Madel Leal
Creative social information scientist focused on the intersection of technology and social impact

Fellowship Overview

Host Agency
Oklahoma Department of Human Services

Project Focus

- Madel utilized her expertise in design thinking, strategy, and facilitation to uplift family, community, and tribal voices, and to help prevent systems-involvement for vulnerable families across Oklahoma.
- Madel led the creation of agency-wide community engagement infrastructure to promote and facilitate the co-designing of solutions alongside families. In this role, Madel equipped the agency with the information it needs to make more impactful and equitable program and service decisions.

What's Next
Madel will continue her work building system capacity for community engagement and co-design as the Project Lead for Foster America’s new partnership with the Colorado Department of Human Services.

Education & Training

MS, Information, UX & Data Analytics, University of Michigan
MSW, Community Development, University of Michigan
BA, Sociology, University of California

Professional Background

- Madel has a strong background in community engagement in the field of social work, specializing in user experience research and data analytics.
- Previously, as a product manager with the Office of Global Michigan, Madel led a cross functional team that focused on the needs of refugees in Michigan via personas, user journeys, concept maps, and wireframes.
- Madel has also worked as a community organizer domestically and internationally. She engaged with the community of Ann Arbor, Michigan to create programs focused on the academic achievement of low income students. In Lima, Peru she conducted interviews and workshops with older adults to discover how their quality of life could be enhanced.
Danielle Savage

Conceptualizes data from a human-centered design perspective, and the experiences of the people behind the numbers

Fellowship Overview
Host Agency
Santa Clara Social Services Agency, Office of Research & Evaluation

Project Focus
● Danielle utilized her expertise in data analysis, modeling, and interpretation to better address the needs of children and their families. She aided the Office of Research and Evaluation in developing innovative strategies to decipher complex datasets.
● She drew from administrative data and built predictive statistical models to inform evidence-based prevention strategies. She examined data trends, predicting what types of services are most effective in helping vulnerable families keep their children safely at home. A particular focus was to partner with public agencies across the county, sharing recommendations regarding how to target families in need at the appropriate time.

What's Next
Danielle’s next opportunity is part time with a private insurance firm, where she will continue to hone her data science and advanced analytic skills. The remainder of her time will be committed to child welfare and social justice data projects. As of July 1, 2022, Danielle will be seeking new opportunities to contribute to the wellbeing of children and families for part of her time.

Education & Training
MS, Data Science, University of San Francisco
BA, Economics, BA Political Science, Pepperdine University

Professional Background
● Danielle joined Foster America from the banking industry, where she developed and tested credit loss models to determine bank reserves and ensure regulatory compliance. Additionally, she monitored changes in model estimates and presented insights to business stakeholders and senior management. Danielle has also developed image classification models to identify contaminants in images of landfills.
● She was excited to use her technical skills to pivot in her career into a role that allows her to leverage data in a way that will result in a lasting and significant impact.
Aaron Slovin

Leads at the intersection of business and mission to make organizations stronger

Fellowship Overview

Host Agency
Hamilton County Job & Family Services

Project Focus

- Aaron utilized his expertise in public finance, strategic planning, and process mapping to improve the financial management operations of HCJFS. He created systems and structures promoting replicable financial management processes designed to maximize local, state, and federal resources; ensuring long term operational continuity for the agency. Additionally, he researched and recommended tools that will modernize HCJFS’ accounting, contracting, and document management processes.

What’s Next

Aaron accepted a promotion at Hamilton County and is now the Deputy Director of Resources and Support.

Education & Training

MS, Finance
University of Cincinnati

BS, Business Management
Indiana University

Professional Background

- Aaron believes that developing relationships and cultivating partnerships has been essential to his professional success in financial management and business operations. In his previous role at Shelterhouse, he ensured the organization was in its best possible financial position by managing grants and funding sources from federal, state, and local governments, in addition to private foundations and other 501(c)3 organizations.
- Aaron served as Executive Director of Camp Livingston, managing the organization as a whole financially and operationally. Under his leadership, camp enrollment grew by 20% over four years after years of decreasing enrollment. Additionally, operational income improved from average deficits of $102.5k to average annual surpluses of $70k.
Sonya Soni

Anthropologist & youth policy specialist focused on institutionalizing community voice in government

Fellowship Overview

Host Agency
Los Angeles County Department of Child & Family Services

Project Focus
- Sonya supported policymakers in L.A. County in institutionalizing community voice in the Department of Mental Health & Department of Child & Family Services by introducing anti-racist community participatory methods.
- She designed and prototyped a holistic service delivery model for L.A. County’s new MLK Center for Child & Family Well-being, and also led a seven-week youth organizing program for middle school-aged foster youth called “Through Our Lens: Photovoice by Systems-impacted Youth in South L.A.”
- Sonya co-leads the Los Angeles County Youth Commission, the first youth-led governing body under the LA County Board of Supervisors with formal power in the County. 15 youth leaders impacted by foster care, juvenile justice, and homelessness make policy recommendations to the 37 LA County departments.

Education & Training

MA, Theological Studies & Medical Anthropology, Harvard University
MPH, University of Southern California
BS, Health Promotion & Disease Prevention, University of Southern California

Professional Background
- Sonya is a youth policy specialist, community participatory researcher, and community organizer in both the global and domestic child health, child rights & child welfare fields.
- She co-designed the first government electronic medical record system for tuberculosis patients in Ethiopia, Lesotho, and Peru with Partners In Health and mobilized with community health providers to introduce vaccines against pneumonia and diarrhea in India with the Gates Foundation.
- Sonya co-leads the Saraswati Soni Mahila Ashram in Dehra Dun, India, which seeks to build a movement to end orphanages and build a more just and holistic child welfare system in India.
Mathangi Swaminathan
Social Entrepreneur with Expertise in Quantitative and Qualitative Research

Fellowship Overview

Host Agency
Olmsted County, MN, Department of Health, Housing and Human Services

Project Focus
- Mathangi led the evaluation design, implementation, cost-benefit analysis and capacity building of prevention programs in the county. She has hyper-focused on the PACE program, which prevents educational neglect for families of color. She developed a theory of change & the data sharing agreement between Olmsted County & Rochester Public School District.
- She also led a working group to develop an equity-centered recruitment process for CFS that centers lived experience and improves diversity of hired staff.
- Mathangi has published articles in two peer-reviewed journals, including the CWLA, on the efficacy of the PACE program, which has evidence-based impact results, and a proposal for similar processes to divert neglect cases away from child welfare.

What's Next
Mathangi is currently leading the learning and reflection evaluation of Foster America’s Cohort 5, and also continues to work on the nonprofit she founded, Parity Lab, which is an incubator for community-led organizations that address violence against women and girls.

Education & Training
- MPA, International Development, Harvard Kennedy School of Government
- MBA, Indian School of Business
- Bachelor of Engineering, Computer Science, Anna University

Professional Background
- Driven by a desire for social change, Mathangi has worked primarily with vulnerable communities in India. She co-directed Waste Ventures India, serving over 100,000 people through composting and recycling solutions.
- She has also conducted an impact evaluation with Brazil’s Department of Education, studying the impact of missing primary school classes on children’s learning outcomes.