

# Research \ Action

Celebrating 50 Years of Social Change



**50** Wellesley  
Centers for  
YEARS Women

# Research \ Action Report

annual report 2024

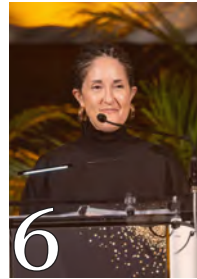
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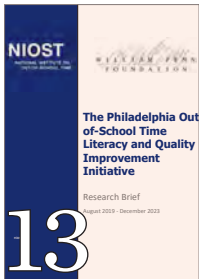
Landmark  
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Celebrating 50 Years  
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NIOST Helps Build  
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Getting Family Child  
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WCW Through  
the Years

**On the cover:** Barbara W. Newell, Ph.D.—president of Wellesley College from 1972-1980, and founder of the Wellesley Center for Research on Women—at the launch celebration for the Center for Research on Women at Cheever House in March 1975; and Layli Maparyan, Ph.D., current executive director of the Wellesley Centers for Women, in November 2024.

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Wellesley College

# From the Executive Director

A world that is good  
for women is good  
for everyone.™

The Wellesley Centers for Women is an academic research and action institute at Wellesley College that is focused on women and gender and driven by social change. Our mission is to advance gender equality, social justice, and human wellbeing through high-quality research, theory, and action programs.

While women's and girls' perspectives and experiences are at the center of our institutional identity, we aim to shape a better world for people of all gender identities and expressions.

*Production of this report was supported in part by the Mary Joe Gaw Frug Fund, an endowed gift to the Wellesley Centers for Women.*

When I arrived at WCW just over 12 years ago, I was starry-eyed on account of all of the celebrated work that had come out of the Wellesley Centers for Women—work that had shaped my own education and career as well as the lives of so many other people.

It was the privilege of a lifetime to take the helm here at this acclaimed research and action institute comprised of women whose work I had read and taught in the classroom and discussed in activist circles.

These were people who were daily bringing high-quality research, groundbreaking theory, and innovative action programs to bear on our most pressing social issues: gender equality, social justice, and human wellbeing.

The purpose of this issue of the Research & Action Report is to reflect on and appreciate all that we have accomplished over 50 years of shaping a better world through research and action. Throughout these pages, we'll share highlights from our history and feature current projects that are taking our work into the future. In every instance, we are grateful to the people who did the work, the people who supported the work, and the people who put the work to use changing the lives of women and girls, children and youth, families and communities, here and around the globe.

It is true that the world is still far from perfect and the goal-posts sometimes change just when we think we've arrived. But the honest truth is,



looking back over 50 years, a lot has changed for the better. And WCW has played a traceable, tangible role.

We have lived up to our motto, so famously coined by our former executive director Susan McGee Bailey—"A world that is good for women is good for everyone"—and, in the process, raised over \$107 million dollars in extramural funding and over \$40 million in gifts and donations from our supporters, for a grand total of \$150 million over these five decades. Thanks to our supporters, we are in a strong position to tackle the challenges of the next five decades.

Your job now is to continue to tell WCW's story. We have 50 years of stories—of studies, projects, initiatives, experiments, theories, innovations, great discoveries, and aha moments—that changed the world. We look forward to 50 more years of stories and social change achievements to talk about. All because we have built such a strong foundation, together.

With gratitude,

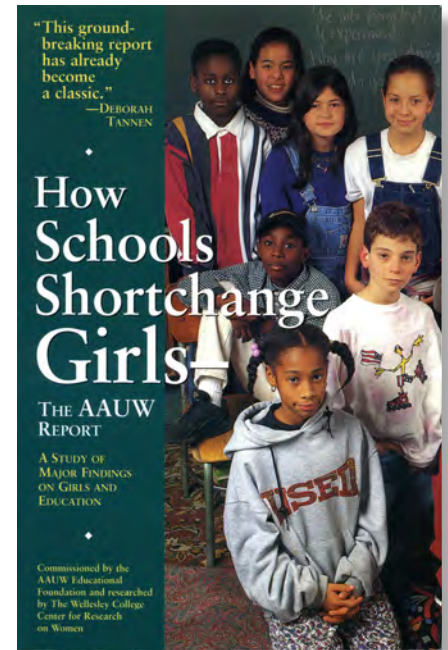
**Layli Maparyan, Ph.D.**

Katherine Stone Kaufmann '67 Executive Director

## How Schools Shortchange Girls

This groundbreaking report, funded by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) and published in 1992, challenged the assumption that girls and boys are treated equally in U.S. public schools. The study found that teachers pay less attention to girls than boys in the classroom. It also found that sexual harassment of girls by boys in school settings was increasing. With support from the Ford Foundation, author Susan McGee Bailey, Ph.D., attended the U.N. Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 and distributed copies of the report in Spanish, French, and Mandarin. The report influenced U.S. federal legislation on programs for girls in science and math, shaped public discourse on gender and education, and led to new community-based programs for girls across the country.

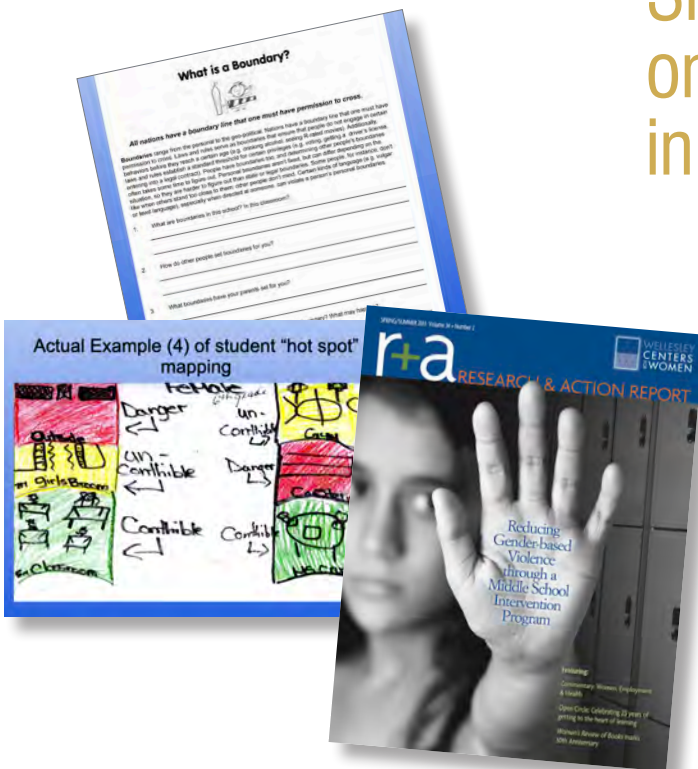
**Susan McGee Bailey, Ph.D., Lynn C. Burbridge, Ph.D.,  
Patricia B. Campbell, Ph.D., Fern Marx, M.H.S.M.,  
Peggy McIntosh, Ph.D.**



