Celebrating a Decade of Dissertation Research in Global Child Development: Patrice L. Engle Dissertation Grant

The Patrice Engle Dissertation Grant began in 2013 and final awardees were announced in September 2023. SRCD thanks Dr. Maureen Black for her commitment in leading this Grant for the last decade.



The Patrice L. Engle Dissertation Grant for Global Early Child Development was inspired by Patrice L. Engle, Ph.D. (1944-2012) who was a pioneer and leader in global early child development. Following formal training in psychology at Stanford University, she launched a highly productive career that included positions in academia and international agencies. She worked to ensure that children throughout the world received the health care, nutrition, nurturance, and early learning opportunities they needed to be successful. Recognizing that disparities early in life (even before birth) often interfere with children's ability to reach their developmental potential, she sought to evaluate and identify effective intervention programs that could be integrated with other systems and scaled up. Pat's contributions included hands-on programmatic work with field staff, scholarly analyses with interdisciplinary colleagues, and advocacy with country-level policy makers. The best legacy to Pat is to ensure that junior scholars are well trained in the science-to-policy model that guided her work in global early child development.

The Engle Grant began in 2013 and provided support to 45 junior scholars interested in a career in global early child development who were from or doing research in low- or middle-income countries. Each awardee received $5,000 USD to support dissertation research and a 2-year student membership to SRCD. The final Engle Awardees were selected in August 2023.

Dr. Maureen Black, professor in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Maryland School of Medicine and Distinguished Fellow at RTI International, directed the grant process over the last decade. Each year, she collected applications and led a review committee to select a diverse group of awardees engaged in research across the globe. These scholars' projects have been conducted in countries such as Cameroon, China, Columbia, Ethiopia, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Kurdistan, Mongolia, Nigeria, Saudi-Arabia, and Turkey, embodying the Grant's far-reaching impact. We thank Dr. Black for her leadership.

Dr. Maureen Black reflects on this process:



"Pat would be thrilled with the expansion of global early childhood development. Supporting dissertation research related to early childhood development among 45 scholars in low- and middle-income countries has built a strong and healthy workforce. With the support of their mentors, the Engle Scholars conducted primary research, ensuring that they acquired the skills to promote future research in early childhood development. With perfect timing, the Engle Scholars are entering the field with the expansion of the Nurturing Care Framework, also sparked by Pat's legacy. In the recent Nurturing Care Framework Progress Report (2018-2023), the directors of the World Health Organization and UNICEF reported that there has been a 48% increase in the number of countries that have adopted policies that put early childhood development at the center. What a wonderful time to be engaged in global early childhood development research and programming!

The Engle grant was funded through the generosity of several foundations and Pat's family and friends. The final grants were awarded in 2023. In the coming year, we will interview the Engle Scholars and ask about their current activities, views of the field, and outlook for future training and activities in global childhood development. We will distribute our findings through SRCD."

SRCD is a multidisciplinary, not-for-profit, professional association with a membership of approximately 4,400 researchers, practitioners, and human development professionals from over 50 countries. SRCD promotes multidisciplinary research in human development, fosters the exchange of information among scientists and other professionals, and encourages applications of research findings. Administration of the Patrice L. Engle Dissertation Grant in Global Early Child Development was consistent with SRCD's strategic plan to promote global child development and to support junior scholars. SRCD supported the Grant by advertising and promoting the Grant recipients, managing the funds (including acknowledgement for the tax-free donations), and providing an annual financial report to the Patrice L. Engle Grant Committee. The Patrice L. Engle Grant Committee (comprised of 3-5 members with expertise in global child development and representing academia and international agencies/foundations) managed the Grant by advertising the Grant, selecting Grantees, requesting release of funds through SRCD, involving Grantees in the biennial SRCD meeting, receiving interim and final reports from Grantees, and providing SRCD with an annual report of activities. Announcements regarding the Grant included information on how to make donations to the Patrice L. Engle Dissertation Grant for Global Early Child Development Research.

READ MORE ABOUT PAT'S LIFE AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS READ A TRIBUTE TO PAT FROM HER FRIENDS AT SRCDView the 2023 call for application archive

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