation, repatriation) of patients in public mental healthcare institutions
- Documented program-specific events
- Assisted in research conducted by agency
- Designed and conducted aspiration-building workshop with clients participating in vocational training programs in Kolkata Pavlov Hospital

Samaita Jana

Philadelphia, PA

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A Village for Independent and Enterprising Women (A VIEW), South 24 Parganas, West Bengal, India

August 2017- September 2017

- Conducted case histories and mental state examinations of clients in A VIEW, a rehabilitation home for women with mental illness
- Assisted in repatriation of clients in rehabilitation home
- Conducted recreational activities for clients within rehabilitation home
- Conducted community health awareness events in Bererkhal village, South 24 Parganas

Koshish, Field Action Project on Homelessness and Destitution, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India

July 2016-April 2017

- Conducted casework (repatriation, rehabilitation, follow-ups) with clients in Chembur Beggars Home, Mumbai
- Assisted in community-based intervention, linking clients from de-notified tribes with existing government schemes and raising awareness on issues of health, education, and livelihood
- Coordinated recreational activity sessions with clients in Chembur Beggars Home

ACADEMIC AND TECHNICAL SKILLS

- Qualitative Research experience
- **Multiple language proficiencies:** English (bilingual proficiency), Bengali (bilingual proficiency), Hindi (professional proficiency), French (limited proficiency)
- Expertise in current academic literatures on Mental Health and Public Health
- **Statistical & IT Skills:** R, MS Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint), Social Media (Twitter, Facebook)
- Labor and Community Organization



Chris Wodicka, MPA

Chris Wodicka is a PhD candidate in the School of Social Policy and Practice. His current research interests include the impacts of U.S. public policies on families' economic well-being as well as on health, labor, educational, and other outcomes. He is particularly interested in the effects of tax credits and cash and near-cash transfer programs and exploring cross-state policy variation. Prior to his time at SP2, Chris worked as senior policy analyst for tax policy at The Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analysis, a state policy research and advocacy organization in Richmond, VA. He researched federal, state, and local tax policy issues and worked on the successful effort to make the state's Earned Income Tax Credit refundable. Previously, Chris worked as a nonpartisan legislative analyst and evaluator in the Legislative Audit Bureau of the Wisconsin State Legislature and as an associate statistical programmer at the Wisconsin Center for Education Research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Prior to his career in public policy, Chris worked in schools as part of Jesuit Volunteer Corps Northwest and City Year Seattle/King County. He holds a Master's of Public Affairs with a concentration in public finance from Indiana University-Bloomington and a Bachelor's in English from the University of Notre Dame.

CHRIS WODICKA

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EDUCATION

PhD, Social Welfare, University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy & Practice Committee: Ioana Marinescu (chair), Dennis Culhane, Benjamin Lockwood	Anticipated 2026
MPA, Public Financial Administration, Indiana University-Bloomington	2013
BA, English, University of Notre Dame	2008

PUBLICATIONS

<i>Peer-reviewed articles</i>	
Lyons, A. J., Wodicka, C. Y. , & Delavega, E. (2024). Variations in Earned Income Tax Credit Distribution between the Program's Eight Qualifying Categories. <i>Journal of Policy Practice and Research</i> , 5(3), 209–224.	

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

American Economic Association (AEA)	2026
Association for Public Policy & Management (APPAM) Fall Research Conference (Poster session)	2025

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching assistant: MSSP 6680 Economics for Social Policy (Fall 2024, Fall 2025)
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AWARDS, HONORS, AND FELLOWSHIPS

Fontaine Fellowship, University of Pennsylvania
Presidential PhD Fellowship, University of Pennsylvania
Educational Opportunity Fellowship, Indiana University Bloomington
Eisenach Memorial Fellowship, Indiana University Bloomington

PREVIOUS PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT

The Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analysis (TCI)	
Senior Policy Analyst	2021–2022
Policy Analyst	2017–2020
Wisconsin Center for Education Research (WCER)	
University of Wisconsin-Madison	
Associate Programmer Analyst	2016–2017

Legislative Audit Bureau, Wisconsin State Legislature	
Legislative Analyst/Associate Program Evaluator	2013–2016
Center for Evaluation & Education Policy (CEEP)	
Indiana University Bloomington	
Graduate Research Assistant	2012–2013

MEMBERSHIPS AND PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management
National Tax Association
Population Association of America

OTHER

Competitive training
Panel Study of Income Dynamics Data User Training Workshop, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (2023)
Other presentations and panels
Session: Student Resources: Bridging the Gap Between Graduate School and Your Non-Academic Policy Career Path, Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management Fall Research Conference (2017)
Other service
SP2 Doctoral Student Steering Committee (2023–2025)
Member, Local Tax Authority Work Group, Division of Legislative Services, Virginia General Assembly (2020)



The PhD program in Social Welfare is designed to develop leaders in academia and research to identify both problems and potential solutions. We work hard to foster scholarly energy, collaboration, and creativity.



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