## Shifting Boundaries: Lessons on Relationships for Students in Middle School

Shifting Boundaries is an evidence-based, multi-level prevention program for middle school students on sexual harassment and precursors to dating violence. The program is unique in that it includes both school-wide interventions and classroom lessons. Funded by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) of the U.S. Department of Justice from 2005–2015, the researchers/authors developed all aspects of the program, trained teachers and staff to implement it with middle school students, and used surveys to gauge the effectiveness with students in New York City and the Cleveland suburbs over several years. Shifting Boundaries was one of only three sets of interventions found to be effective in a meta-analysis of 110 interventions conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 2014, and was recognized by the Obama administration during Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month.

**Nan Stein, Ed.D. with collaborator Bruce Taylor, Ph.D.**





## White Privilege Essays

Peggy McIntosh's 1989 essay, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack," itemized examples from her lived experience in personal, accessible, and non-judgmental language. By making lists of unearned advantages she gained from being born white in a culture that favors white people, she inspired countless others to explore their own experiences of privilege and disadvantage. Her papers started a national and international conversation on white privilege and privilege systems more broadly—including discussions of gender, race, sexuality, and colonialism—and remain among the most widely cited sources on the topic of privilege. For these contributions and for founding the National SEED (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity) Project on Inclusive Curriculum, she received the Centennial Medal, the highest honor of the Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, and was inducted into the U.S. National Women's Hall of Fame.



**Peggy McIntosh, Ph.D.**

## Critical Mass on Corporate Boards: Why Three or More Women Enhance Governance

In 2006, this study revealed that a critical mass of three or more women serving on a corporate board allows women to influence the content and process of board discussions more substantially than one or two women. The study found that, when there is a critical mass of women directors, boards are more likely to include the concerns of a wider set of stakeholders, to persistently pursue answers to difficult questions, and to bring a more collaborative approach to leadership. Since this study was published, companies and nonprofits have made more strenuous efforts to increase the number of women on their boards, and the number of women serving on boards has increased greatly.

**Sumru Erkut, Ph.D. with collaborators Vicki W. Kramer, Ph.D., Alison M. Konrad, Ph.D.**

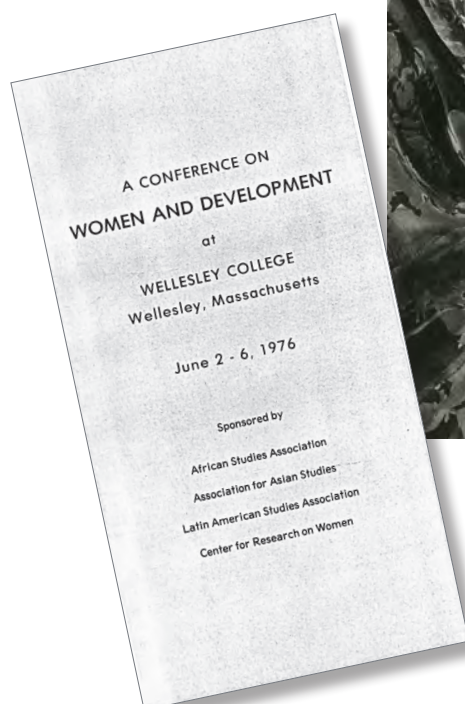


## THEN

# 1976 International Conference on Women and Development

Inspired by the growing perception among scholars and policymakers that international development impacted women in unique ways, this conference—the first such gathering in the U.S.—attracted 117 women from 32 countries. Scholars of and from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East came together to share notes and join forces, all with the goal of shaping development discourse and practice to better account for differences among women. Many papers from this study, as well as commentaries on the conference itself, were published in a special issue of the feminist academic journal, *Signs: Journal of Women and Culture in Society* (Vol. 3, No. 7, Autumn 1977), edited by Catharine R. Stimpson. This momentous conference shifted both feminist discourse and development practice globally and can be considered a turning point in the move toward intersectionality.

**Carolyn M. Elliott, Ph.D.**



Wellesley College President Barbara W. Newell, Ph.D., with a conference participant

NOW

## An Inclusive Approach to Climate Change in Liberia

Where development was a top concern in the 1970s, climate change is at the forefront of global challenges today. And, as with development, it's critical that women and other marginalized groups have a seat at the table where decisions are made. WCW is working to ensure inclusion through a program called Higher Education for Conservation (HECA) in the Republic of Liberia.

With funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development, WCW and seven other institutions are working to strengthen forest management and conservation in Liberia—which contains roughly half of the remaining rainforest in West Africa—through education, training, and technical assistance. WCW is leading HECA's gender equality and social inclusion strategy, with the goal of involving more women, people from forest-dwelling communities, youth, and people with disabilities in conservation efforts.

"In our first year, we completed two studies—one on women, and one on forest dwellers and forest-dependent communities—so that we could develop programming to increase the access and participation of these populations in forestry, biodiversity, and conservation education and careers," said Executive Director **Layli Maparyan, Ph.D.**, who is leading WCW's work on the project. "We've already turned that research into action."

This past year, HECA worked alongside the up-and-coming Female Forest Rangers Platform (FFRP) at the Forestry Training Institute (FTI) in Liberia. The FFRP provides a safe space for women students to discuss the joys and challenges of being a woman in forestry, which has traditionally been a male-dominated field. The FFRP also hosts a quarterly speaker series with women role models, and the members of FFRP work together

on conservation projects to build up their natural resource management expertise.

