NEWS | POSTED SEPTEMBER 16, 2022

Seven Scholars Receive the Patrice L. Engle Dissertation Grant in Early Child Development

Established in 2013, the Patrice L. Engle Dissertation Grant for Global Early Child Development provides opportunities for scholars who are from and/or are working in an international context to conduct dissertation research in global early child development. Recipients of the grant are each awarded $5,000 USD to support dissertation research, as well as a two-year graduate student membership to SRCD. This grant honors Patrice L. Engle, a pioneer and leader in global early child development whose work spanned multiple industries, countries, and research fields.

SRCD is pleased to recognize the 2022 Patrice L. Engle Dissertation Grant winners: Chalchisa Abdeta, Jorge Cuartas, Sone-Ajang Doris Esunge, Jing Gong, Catalina Rey-Guerra, Delshad Shroff, and Paschal Chukwuma Ugwu.



Chalchisa Abdeta, University of Wollongong

“Strategies to disseminate child health research outputs to study participants and local stakeholders in Ethiopia”

Chalchisa Abdeta is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Wollongong, Australia, and the Principal investigator of the SUNRISE Study Ethiopia in collaboration with SUNRISE International Study led by Senior Professor Tony Okely. Chalchisa is passionate about physical activity research for children and engaged in a global research collaboration to explore healthy habits for children in Ethiopia. Chalchisa’s dissertation focuses on adherence to 24-hour movement behavior guidelines and its association with health and development outcomes in preschool children in Ethiopia under the supervision of Senior professor Tony Okely, Associate Professor Dylan Cliff and Dr Katharina Kariippanon. He will complete the data collection by mid-September 2022. The Patrice L. Engle dissertation grant award will help him to examine innovative strategies to disseminate child health research outputs to study participants and local stakeholders that aimed to enhance the translation of evidence into action from the findings of the SUNRISE pilot study in Ethiopia. Chalchisa is an active member of the International Society for Physical Activity and Health (ISPAH), Asia-Pacific Society for Physical Activity (ASPA) and International Society for Urban Health (ISUH).



Jorge Cuartas, Harvard Graduate School of Education

“Corporal punishment in the home and child development in low and middle-income countries”

Jorge Cuartas is a Ph.D. candidate at the Harvard Graduate School of Education working with Dr. Dana McCoy, Researcher at the Centro de Estudios Sobre Seguridad y Drogas (CESED) at Universidad de los Andes, and co-director of the NGO Apapacho. His research focuses on early childhood development and parenting in global contexts, the effects of violence on children’s development, and the design and evaluation of early childhood and violence prevention programs and policies. His research has been published in *Child Development*, *Developmental Psychology*, and *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health,* among other journals. Jorge holds a bachelor’s degree in Economics from Universidad Jorge Tadeo Lozano, a master’s degree in Economics from Universidad de los Andes, and a master’s in Human Development & Psychology from Harvard University. In his project, Jorge will work with key stakeholders (policymakers, facilitators, and families) and use mixed methods to design, pilot, and optimize a strengths-based, open-source, flexible, and scalable universal violence prevention parenting program for caregivers of young children. His goal is to produce an open-access program that supports the promotion of the nurturing care of children, addressing some of the root causes of violence and promoting a culture of peace in Colombia.

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Sone-Ajang Doris Esunge, University of Buea

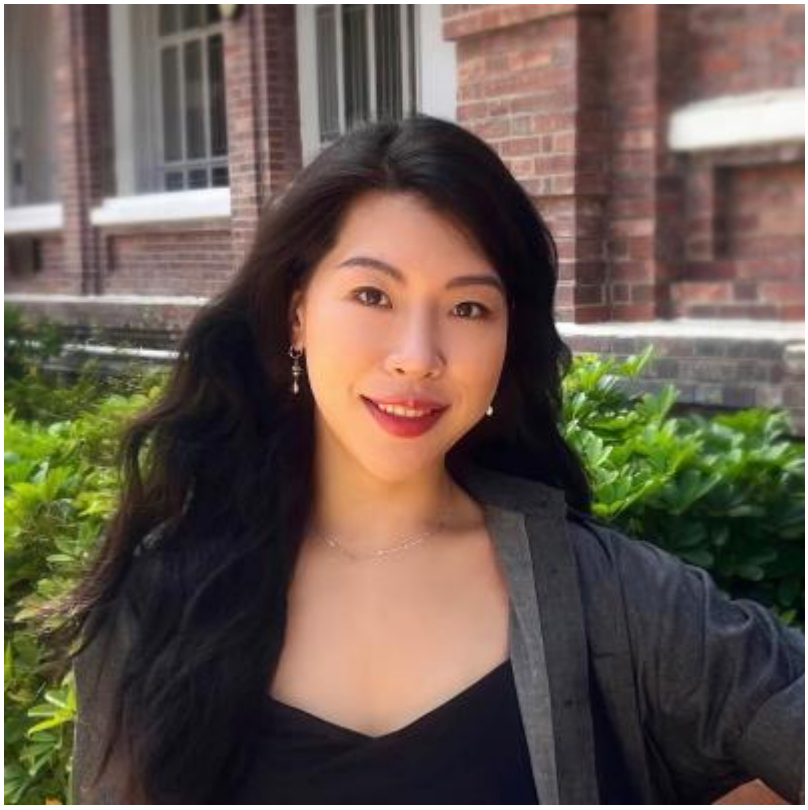
“Traditional musical instruments as tools for the Socio-Cognitive Development of children between 5-8 years old in Kupe/Mwanenguba Division in the South West Region of Cameroon"

Sone Ajang Doris E. is a female Cameroonian who hails from Kupe/Mwanenguba Division in the South West Region of Cameroon. Doris is a doctoral candidate at the University of Buea where she is working towards a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology under the supervision of Professor Emeritus Therese M. S. Tchombe. Doris holds a bachelor’s degree in Nursery and Primary Education and a Master’s degree in Educational Psychology from the University of Buea respectively. Her research interests are in the field of cultural, psychological, social, and cognitive development of early childhood.