HECA also launched the Conservation Education Corps (CEC) pilot project, in which FTI alumni and expert supervisors are working to develop and deliver a conservation education program for forest dwellers. Next year, the CEC will visit several forest-dependent communities to test and refine the modules it has developed, and it will develop additional modules.

Besides programming aimed at women and forest dwellers, Maparyan and her team completed landscape studies on youth and people with disabilities. Focus group, interview, and observational data was collected in February 2024 by 30 bilingual student intern data collectors from FTI trained by Maparyan. The data were transported to the U.S. and transcribed by CeCe Kwenah, a research assistant from Liberia.

The Liberian youth that were surveyed were most concerned about their livelihoods, expressed interest in continuing their education, and wanted more information about conservation. The Liberians with disabilities had a strong desire for inclusion in forestry education and careers. These findings will influence HECA's future programming.

"All of these groups—women, forest dwellers, youth, and people with disabilities—have a significant stake in what happens to Liberia's rainforests," said Maparyan. "We're learning how best to reach them and to make sure they play a role in efforts to mitigate climate change in Liberia."



Clockwise from top: Maparyan at CEC kickoff; FTI student intern data collectors and faculty; Maparyan with FFRP at FTI waterfall improvement site

# Celebrating 50 Years of Social Change for Women

During the 2024-2025 academic year, the Wellesley Centers for Women is celebrating its 50th anniversary. As we look back on 50 years of advancing gender equality, social justice, and human wellbeing, we are proud of the way we've shaped a better world through research and action.

In 1974, Wellesley College President Barbara W. Newell, Ph.D., founded the Wellesley Center for Research on Women in Higher Education and the Professions. With seed funding from the Carnegie Corporation, the Mellon Foundation, and the Ford Foundation, the center set out to create a home for feminist social scientists to do the kind of bold, audacious research and action programs that they could not do anywhere else.

In 1995, the Center for Research on Women joined with the Stone Center for Developmental Services and Studies—founded by Wellesley College in 1981—to become a single organization: the Wellesley Centers for Women. Since then, research scientists and project directors at WCW have conducted groundbreaking

interdisciplinary studies on a broad range of social issues, including education and child care, economic security, mental health, youth and adolescent development, and gender-based violence.

As it heads into its next 50 years, WCW will leave its longtime home in Cheever House for Simpson Cottage, an 1880 building on the east side of campus, and will hold a new position under the umbrella of the Wagner Centers for Wellesley in the World. Alongside the Madeleine Korbel Albright Institute for Global Affairs and the Hillary Rodham Clinton Center for Citizenship, Leadership, and Democracy, WCW will continue to make a global impact on women and girls, families and communities.



From left: Wellesley President Barbara W. Newell; Irene Murphy, executive director of the Federation of Organizations for Professional Women; Carolyn M. Elliott '59, founding director of the Wellesley Center for Research on Women; and an unidentified woman at Cheever House in 1975



The Center for Research on Women and the Stone Center merged in 1995



Staff at the Center for Research on Women in the 1980s



# 50 WELLESLEY CENTERS FOR WOMEN YEARS

WCW kicked off its anniversary year with a celebration at Cheever House on September 28, 2024. We welcomed 175 guests for a magical night under the stars filled with music, poetry, and a look back at the momentous achievements of the past five decades.



Cheever House, WCW's home since 1974



The Stone family, whose generous gift in 1981 launched the Stone Center for Developmental Services and Studies



A banner displayed at the 1978 March for the Equal Rights Amendment in Washington, D.C.



Clockwise from top: The evening's emcee, Amna Nawaz, M.S., co-anchor of the PBS NewsHour; WCW staff, past and present; Wellesley College President Paula A. Johnson, M.D., M.P.H., WCW Executive Director Layli Maparyan, Ph.D., and Nawaz; and Alexandria DeWalt, M.M., a vocalist, flutist, and composer who is an assistant professor at Berklee College of Music



**Watch a video retrospective celebrating WCW's history and impact: [wcwonline.org/50th](http://wcwonline.org/50th)**



## Excerpt from the remarks of Executive Director Layli Maparyan

There's a saying I love, attributed to African wisdom, that captures the spirit of this moment perfectly: "If you want to go fast, go alone; but if you want to go far, go together." Over these 50 years, we have gone far, and we have gone together. We have made a difference!

Think back 50 years, if you are able, and remember what things were like for women and girls—and then bring your mind back to today. Are you free to go to work and put your child in childcare without guilt? Does your daughter's teacher pay as much attention to her as to the boys in the class? Does your child's or grandchild's school have education and policies to prevent and address sexual harassment? Is there multicultural education or social-emotional learning at that school? Is there a quality afterschool program?

## • Awardees

The building of any great edifice requires the careful placement of its essential structural elements: the cornerstone, the keystone, and the capstone—those elements without which the edifice could not stand, without which there would be no floor, no walls, no roof, no building within which to live and work. Over the 50 years of its existence, the Wellesley Centers for Women has stood—strong, beautiful, powerful, influential, indeed, glorious—because of the many people who have each contributed something of value to its structure, its durability, and its excellence. On September 28, WCW celebrated three individuals whose contributions have been particularly pivotal during its 50-year history. Three “lifetime achievement” awards—the Cornerstone Award, the Keystone Award, and the Capstone Award—were presented to these pillars of WCW.



### **The Cornerstone Award:**

**Carolyn M. Elliott '59, Ph.D.**

Honoring her service as Founding Director of the Wellesley Center for Research on Women from 1974 to 1980. Presented by Susan McGee Bailey, Ph.D., Executive Director of WCW from 1985 to 2010.