The goal of Doris’ thesis is to measure early childhood outcomes for children in the areas of early reading, writing, spelling, early numeracy, social competence as well as their fine motor functions. Her passion for educating young children ran through her undergraduate education.

The grant in global early child development will allow Doris to expand her research beyond Western countries to begin understanding the nature of traditional musical instruments in Kupe/Mwaneguba Division in Cameroon, a developing country in Africa.

This project will take place in 4 primary schools with 40 participants in each class from each selected school. Doris anticipates that the proposed research will serve as a yard stick to highlight the need to tailor the Cameroonian educational system around the culture of the people.



Jing Gong, University of Hong Kong

“Early Home Learning Environments and Early Child Development in China”

Jing Gong is a Ph.D. candidate in the Faculty of Education, the University of Hong Kong (HKU), under the supervision of Professor Nirmala Rao and Dr. Stephanie Chan. Jing received a Bachelor’s degree in Social Work from Huazhong University of Science and Technology, and following her earnest passion, she completed her Master of Social Work degree concentrating on children, youth, and families at the

Washington University in St. Louis, and a Postgraduate Diploma in Early Childhood Education at HKU. Jing's research interests include determinants of home learning environments (HLEs) and child development, educational inequality, and social mobility. Before pursuing her doctorate, she worked on multiple early childhood intervention projects with colleges and NGOs in Hong Kong and the U.S. and served as a family support coordinator in kindergarten.

Jing's dissertation research examines socioeconomic disparities in HLEs and early achievement in China and pilots a culturally appropriate measure of HLEs for Chinese families. The project uses a mixed-method design to provide more nuanced findings on the link between family socioeconomic status, HLEs, and child outcomes. After her dissertation, Jing hopes to further this project and promote evidence-based policies and programs that support disadvantaged children and families in low- and middle-income countries.



Catalina Rey-Guerra, Boston College

"Gender Disparities in Early Childhood Learning Opportunities and Development in Low- and Middle-Income Countries"

Catalina Rey-Guerra is a doctoral candidate in Applied Developmental and Educational Psychology at Boston College, where she works with Dr. Eric Dearing and Dr. M. Brinton Lykes. Catalina received a M.S. in Public Policy and Economics at Universidad de los Andes in Colombia and a M.S. in Human Development at Boston College. Her research examines global patterns of gender disparities in early learning opportunities and development in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). For her dissertation, Catalina will (1) examine variations in gender similarities and differences in the cognitive and social-emotional development of young children growing up in more than 70 LMICs, (2) explore potential mechanisms underlying gender disparities in early childhood (e.g., gender-differentiated parenting practices and provision of learning opportunities for girls and boys), and (3) co-design and co-conduct together with Colombian families and early childhood education teachers participatory workshops to have a more nuanced understanding of their perspectives about gender-related variations in learning opportunities and caregiving practices in different learning contexts. Catalina's work has been published in *Child Development*, *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, and *Feminism & Psychology*. In the long term, she envisions leading research and global strategies aimed at promoting children's healthy development and gender equity from the first years of life.

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Delshad Shroff, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

“Examination of Emotion Socialization Practices During Early Childhood Among Parents in India”

Delshad Shroff is a doctoral student in the Clinical Science program at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, with experience in clinical and developmental research, as well as cross-cultural research methods. Delshad’s academic and research experiences to date have implemented a biopsychosocial approach to understanding child development, used innovative technologies and advanced quantitative methods, and focused on research implementation across diverse and underserved populations. Under the supervision of Dr. Rosanna Breaux, Delshad’s current research focuses on the role of parents in emotion regulation and executive function during childhood and adolescence. Delshad’s dissertation focuses on examining emotion socialization practices among Indian parents during early childhood and the relation between parent emotion socialization practices and children’s emotional and behavioral outcomes for Indian families. Delshad expects that her proposed research project will proactively address the social-emotional development of children in India, which will in-turn influence development across important domains of their life (e.g., academic, relational) throughout childhood and adolescence and into adulthood. Delshad also anticipates that, in the long term, this will support the development of a culturally relevant parenting intervention for Indian populations, which could potentially be adapted for other Eastern cultural populations.



Paschal Chukwuma Ugwu, Nnamdi Azikiwe University

“Construct Validation of Pictorial Measure of School Stress and Wellbeing among Nigeria Kindergarten School Children"

Paschal Chukwuma Ugwu is a doctoral candidate of Developmental Psychology in the Department of Psychology, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State Nigeria, under the supervision of Dr. Chidozie Edwin Nwafor. He obtained a BSc in Psychology and a MSc in Developmental Psychology. He is interested in exploring the consequences of personal, interpersonal and institutional stress factors children experience in low-income countries. Given the scarcity of culturally adapted instruments for exploring these phenomena of interest, especially among children between 5 and 6 years of age, developing and adapting an instrument that captures this phenomenon is the first step in understanding the concept. Thus, the study will adapt a pictorial measure of school stress and wellbeing and establish inter-rater reliability, transform the qualitative coding system into a numerical one, assess the validity of the instrument by correlating the numerical scores with other variables such as socio-emotional skills, academic performance, callous unemotional traits, and bullying among 500 students in Awka, Nigeria. The research will provide a tool for assessing the important domains that contribute to children’s smooth adjustment to the school environment.