## A Womanist Affirmation

Made of womb  
and water  
spirit & matter  
Woman, you are center  
You are pillar & pulpit  
You are nature  
You nurture  
You self-care  
You care  
You cease fires  
You are peace  
You *peace* our worlds together  
You are language  
You are musical notes  
You are symphony  
You are axis  
You are justice  
(in principle and practice)

Woman, *you* balance the scales  
You are grace  
You are time & space  
You are evolution & revolution  
You are Love & riverstone

Woman, you are Earth  
You are God & godly  
You are Church  
You are purple  
In you and through you  
Truth & compassion reign  
You are Sojourner  
You are Walker  
You are Harriet  
You are Claudia  
You are Lorde  
You are June  
You are Morrison  
You are Maparyan  
You are Wynter  
You are Autumn  
You are Springtime  
You are Ginsburg  
You are root  
You are midwife  
You bring life to life

You are inclusion  
You are whole & holy  
You are hallowed & halo-ed  
You are rainbow  
You are rainbow  
You are rainbow  
You are Sun,  
You are Creation,  
Woman, you are *Rising!*

**An original poem by Liseli A. Fitzpatrick, Ph.D., Trinidadian poet and professor in African Studies at Wellesley College, written in honor of WCW's 50th anniversary.**

Do you serve on a corporate board? Are there at least a few women on it? Do you see a therapist or know anybody who does? If so, does that therapist draw from feminist perspectives and tune in to the quality of your relationships with the important people in your life? Have you noticed any digitally-based intervention and prevention programs for mental health conditions? Do you have a kid or teen who uses a cellphone? Have you ever been glad that there's a U.S. Surgeon General's report helping you navigate how to relate to your young person about social media usage? Do your kids get sex ed at school? Isn't it great that there are now evidence-based sex ed curricula for schools?

Do you know anyone who has experienced relational or sexual violence? Isn't it great that we now know to believe people who

report sexual violence, even if it happened a very long time ago? And isn't it great that accountability mechanisms for sexual harassment and violence are now so much stronger and more ubiquitous?

And what about our paychecks? We know so much more about the factors affecting pay disparities, and the knowledge we have generated right here at WCW has contributed to policy changes that reduce gender pay inequities—as well as to raises for women.

We have the tools to make change, in large part because of research, theory, and action that was painstakingly and with great creativity undertaken right here at WCW over the last 50 years.



### The Keystone Award:

**Kathy Stone Kaufmann '67, M.S.W., Ed.D.**

Honoring her lifetime of support for the Wellesley Centers for Women and service on the WCW Council of Advisors since 1981. Presented by Andrew Shennan, Ph.D., Professor of History and Provost Emeritus at Wellesley College.



### The Capstone Award:

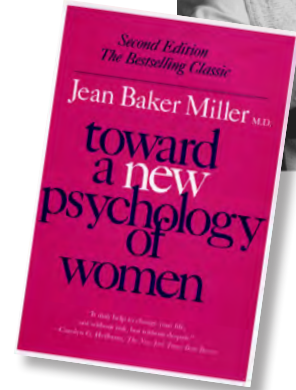
**Robin Cook-Nobles, Ed.D.**

Honoring her leadership of the Stone Center Counseling Service for over three decades and achievement in translating Relational-Cultural Theory into action. Presented by Peggy McIntosh, Ph.D., Senior Research Scientist and Former Associate Director of WCW.

## Relational-Cultural Theory

Relational-Cultural Theory (RCT) posits that healthy human development is growth through relationships and toward greater mutuality across the lifespan, and that relationality itself is powerfully shaped by culture. This theory challenged the masculinist notion that the goal of human development is movement toward greater individualism and independence. RCT grew from the early work of Jean Baker Miller, M.D., who wrote the groundbreaking 1976 book *Toward a New Psychology of Women*. The Jean Baker Miller Training Institute (JBMTI), which was founded in 1995 and originally housed at the Stone Center, taught thousands of people to apply RCT in clinical settings, educational institutions, organizations, and businesses around the world. RCT has been recognized by an editor at the American Psychological Association as “one of the top ten psychological theories today.”

**Jean Baker Miller, M.D., Judith V. Jordan, Ph.D., Irene Pierce Stiver, Ph.D., Janet L. Surrey, Ph.D., Robin Cook-Nobles, Ed.D., Amy Banks, M.D., Maureen Walker, Ph.D.**



## SEED

SEED (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity) partners with communities, organizations, and institutions in bringing people together to learn through self-reflection, build relationships through structured dialogue, and create change through personal stories and systemic analysis. Since 1987, SEED has prepared more than 4,000 leaders to facilitate monthly seminars at 1,200 sites involving preK-12 and university educators, parent groups, and others in 45 U.S. states and 15 countries. SEED originally worked primarily with educators, in person, at one annual training, and has grown to include two virtual and two in-person New Leaders Trainings as well as follow-up ReSEED trainings for SEED leaders who want to hone their craft.

**Peggy McIntosh, Ph.D., Emily Style, M.A., Brenda Flyswithawks, Ph.D., Gail Cruise-Roberson, Emmy Howe, M.Ed., Jondou Chase Chen, Ph.D., Ruth Condori-Aragón, M.Ed., Motoko L. Maegawa, M.A.**



# Reach Out to Schools/ Open Circle

Open Circle was founded at the Stone Center in 1987 to provide evidence-based social and emotional learning (SEL) curricula and professional development for elementary and middle schools. Originally called the Framingham Schools Project and, later, Reach Out to Schools, it was one of the first programs in the nation to define SEL, launching an entire field and kickstarting a culture shift that transformed hundreds of schools across the United States into communities where students feel safe, cared for, and more engaged in learning. It also spurred U.S. schools to put more emphasis on the emotional wellbeing of the entire school community—teachers, administrators, staff, and students.

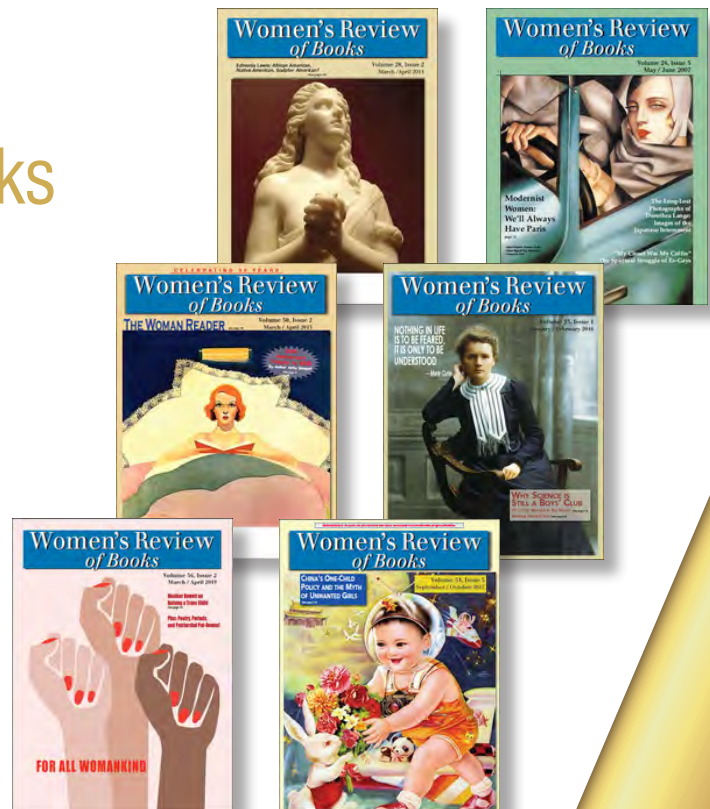
**Pamela Seigle, M.S., Kim Comart, J.D., Kristen Handricken, Ed.M., Nancy MacKay, Nova Biro, M.B.A., Kamilah Drummond-Forrester, M.A., C.A.G.S.**



# Women's Review of Books

*Women's Review of Books* was founded in 1983 at the Center for Research on Women. Its mission was to give writing by feminist scholars and creative writers the serious critical attention it deserves; to promote women's critical writing; and to act as a bridge between feminist scholars, writers, and activists by encouraging thoughtful discussion of new information, ideas, analyses, and experiences. The publication became the go-to resource for people interested in women's literature, knowing they could find in-depth, original, thought-provoking discussion of the issues of the day between its pages.

**Linda Gardiner, Amy B. Hoffman, M.F.A., Jennifer Baumgardner, with Old City Publishing**

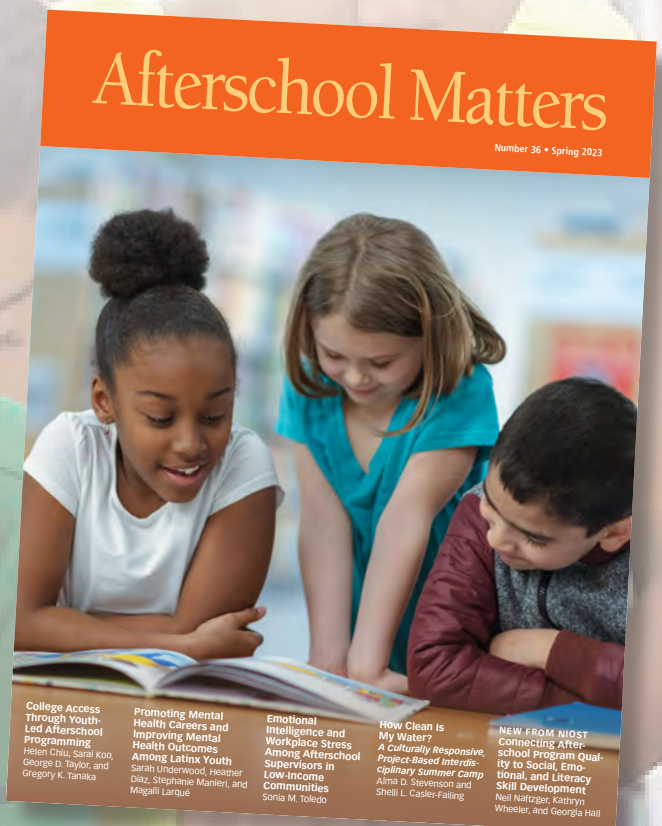


## THEN

# School-Age Childcare Project/National Institute on Out-of-School Time

In 1978, the School-Age Childcare Project was founded at the Center for Research on Women with start-up funding from the Ford Foundation. The project brought national attention to the importance of out-of-school time programming as a strategy to help mothers enter and stay in the workforce. The project was later renamed the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST) and has continued to focus on how OST programs can enhance the work of schools, especially in high-need communities, to improve children's wellbeing, social-emotional learning, academic achievement, and life prospects. NIOST has also contributed to the sector-wide development of the OST workforce.

**Michelle Seligson, Ed.M., Ellen S. Gannett, M.Ed.,  
Joyce Shortt, M.Ed., Georgia Hall, Ph.D.**



## For the Love of Literacy: NIOST Helps Build Literacy-Rich Environments

Research overwhelmingly reveals that the early elementary years are critical for developing foundational literacy skills, yet grade-level literacy proficiency remains out of reach for many children in the United States. Out-of-school time (OST) programs can play an important role in building children's literacy skills and helping to bridge achievement gaps—if those programs receive the right support.

Enter the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST), the city of Philadelphia, and the William Penn Foundation.

“There are many opportunities to build enthusiasm for literacy outside school hours,” said NIOST Director **Georgia Hall**, Ph.D. “Research shows that OST programs can support the development of and excitement about literacy in a setting where children feel comfortable.”

Between August 2019 and December 2023, NIOST partnered with OST programs in the Philadelphia Out-of-School Time Literacy and Quality Improvement Initiative (OSTLit), funded by the William Penn Foundation, to create and sustain literacy-rich environments (LREs). Their aim was to help programs embed literacy into everyday practices so children in kindergarten through third grade could engage with literacy activities in a new way.

NIOST approached this work from a program improvement perspective, meeting programs where they were in understanding the elements of LREs and then providing the necessary training, coaching, and instructional resources. Ongoing support and activities were designed to be predictable, easy-to-access, and meant to put light-touch literacy practices into action right away.

OST program staff participated in a monthly learning cycle that included a brief training video on a

light-touch literacy practice, implementing the practice in their program, check-in meetings with a quality and/or literacy coach, and community of practice (CoP) meetings with peers.

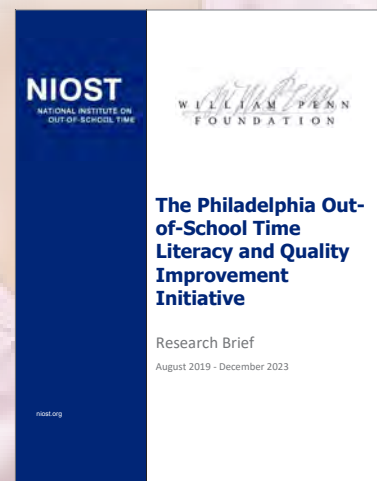
Feedback from program staff was extremely positive. “I feel like I have a lot more knowledge of how to interact with youth and how I can better support their literacy skills, whether it be with homework, during our story time, or during our independent reading time,” said one participant. Another said, “This program was able to give me a lot of ideas, and knowing what I can do and how creative I can be, I’ve been more confident in terms of how creative lesson planning can be and how fun it can be.”

Through the city of Philadelphia and the William Penn Foundation's broader LRE Initiative, various partners set out to provide access to literacy and playful learning in informal learning spaces such as bus stops, museums, libraries, medical offices, laundromats, playgrounds, and more. A nonprofit organization called The Learning Agenda gathered insights from the project in order to help others create city-wide approaches to address literacy, detailed in its brief, “Philadelphia as a Literacy-Rich Environment:

Unlocking Potential and Creating Change.”

“We and our partners have gained incredible insight into how communities can create literacy-rich environments for their children,” said Hall. “We know what to do—now we just need to bring it to more children, more OST programs, more communities.”

Read more at [wcwonline.org/literacy](http://wcwonline.org/literacy)



## 2017 Gender, Social Justice, and Women's Empowerment Conference in Cape Verde

WCW and the Centre for Research and Training in Gender and Family (CIGEF) at the University of Cape Verde (UniCV) organized a joint conference in Cape Verde in 2017. Academics, government officials, UN officers, and representatives of numerous NGOs and community-based organizations came together to discuss such topics as sexual- and gender-based violence, gender and health, rural vs. urban women, women's access to non-traditional careers, womanism, and the relation between systems of care and social and economic empowerment. This conference provided an opportunity for diverse stakeholders and changemakers to share insights, discuss strategy, and form collaborations.



**Wellesley Centers for Women, Centre for Research and Training in Gender and Family (CIGEF) at the University of Cape Verde (UniCV)**



## 2004 International Research and Action Conference: Innovations in Understanding Violence Against Women



In 2004, WCW hosted a groundbreaking international conference on violence against women, with 140 participants working in 46 countries. By placing gender-based violence in global, cultural, and local community contexts, the conference participants took a unique stance focused on research and action. The conference design promoted dialogue and successfully fostered networking and the formation of collaborations across and within countries.

**Linda M. Williams, Ph.D., Nan Stein, Ed.D.**

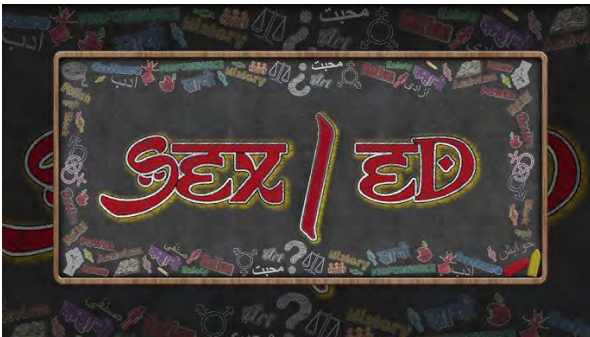


# 2017 Sex/Ed Conference in India



WCW and the Centre for Studies in Gender and Sexuality (CSGS) at Ashoka University in India collaborated to host an international conference exploring the relationship between sex, sexuality, and education in the context of a rich international history of discourse and activism. Topics included sexual harassment in the classroom, LGBTQ+ education and K-12 students, reproductive justice and anti-racist approaches to sex education, and human rights perspectives on sex work. Contributions from art, music, drama, dance, and popular culture showcased the role of the humanities in this multidisciplinary conversation.

**Wellesley Centers for Women, Centre for Studies in Gender and Sexuality (CSGS) at Ashoka University**



## Economics, Race, and Gender

In the 1990s, the work of Lynn C. Burbridge, Ph.D., focused on the impact of public policy on minorities, low-income women, and youth. She also studied trends in employment in the government, nonprofit, and for-profit sectors by race and sex. Her work painted a clearer picture of the segregation that existed in the job market and examined the implications for women's earning power and ability to support themselves and their families.

**Lynn C. Burbridge, Ph.D.**

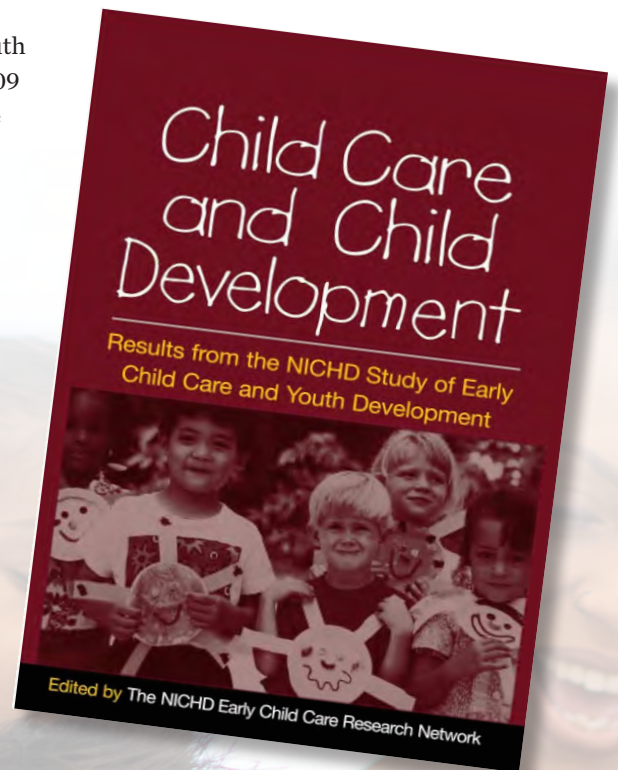


## THEN

# NICHD Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development

The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development was a massive national effort from 1991–2009 to examine how differences in child care experience relate to children’s social, emotional, intellectual, and language development, and to their physical growth and health. It decisively answered the question of whether or not child care harms children, and, by implication, whether women could participate in the workforce without guilt—a key question of the women’s movement. The study revealed that child care, particularly high-quality child care, does not harm children and, in some respects, is beneficial. The impact of this study on the lives of women and families at all levels of society was tremendous.

**Nancy L. Marshall, Ed.D., Wendy Wagner Robeson, Ed.D., Kathryn A. Wheeler, Ed.D., Elizabeth Starr, M.Ed.**



# Getting Family Child Care Providers Into the Field—and Keeping Them There

Today’s concerns about child care are largely about quality, access, and affordability, which are closely related to the number of available providers. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the child care sector in the U.S. faced a massive loss of skilled early educator talent. For family child care providers (FCCs)—what parents might call an at-home daycare—the crisis pre-dates the onset of the pandemic, with a staggering 52% decline nationally between 2005 and 2017.

“On the one hand, the issue has been raised to national consciousness: people are much more aware that the child care sector is in deep need of reform,” said WCW Senior Research Scientist **Wendy Wagner Robeson, Ed.D.** “But on the other hand, those who work in the field and those who are considering entering the field are much more aware of how undervalued they are, and that affects their decision to enter or stay in the field.”

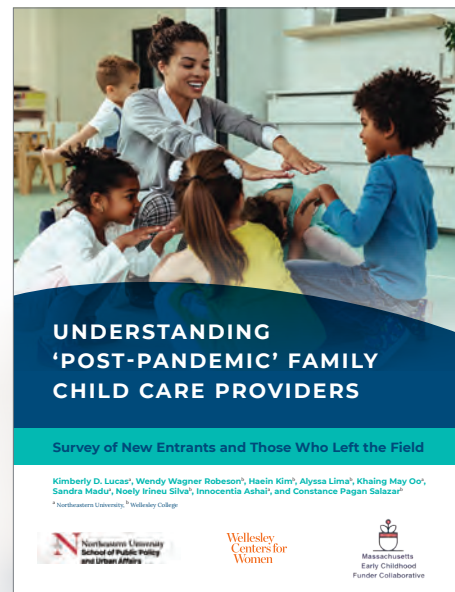
Massachusetts still saw new family child care providers in the years following 2020, one of the most difficult times to enter the field. These new entrants can offer insight into the field’s value—what makes it worthwhile to become a family child care provider? For those who left, what are some of the persistent challenges?

To get at the answers to these questions, Robeson and **Kimberly D. Lucas, Ph.D.**, Professor of the Practice in Public Policy and Economic Justice at Northeastern University, in partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), developed a two-part, mixed methods study funded by the Massachusetts Early Childhood Funder Collaborative. Their overarching goal was to understand how EEC and other statewide partners can strengthen and improve recruitment and retention experiences for family child care providers as we emerge from the pandemic.

Based on their key findings, both from a survey of new entrants to the field and from focus groups of those who left the field, Robeson and her team made a series of recommendations for EEC and other key actors in the early childhood ecosystem. These recommendations include better communication and provision of business support and digital literacy support, development of mentoring programs, and the cultivation of trusting relationships with licensors.

“We found that whether they’ve been in the field for a year or 30 years, family child care providers continue to experience the joys of working directly with young children and families—and the challenges of low compensation, the digital divide, navigating tensions within and beyond work relationships, and the need for more business support,” said Robeson. “We learned that FCCs who left the field don’t just have stories about what went right or wrong during their tenure, they also can offer innovative and implementable solutions. And their experience through the COVID-19 pandemic serves to provide us with some practical preventive changes that can be implemented now.”

Read the full report at [wcwonline.org/childcare](http://wcwonline.org/childcare)



## THEN & NOW

# Family, Sexuality, and Communication

**THEN** Beginning in the 2010s, WCW's research has investigated who teens talk to about sex and what they are talking about—and what effect those conversations have on teens' decision-making down the road about sex and relationships. Among the groundbreaking findings are that fathers have an important role to play in their teens' sexual health, and that teens often talk about sex and relationships with their extended families as well as with their parents. WCW also evaluates sex education programs to see if they are effective in changing teens' sexual knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors.

**Jennifer M. Grossman, Ph.D.**

**NOW** Senior Research Scientist **Jennifer M. Grossman, Ph.D.**, is now developing and piloting an intervention program to help fathers talk to their kids about sex and relationships. Funded by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health & Human Development of the National Institutes of Health, the program includes unique components that fathers requested in a needs assessment, such as a peer support group where they can ask each other questions and share advice. This project is significant because few interventions support fathers' talk with their teens about sexual topics, even though these conversations can promote teens' health.



## Youth, Media & Wellbeing

**THEN** WCW's studies on the effects of digital media on the health and wellbeing of children and teens were included in the American Psychological Association's 2023 health advisory (and 2024 advisory update) on social media use in adolescence. The U.S. Surgeon General referenced this APA advisory in his 2023 advisory on protecting youth mental health as well as the Youth, Media & Wellbeing Research Lab's book chapter, "Marginalized Youth Using Digital Media." Amidst a crisis of depression and anxiety among young people, the research conducted by the lab—founded in 2018—provides hard data about the nuanced role social media and smartphones play.

**Linda Charmaraman, Ph.D.**

**NOW** In 2024, Senior Research Scientist **Linda Charmaraman, Ph.D.**, expanded the Youth, Media & Wellbeing Research Lab's digital wellbeing workshops to reach more girls. In the spring, the lab piloted a virtual afterschool workshop club facilitated by near-peer mentors, with session themes including deceptive design and AI, mental health and emotional regulation, and marginalized identities. The club served as a safe space for middle school girls and their allies to talk about digital wellbeing in order to enhance their self-awareness, self-care, and healthy online interactions. Though the local Metrowest Boston area community was especially welcome to participate, the club was open to anyone with internet access anywhere in the world and free of charge to families.



# The Motherhood Penalty and the Fatherhood Premium

**THEN** WCW’s studies on women’s earnings over the life cycle showed that when children get older, mothers can increase their work hours again—but they are never able to catch up to the earnings of fathers, who experience a “fatherhood premium” that gives them a lifetime advantage. These findings position employers, policymakers, and others to critically analyze gender pay gaps and find solutions that create gender pay equity. The work on the “motherhood penalty” was recognized with a Nobel Prize for economist Claudia Goldin, Ph.D.—a frequent WCW collaborator—in 2023.



Dr. Sari Pekkala Kerr

**NOW** In 2024, Senior Research Scientist **Sari Pekkala Kerr**, Ph.D., and her colleagues **Claudia Goldin**, Ph.D., and **Claudia Olivetti**, Ph.D., published another article about the parental pay gap over the life cycle. With more data and richer analyses, the researchers delved deeper into why this gap remains substantial. The researchers found that women, especially mothers, seem willing throughout their working lives to trade lower pay for more flexibility, whereas fathers—particularly those working in time-intensive jobs—manage to expand their relative earnings gains as their children age.



**Sari Pekkala Kerr, Ph.D.**

# Depression Prevention/Mental Health

**THEN** Beginning in the 2010s, WCW’s studies showed that internet-based depression prevention programs could be effective for at-risk adolescents and their families. These

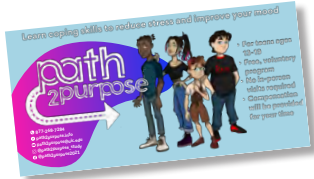


**NOW** In late 2023, Research Scientist **Katherine R. Buchholz**, Ph.D., and her colleague, **Tiffany Artime**, Ph.D., were awarded \$2.5 million by the Patient-Centered

are a game-changing tool in combating the youth mental health crisis in the U.S., especially at a time when there are not enough practitioners to meet the demand. Technology can be effective at preventing mental health issues before they start.

Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) to implement an evidence-based treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in university counseling centers. The treatment has demonstrated efficacy in several randomized controlled trials and across many populations exposed to trauma. Buchholz and her team are now adapting and implementing it at colleges across the United States.

**Tracy Gladstone, Ph.D., Katherine R. Buchholz, Ph.D. with collaborator Benjamin Van Voorhees, M.D., Ph.D.**



# Justice and Gender-Based Violence

**THEN** Since 1996, WCW has conducted and disseminated research that examines the causes and consequences of gender-based violence and the social, health, and justice system responses to violent crime and victimization. This work, which was formalized as the Justice and Gender-Based Violence Research Initiative in 2015, is built on the premise that research is a critical part of social change and that linking research, theory, and action will increase the impact on issues of justice that are critical to women and girls.



**NOW** Senior Research Scientist **Linda M. Williams**, Ph.D., is now working on a narrative nonfiction book that weaves together stories from the hundreds of women and girls she has interviewed over the course of her career as a sociologist studying sexual and gender-based violence. The book is motivated in part by the urging of one survivor, who pled with her that “somebody’s gotta hear my story,” and in part because after 50 years, Williams sees the need for more than statistics and academic articles to confront rape culture.



**Linda M. Williams, Ph.D.**

50  
YEARS

WCW Through the Years

1974

Center for Research on Women in Higher Education and the Professions is established at Wellesley College.

1976

International Conference on Women and Development attracts 117 women from 32 countries.

1978

National Institute on Out-of-School Time (originally known as the School-Age Child Care Project) is founded to improve the quality of children's out-of-school time.

1987

National SEED (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity) Project on Inclusive Curriculum is founded.

1983

The *Women's Review of Books* begins publication.

1981

Stone Center for Developmental Services and Studies is established at Wellesley College under the leadership of Jean Baker Miller.

1987

Originally called the Framingham Schools Project and, later, Reach Out to Schools, **Open Circle** is established as one of the first programs in the U.S. to define social-emotional learning.

1991

**Pathways for Women in the Sciences**, a 5-year research effort, examines barriers to young women in scientific fields.

1992

**How Schools Shortchange Girls**, a report funded by the American Association of University Women, focuses national consciousness on issues of gender equity in education.

2001

WCW receives **NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) in Special Consultative Status** with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

1995

Stone Center and Center for Research on Women become a single organization: the **Wellesley Centers for Women**.

1995

**Jean Baker Miller Training Institute** is established.

2006

**Critical Mass on Corporate Boards** study reveals that having three or more women on a board allows them to influence the content and process of discussions more substantially.

2009

WCW wraps up its \$8.3 million, 15-year study of **early child care and youth development** funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

2011

The National Institute of Mental Health awards WCW \$1.3 million over five years for an evaluation of a primary care/internet-based **depression prevention intervention** for at-risk teens and their families.

2018

WCW is awarded an NIH grant to study **youth and social media** while providing Wellesley College students opportunities to work as research assistants—the first federal award of its kind in the social sciences for Wellesley College.

2015

The **Justice and Gender-Based Violence Research Initiative** is launched.

2014

The White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault cites the **Shifting Boundaries** middle school intervention program as an effective strategy for reducing rates of sexual violence.

2023

Harvard professor Claudia Goldin wins the Nobel Prize in economics for her groundbreaking work on the **gender pay gap** with WCW Senior Research Scientist Sari Kerr.

2023

WCW enters the **environmental arena** with a project funded by USAID that aims to strengthen forest management and conservation in Liberia.

2024

Peggy McIntosh is inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame for her life's work, including her 1989 essay "**White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack**"

2024  
WCW celebrates its 50th anniversary

Proudly  
Celebrating  
50 Years of  
Shaping a  
Better World

# Wellesley Centers for Women

The Wellesley Centers for Women (WCW) was established on the premise that women's and girls' advancement could be accelerated by applying rigorous social scientific methods to issues of women's empowerment and gender equality.

That is still true today. Through a lens now decidedly intersectional and attuned to the evolving issues of our time, WCW continues to forge ahead with gold-standard research, groundbreaking theory, and innovative action programs. Please join us by making a donation in honor of 50 years of social change.



[wcwonline.org/donate](https://wcwonline.org/donate) \ 781.283.2500

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Shaping a  
Better World

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Women**